

INSPIRED BY NOTIONS

Editor's note: Were you inspired to try a new technique, create a special garment, enter a sewing contest, use your sewing skills to help others, or embark on any other sewing-related adventure (for yourself or your chapter) thanks to something you read in Notions? If so, we'd love to hear from you for this occasional "Inspired by Notions" feature. E-mail us at editorial@asg.org with your story.

LOVE HANDLES FOR DISASTER RELIEF

by Pat Brodeen

Love Handles for Disaster Relief was born from an article in the Spring issue of *Notions* ("Helping Hands in Sandy's Wake") about how many ASG chapters rallied to make tote bags for Hurricane Sandy victims. After the terrible fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas in April, I was reading that article. After seeing disaster victims so often digging through junk, mud, and debris for personal belongings, I felt that having a tote bag to put their belongings in would be a great gift. I sent e-mails out to three groups—the ASG San Antonio Chapter, my church, and Fiber Artists of San Antonio—requesting any sturdy tote bags, handcrafted tote bags, or handcrafted children's pillowcases for delivery to West in 48 hours. I was humbled by the response and the urging to continue this project for future disasters.

Forty-eight hours after my e-mail, my husband and I delivered over 200 tote bags (top photo) of every size and description—some brand new—and 10 of the most beautiful children's pillowcases (bottom photo) made by ASG member Carol Coulter

to West, Texas. The trip was difficult since the small town of 2,400 people had grown overnight to thousands attending the funeral of the Dallas firefighter who lived in West and died as a first responder, along with 18 others. All of the roads we were told to take were closed, but one place of business was open and told us how to take the back roads to the fairgrounds where donations were being accept-



ed. We found a very helpful state trooper who was speechless when I told her what we had brought. You



have no idea how much the volunteers appreciated those tote bags! When I gave the pillowcases to a minister who promised to see that they were given to the youngest children most affected by the blast, he cried and that made me cry, too. I did learn

a good lesson that day—don't try to enter a disaster area soon after the event!

After the Moore, Okla. tornado disaster only two weeks later, 67 handcrafted tote bags and 51 children's pillowcases were delivered directly to the dormitory at the University of Oklahoma where some of the victims of the tornado were staying, and another 100 commercially-made bags went on the San Antonio Salvation Army canteen truck to Oklahoma to be given to those people beginning the cleanup of their devastated homes. After learning that I would need an organization to partner with who could be on disaster sites immediately after the disaster, we partnered with the Salvation Army who will see that future tote bags will go on the canteen truck to other disasters and given out along with the Salvation Army home clean up kits. Handcrafted tote bags and children's pillowcases made by ASG members will continue to be given to those most affected by each disaster. It is my hope that other ASG chapters will partner with their local Salvation Army and spread this project across the nation.

Pat Brodeen is president and newsletter editor of the San Antonio, Texas Chapter. She taught Family and Consumer Science for 37 years at Roosevelt High School in San Antonio and has been an ASG member for 10 years. She started sewing in junior high school and has loved fashion sewing and wearable art ever since.