

PRAYER SHAWLS: HAND-KNITTED KINDNESS

*“When you pray, rather let your heart be without words
than your words without heart.”*

- John Bunyan

Compassion and prayers are woven into the hand-knitted prayer shawls and then given to people recuperating from surgery or illness. But two long-time friends have taken the concept to a whole new level.

When Jill Hinds was diagnosed with colon cancer in the spring of 2005, a group of her friends knitted a prayer shawl, each one saying a prayer for her as they added their rows.

Jill was presented with the colorful shawl – a fun combination of pinks, purples and lime greens – just before surgery. She was completely surprised and overwhelmed. Jill wrapped herself in the beautiful, soft creation and made good recovery.

Paying it forward

And then a year later, Marilyn, Jill’s friend and colleague for nearly 25 years, was diagnosed with breast cancer. Now it was Jill’s turn. She organized 19 of Marilyn’s closest friends who each knitted and prayed for Marilyn as they contributed several rows on the multi-colored prayer shawl.

Jill, a retired college art instructor, finished the edges off beautifully with a row of fluffy yarn. And then she sewed pink ribbons with each contributor’s name into the prayer shawl. Every time Marilyn looks at it, she can see who knitted which rows. “It was a work of love,” says Marilyn, “more like an afghan than a shawl!”

Bonus

Chemotherapy, under the best of circumstances, is a major assault on all systems. For Marilyn, it was particularly difficult. The second mix of chemo brought an allergic reaction. Her hair was already gone and now Marilyn lost all her toenails and fingernails – a very painful experience – and her skin peeled off in various places.