

# Bringing Cheer to Western North Carolina - Service through Sewing

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## Objectives:

- Provide a meaningful service project to help those affected by Hurricane Helene in Western North Carolina by creating stockings filled with cheer.
- Teach practical crafting skills such as measuring, cutting, pinning, machine sewing, hand sewing, and construction to Extension staff.
- Promote community involvement by encouraging staff participation in a collaborative, hands-on activity.
- Create a replicable model for future service efforts in disaster-stricken areas, nursing homes, hospitals, or similar settings.

## Target Audience:

- **Primary Audience:** Extension Staff, who were involved in learning skills and participating in the stocking-making process.
- **Secondary Audience:** Residents of Western North Carolina who were impacted by Hurricane Helene, as the stockings were delivered to them as part of the service project.
- **Potential Future Audiences:** Other adult or youth groups who can replicate the stocking-making project as part of future community service efforts.

## Delivery Mode(s):

- **In-person workshops:** Extension staff participated in hands-on crafting sessions, where they learned various sewing and construction skills.
- **Community-based outreach:** Stockings and related items (Christmas trees, 3D-printed ornaments, and toy fidget trees) were physically delivered to those affected by the hurricane.

## Outcomes:

- Creation of 24 stockings that were delivered to Western North Carolina, along with small Christmas trees, ornaments, and fidget trees, providing comfort and cheer during the holiday season. Stuffed stockings were mailed to Asheville Cotton for distribution.
- Skill development among Extension staff, who learned valuable sewing and crafting skills that they could apply in future projects.
- Fostering a sense of community and engagement among district staff who participated in the project, strengthening teamwork and collaboration.
- A replicable service model that Extension agents could use in future efforts for disaster relief, nursing home residents, or hospital patients.

## Conclusion:

The stocking-making service project successfully provided both immediate aid to those impacted by Hurricane Helene and a long-lasting educational experience for Extension staff. By combining community service with skill-building, the project fostered a sense of unity and purpose. Going forward, the initiative has the potential to be a model for future disaster relief efforts, offering both a meaningful way to engage communities and the opportunity for participants to learn new, practical skills. Training Extension agents to replicate this project will ensure its continued impact in future service endeavors.



Clemson Extension Piedmont District Agents holding up the stockings they created. Photo credit: Jessica Simpson.



Volunteers distributing stockings that were donated to Asheville Cotton. Photo credit: Asheville Cotton Facebook Page.