

COFFEE CREEK QUILTERS

Who are we?

Coffee Creek Quilters offers quilting classes to women incarcerated at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville, Oregon. Since 2002, we have provided a positive, hands-on program that gives our students an opportunity to learn and practice many life-enhancing skills. We all combine a love of quilting with the desire to make a difference in the lives of our students.

How does the program work?

Each student makes three quilts during 18 to 24 months in the program. The first two quilts are donated to a variety of organizations that serve hospital patients, terminally ill adults, and foster children. Students may keep the third quilt they make, or give it to a loved one.

When they are released from the prison, if they have successfully completed the program they are provided with a machine, tools, sufficient fabric and supplies to make another quilt and be able to keep quilting in their lives.

How many women participate?

CCQ currently offers two classes a week. We have the capacity for 20 students in each class, but until we become fully staffed we currently have 30 total students.

Why do you donate the first two quilts?

Donating quilts lets the students give something beautiful to the community at large, an experience that few of them have ever had. When we read the women the thank-you letters from bereaved families or hospital chaplains, many are deeply moved to realize what their work has meant to others.

Why teach quilting in a prison?

Quilting teaches patience, perseverance, problem-solving and the importance of quality work. When students complete their quilts, they develop a positive, "I can do it" attitude. Our goal is to nurture students' self-esteem, so that they will be more successful living in the community after release from prison.

What are some benefits of the program?

Many of our students have experienced interpersonal violence and homelessness. Most have mental health and substance abuse issues and quite a few suffer from chronic medical conditions.

The women make amazing changes during the program. They go from not being able to find a quarter-inch mark on a ruler, read a pattern or sew a straight seam to completing three quilts. The goal of this process is to nurture our students' self-confidence and self-esteem, attributes that we hope will enhance their success at living in the community after release from prison.

Isn't it complicated to teach classes in a prison, using cutting implements, sewing machines and other equipment?

It sure is. We teach the classes in CCCF's dining room. Sewing machines, supplies, and the students' projects are stored in locked cabinets, then quickly brought out and set up on dining tables for the classes. Students work hard because they know they only have the two-hour class time to work on their quilts.

How to get involved?

CCQ is an all-volunteer organization. There are different ways you can be involved with Coffee Creek Quilters

- A) Donate fabric and supplies. Donations can be brought to Wisdom House, the small white building at the rear of the property of St Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church in Wilsonville on the **third Wednesday and Saturday of each month from 10 am to 11:30 am** (8818 SW Miley Road). Volunteers will be present to accept donations during these hours. Donor receipts will also be available at that time. Check the website to see what is acceptable for donation.
- B) Volunteer Time - We are currently teaching two classes per week. We are in the process of training new volunteers to become teachers in the program. We also need volunteers for fabric sorting of donations, organizing the fabric in the storage areas, making kits to be used by the students, assist with the annual sale and other organizational tasks.
- C) Attend the annual fundraising fabric sale.

If you are interested in participating in the CCQ program or getting more information, you can check the website. Current information is listed under 'contact us'.

Coffeecreekquilters.org
Gwen White, President Elect