

African Comfort Dolls

By Marion Guzik

I read an article in the Lethbridge Senior Citizen, about knitting and crocheting "Izzy African Comfort Dolls", which are sent to orphaned children and children with HIV/AIDS. I contacted William Willbond of Saanichton, B.C., a representative of ICROSS, a Non-profit organization, and was told the dolls bring smiles of joy to the little faces of suffering children all across the African Continent. These children have never had a toy and when they die of their disease, their doll is buried with them.

The doll knitting program was started by Mrs. Carol Isfeld, who knit the dolls for her son to hand out to the children of war on the various missions he served on. Her son Mark was killed in the former Yugoslavia by land mines and she continued to knit and the peacekeeping soldiers continued to hand out the dolls. She gave ICROSS CANADA permission to change the faces of the dolls to black and brown for the "Izzy African Comfort Dolls". To date more than 20,000 dolls have been sent to the 3rd world, however, there are millions of Aids Orphans, and so they are a few short.

The Ontario Director of ICROSS CANADA, Mike Comeau, can refer our knitters in Ontario to Deborah Collins at Health Partners International of Canada (HPIC) in Toronto, who packs physicians travel packs with the dolls.

Thank you for caring and bless you for sharing with the suffering poor in the global village on our battered and bleeding wee planet.

Knitting and crocheting are great stress relievers and I am inviting all TN members to participate in helping these wonderful Peacekeeping Soldiers to be able to reach into their pockets and hand out these dolls to every child they see.

For our Western Members you may send them to: William Willbond, Box 3, 1883 Prosser Road, Saanichton, B.C. V8M 2C3.

For our Eastern Members, please refer to the Ontario Director of ICROSS CANADA, Mike Comeau. - see above.

I have seen 300 of these dolls made up and they are truly amazing. I have enclosed the patterns and picture for you to see. Some were small and some were a bit larger. Have fun, and use your imagination.

CROCHET PATTERN FOR AFRICAN COMFORT DOLLS



Materials/Tools:

G hook

Black, red, white plus at least three other colors of easy care yarn, whatever weight fits gauge

Stuffing – Fiberfill

Yarn Needle

Gauge: 1 inch = 7 single crochet (sc) and 7 rows.

Pattern:

With black yarn, chain (ch) 37. Last 2 ch are first stitch (st) in first row. Slip stitch in first st of same row, ch 1 and start next row in a round.

Row 1: Continuing with black, sc in second st from hook and in each of remaining ch (should be 35). Ch 1 and slip stitch in first st of same row, ch 1 and start next row in a round.

Rows 2-3: Continuing with black, sc in each st across. Finish off black. This is the “shoes”.

Rows 4 – 14: *With colour A, sc in each st across. Slip stitch in the first st of same row, ch 1 and start next row in a round. Continue from * until you have 10 rows of Colour A. Finish off Color A. These are the “pants”.

Rows 15 – 25: **With Colour B., sc in each st across. Slip stitch in first st of same row, ch 1 and start next row in a round. Continue from ** until you have 10 rows of Colour B. Finish off Colour B. This is the “shirt.”

Rows 26 – 34: ***With black yarn, sc in each st across. Slip stitch in first st of same row, ch1 and start next row in a round. Continue from *** until you have 8 rows of black. Finish off black. This is the “head”.

Rows 35-42:****With Colour C, sc in each st across. Slip stitch in first st of same row, ch1 and start next row in a round. Continue from **** until you have 8 rows of Colour C. Finish off Colour C. This is the “hat”.

You should have a cylinder 32 rows.

Construction:

Flatten cylinder lengthwise and slip stitch bottom (original chain) with black yarn to make an “envelope”. Weave in ends.

Stuff lightly with stuffing. Enough stuffing to pad but not stretch the stitches.

At top of "hat" sew same colour yarn as the top row through all sc and pull tight to make a point.

Do the same, with either colour, between Colour B and the first row of the "head". Pull tight enough to delineate the "neck".

About 5 rows down from the neck and 3 to 5 sc in from sides on both sides, sew with Colour B down in a straight line to bottom of "shirt" to simulate arms.

About 3-4 rows down from the top of Colour A sew with same colour yarn down to bottom of "pants" to delineate "legs." Do the same with black of the "shoes."

Make "eyes" with French knot embroidery stitch and white yarn.

Make "mouth" with two stitches in red yarn to make a V shape.

Note: You can have some fun with this. Make the "shirt" and/or "hat" striped. Add a pompom to the top of the hat. You can use brown for the "head".



KNIT PATTERN FOR COMFORT DOLLS

The basic method for making each doll is the same. Begin at the feet and knit a rectangle, changing yarn color for each body segment. The head is stuffed and the neck formed by pulling in with a gathered thread. When the body is stuffed, the feet are formed by pulling with a thread. The arms and legs are defined by stitching through all layers after the doll is stuffed. The number of rows in each part of the doll can be increased or decreased depending on the individual design. Finished height of each doll is approximately 13 cm (5 inches).

YOU NEED:

Small quantities of Sayelle or similar weight yarn, 1 pr. 2.25 mm (US size 1) needles, tapestry needle, polyester fibre fill.

To Make:

Work in stocking stitch throughout. Cast on 32 stitches.

Work 4 rows for feet. Change yarn.

Work 14 rows for pants. Change yarn.

Work 12 rows for sweater. Change yarn.

Work 8 rows for face. Change yarn.

Work 11 rows for hat as follows: Rows 1-4 work evenly in stocking st.

Row 5: Decrease 5 stitches evenly across the row (27 stitches).

Row 6: Pearl across row.

Row 7: Decrease 5 stitches evenly across row (22 stitches).

Row 8: Purl across row.

Row 9: Decrease 5 stitches evenly across row (17 stitches).

Row 10: Purl across row.

Row 11: (K1, K2 tog.) 9 times. Draw yarn through remaining stitches and pull up.

To Finish:

1. Sew sides together to form a centre back seam.

2. Stuff head. Weave a single strand of matching yarn across first face row. Draw up to form neck and secure ends.

3. Repeat for body, drawing in at ankles.

4. Stuff feet and sew up bottom, pulling in as much as possible.
5. With matching yarn, form arms with tiny back stitches through all layers from waist to 2 rows beneath the neck. Define legs in the same way, from bottom to just below waistline.
6. Embroider hair and facial features as desired.

NOTE: Photos of the dolls are on the last page of the newsletter.

Please log on to www.ctv.ca/generic/generated/news/WFive.html for a heart warming story. Scroll down and click on "Heart of Darkness"