

## Hi St Pancras Knitters!



**Spring is here and with lighter evenings let's hope for some great sunshine and good days ahead!**

### **News from home:**

Despite COVID continuing to be an issue it has not deterred our mission to keep going and we have managed to continue meeting weekly. The squares have been coming in at pace and to date we have sent 762 blankets amounting to a whopping 26,670 squares! Penny has also been busy making beautiful crocheted blankets to send to Ukraine.



The group has continued to grow with currently 17 regular attenders though not everyone is able to come every week. Continued thanks for all of you faithful supporters out there in the community too and to the St Boniface craft group at St Budeaux for your amazing support.

As for any 'needs', it is becoming harder to obtain 'used' bubble wrap to secure our squares within the parcels. We prefer to reuse rather than buy new to help reduce the amount of plastic in the environment. So, if you find any in your parcels perhaps you would consider passing it on to us please? Wrapping the squares in bubble wrap enables us to get 70 squares (2 blankets) in a parcel within the size restrictions. Also, if the parcel gets ripped the bubble wrap helps to keep the squares intact. This has recently been proved at KAS:

*"Opening Day at the KASbarn on this "TWOS'DAY" 2/22/22.*

*We were delighted to see post when we arrived at the barn but distressed to see how some of the parcels arrived. There seems to be more tampering with the parcels especially the ones just wrapped in brown paper. Please secure your parcels with masking tape even if they have been sent in a postal bag. Thank goodness you wrapped your squares in bubble wrap Trish as both these parcels were opened."*



As a result of this I contacted KAS having also had a parcel returned to us saying 'insufficient address' even though the address label was clearly there as always. A few days later an email arrived along with this message also on Facebook:



Our team is South Africa is requesting that we do not mail anything to South Africa at the moment. There are many problems with the Post Office at the moment and the team does not want to lose any parcels, packages in the process.

They hope that these issues will resolve themselves soon. We will keep you updated on events here on The Forum and on our Facebook Page. Thank you for understanding.

We were obviously not the only ones! Be assured however, All of our parcels were received by them in February so all is well! We are continuing to knit as usual but holding our parcels until this temporary situation has been resolved.

**Further news from South Africa:**

'The KAS Barn' opened on February 8<sup>th</sup> only to find it had been flooded! Wet squares and blankets greeted them along with Ronda's files etc. However as always, the volunteers set to work taking home bags of squares etc to wash, clean and dry as well as mopping and drying out the Barn until everything was finally back to normal.



'Knit a Square' moved into what they lovingly call 'The Barn' in 2015. It is located in Randburg, not far from the post office. This is a very large space that allows them to sort all the post, make blanket packs, stack blankets, and most importantly create the wonderful KAS blanket 'cakes'. The volunteers show up on Tuesday mornings around 9:00am and work their magic until about 3:00pm. Themba will already have collected the post, and often times will make a distribution on Tuesdays. The Team are anxious that you should know the following:



*"Please know that the Barn is a success due to all our contributors, financial donors and volunteers. Without your ongoing support we would find it difficult to carry on".*



## Distribution News:

Several distributions have been made since the start of the year and more are about to take place but here are details and photos of a particularly needed one that was due to take place in December but due to COVID lockdowns it couldn't take place.:

On Saturday, February 26, Athele along with Mandy, Estelle and Norma headed out to 'Lion Park Informal Settlement' for a huge distribution.



*"The 'KnitASquare' team of volunteers on the ground distributed on what turned into a sweaty slog in cramped quarters, and a whole bunch of happy little ones.*

*(264 vulnerable children of the Lion Park informal settlement).*

*Where you see bigger ones it's because we couldn't bear to turn away children under the age of 13 who were only allowed in the gate because they're the care giver to their little sibling. The surprised delight especially in these older children was so heart*

*warming. These severely impoverished children were given beautiful blankets, beanies and soft toys on behalf of kind hearts all over the world who contribute to knit a square."*



### **Entrance to the distribution site**

*"In no time at all there was a pressing crowd at the gate. Thank goodness for our helpers and kind 'lion' of this little crèche".*



*"This darling lady coping with twin babies and no push chair. (Can you spot baby number 2 on her back?) So good to be able to give her these few things to bring comfort.*

*"The leopard blanket went to the twin in front and the other one to the one on the back. Although that's just in my head ha ha. I'm sure it's all share and share alike back home!"*



## A few tips and reminders from Trish and Sue:

Have you checked the size of your squares lately? The tension of our knitting can change and unfortunately not all double knitting wool is the same either so it's always good to check the width of your squares when you are about a third of the way up. Also, different patterns will work differently. A general guide would be that if your squares are coming out too wide reduce your stitches by 2 or if not wide enough add a couple and check again. Ones that are too small can be rectified but it's not possible to do anything if the square is too big and although KAS will accept the odd square that is not 8 inches it does mean extra work for them to match them with others of the same size. Remember to leave a 20 inch piece of yarn when casting off and attach using the butterfly method with a piece of contrasting wool.



It's been lovely to see so many wonderful patterns coming in! It makes a change too when knitting. Just remember, not too much purl on its own as it tends to be thin and rolls and definitely no large holes that could trap their fingers!



There are plenty of good examples online with instructions and even videos to help you if you feel tempted to have a change. However, don't underestimate the



'Plain Jane' (Garter stitch) as was expressed on KAS opening

day on March 1<sup>st</sup>: *"Beautiful squares make beautiful blankets but it's not possible without plain squares to compliment and complete them. We are extremely grateful for the magnificent and the plain squares we receive from our contributors."*



Lastly a request from KAS for some squares which include black. They enhance and bring out the colours of the other squares and they haven't had many of late. So not completely black just an occasional square with a little black here and there. Isn't it great that they care so much about how lovely the blankets are for the children!



## Finally a Prayer:

Lord, we pray for the Team and volunteers at 'Knit A Square' that you would continue to bless them and strengthen them. We pray you would help them through this difficult time following the flood and the issues relating to their local postal service. We pray this may be resolved soon so we can all get on with the mission to provide the children with the blankets and love they so need. Thank you for bringing us together in our group and for the joy of meeting and supporting one another whilst we strive to serve and help others. Amen