

## EACH YEAR WE LEARN MORE-STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

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After 7 years of Manatee Co. 4H Sewing Camp/Sarasota Gulfcoast Chapter of the ASG, I'm not sure I have another camp story in me. I am not any less excited about it or less rewarded from it, but maybe it's getting to be old hat.

As Director of the camp, I did want to make a big change this year. In past years I have seen many of the teachers feeding the kids too much information verbally instead of insisting they read their instruction sheets before asking questions. I am aware that this is sometimes the easier way but it is definitely not the best way to teach the children to gain confidence in their sewing skills. I want them to be able to go home and recreate the project they made at camp and do it even better the second time.

The other change I wanted to see was less of the teachers doing the student work. That included ripping which is a technique the kids need to learn. Teachers already know how to rip or 'unsew' if you wish to call it that. The teachers agreed to the change and as I walked around, for the most part, I saw kids reading and doing their own work.

I think as a result of the changes we made this year we were able to slow the children down a bit, the quality of the finished project was better and I believe almost all could go home and remake the projects. That has been my goal for a long time and I am convinced we reached that goal this year.

When we began this camp 7 years ago we had nearly 1 ASG volunteer to 1 student. Today we have closer to 1 ASG volunteer to 2 students. Those volunteers who have given their time to the camp continue to keep coming back, however, due to our ages attrition is our worst enemy. We have gotten a few younger ones, by that I mean under 65, joining the guild but often they are still working and cannot help us. I can only encourage everyone to try volunteering for the sewing camp. It really is fun, and yes it is exhausting at times, also. BUT, it is "sew" very rewarding and the kids are very appreciative.

About 6 months ago I sat in church and watched some young children walk up front Sunday after Sunday. I then had a thought that maybe we could start a little sewing camp here? I asked some of the gals if they would help with it and I got 5 yes responses. So we rolled with it. It was limited to 10 students and all would be on the same level and projects for the first time. Quite honestly everything went very well but the teachers were totally exhausted. By the end of our second week of camp we all said, "never again". Our heads and our hearts say "yes, we want to teach all the children we can find". Our bodies said, "I don't think so." It was something we were considering in the future in order to teach more numbers of students. I am surely glad we tried it with a small group before trying to teach another week of 20 kids. OMG!!!!!!!

The 4H office and I are getting some unpleasant flack from parents because their kids have been on the waiting list for years and cannot get into the sewing camp. That waiting list for this year had 20 kids and only 1 student did not return thus only 1 student on the list got in. At a meeting this week with 4H and ASG, after brainstorming a possible 6 or 7 solutions, we came up with an idea for camp 2016 plus several ideas to be put into place in 2017 that will help to resolve this problem. We are going to have to limit their years in sewing camp. I don't like it but I believe, as did the rest of the committee, it is the best of the solutions considered.

Our field trip with the 4H camp this year was extra special. We got to ride on a charter bus to St. Petersburg, FL to the wonderful Jay's Fabric Store. It's about 45 minutes away from camp. Cindi, the store manager, gave a super program on all the different types of fabrics they carry and ideas of what to make from them. Also shown were new items and fabrics that smelled like lemons, oranges, and strawberries. Cindi offered us a group discount of 25% off which encouraged almost everyone to buy something. Pizza, bananas and cookies were served upstairs of the store and as we boarded the bus everyone got a goodie bag from the store to go back to Palmetto, FL with us. It was an awesome day.

The Community Service projects, done in assembly line fashion, from the 2 camps produced **128 QUALITY MADE PILLOW CASES** for Conkerr Cancer. Kids sewing for Kids. I love it!!!

Please get involved. We really need your help. If we had more volunteers we could split up and operate another camp.