



MIDDLESEX COUNTY IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY

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RCC Edison's Close-Knit Circle Connected by String

EDISON – It's a close-knit circle, a weekly congregation of women with wandering conversation and hands that move in cadence.

For several years now, Roosevelt Care Center at Edison's crochet group has become a Friday ritual for many residents, who take pleasure in both the company and the craft.

"We're all connected by string," said Diane Toni, a Roosevelt volunteer and licensed crochet instructor. "I volunteer at Roosevelt because I had a family member here...I love to see them help each other."

As they pause every so often to glance down at their work, their intricate weaving seems to undecidedly fall somewhere between complex and second nature.

According to historians, crocheting, derived from the French word meaning "hook," dates back centuries and is the process of creating fabric from yarn, string or other materials. Much like knitting, crocheting consists of pulling loops of material through other loops, but additionally incorporates wrapping the working material around the hook one or more times.

The major variations come about because crocheters typically using one hook and one active stitch at a time, with stitches that are comparably taller than knitters.

But in a microcosm of yarn stores, specialized clubs and trade magazines, the knitting world can sometimes turn a critical eye toward crocheting, Toni explains.

"It's more user-friendly, because you're sorting sculpting," Toni said. "There's not a lot of flexibility with knitting."

Dubbed by some in the group as an immediate-gratification activity, the hobby is happily embraced, if not revisited, by grandmothers and great grandmothers at Middlesex County's long-term care center.

"I've been coming here for almost three years now," said Roosevelt resident Marjorie Lisa, whose costume work is so impressive, competition would be hard-sought. "But I love it; it gives me something to do. If I'm just sitting in my room, I'll just pick it right back up."

Even as some circle-goers battle through degenerative conditions and other maladies, they've managed to churn-out carefully constructed collections of afghans, accessories, booties and the like.

"This inspires them to keep going," Toni said. "This way they're still feeling productive."

Roosevelt Care Center at Edison currently accepts yarn donations from the public. For more information, interested parties may contact the recreation staff at 732-321-6800 or stop by its 118 Parsonage Road location.

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