Make to Give: Charitable Crafting with Creativebug

Chapter 1 - Make to Give: Charitable Crafting

Overview

(warm music) - Whether you're a crocheter, a knitter, or a general crafter, there are lots of places accepting donations of your charitable projects. I'm Twinkie Chan. I'm a crochet designer and fiber artist. And along with Faith Hale, Professional Crafter, and Courtney Cerruti, Maker Extraordinaire, we will share our favorite projects and organizations. I'm gonna show you how to crochet small blanket sections that can be donated and stitched together to help people in need. Faith, a skilled knitter, will highlight three Creativebug classes for knitted hats and charities that accept them. For non-crocheters and knitters, Courtney will teach you an easy no-sew method for making a fleece blanket. Every community has resources for donating, such as hospitals and pet shelters, and the Creativebug team will share some national organizations. Charitable crafting can help you feel part of a larger project or initiative. It feels great, and gives you the opportunity to give back to your community.

Knit a hat

- Whether you have more finished knit projects than you know what to do with or you just wanna give back to your community, charitable knitting can be a really great way to connect with people in need. I started knitting preemie hats after my grandmother actually made, I think, 66. She told me about it, and she just worked directly with her local hospital. So you can reach out to the NICU unit or the pediatrics unit to see if they are in need of hats. I know that it ebbs and flows. Sometimes they have more hats than they need. Sometimes they don't. One of my favorite organizations is Knots for Love, which donates little blankets for NICU babies. And they also donate hats for people who have hair loss because of cancer. You can reach out to them if you have cancer and you are looking for a hat, and you can even specify colors or styles you like. You can find patterns, resources, where and how to donate at their website, knotsoflove.org. And they actually do have an approved list of yarns that you'll want to take a look at before submitting. We have two hats on the Creativebug site that I think would work really well for this. This is my easiest garter stitch hat. That is very simple. It's just garter stitch and it's seamed up with some basic decreases. But if you wanna get a little fancier you can use Norah Gaughan's cable hat pattern. And of course substitute this yarn for any yarn you find on this list. Warm Up America is one of the oldest charitable knitting organizations in the country. It was founded in 1991 by Evie Rosen, and it's most famous for collecting squares that they then make into blankets and distribute to people in need, but they also do accept hats, garments and other knit goods. A great pattern for this organization I think would be the short row shaping hat by Jill Draper. It's really interesting to knit up and knits up super fast. So you can knit one for yourself, knit one to give away. Knit for Kids is a faith-based organization that donates knit goods and money worldwide. And one of my favorite things about this organization is their spokesperson is Debbie Macomber, who is a knitter and also writes knitting-based mysteries. Their website has a bunch of patterns and free resources. I think a good pattern on the Creativebug site is how to knit a baby hat with Maggie Pace. Even if you have knit a baby hat before, they have these interesting details that make them really fun to knit. And of course you'll wanna check each of these organizations' websites. Needs ebb and flow a lot. So when people are knitting a lot in the colder weathers, I think they have more than enough. And sometimes over

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the summer, they have less than they need. All these websites should be updated regularly to give you the exact information of what they're looking for.

Crochet a blanket section
- Blankets are always a wonderful project to make for a donation. If you feel like you don't have time to make an entire blanket, the organization Warm Up America has organized a way for you just to make a small part of a blanket, and you can send this to Warm Up America, and another volunteer will seam it together. It's a great way to have a central hub to send either your whole finished blankets or just parts of them. The standard that they have established for the blanket sections is seven inches by nine inches, and I'm going to show you how to crochet one. As far as yarn, you can really use any weight, any color that you have at home, but I would suggest working with a medium or worsted weight yarn. And Warm Up America suggests that you use an acrylic because it's really easy to machine wash and to care for. You can use a variety of colors or just one color. I'll be showing you a sample in this golden color. And the crochet hook that you'll need should just correspond with the weight of the yarn that you're using. I'm going to be using an H hook. You'll also need a pair of scissors and a yarn needle, and I really recommend that you cut out a piece of cardboard that's seven inches by nine inches because this is a really great visual guide as you create your blanket section. There is no pattern for this section. I encourage you to use this little template here to guide you. And also, the pattern would change depending on what yarn and hook you use, and I want this to be accessible to everyone with whatever they have at home. So we're just gonna visually create a pattern for ourselves. We're gonna start with a slipknot and then chain. And I'm gonna chain pretty loosely, and I'm gonna aim for this length of chains. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. 19, 20. And I'm gonna see what that looks like. It's not quite enough. Gonna go a little bit more. Let's do four more. 21, 22, 23, 24. Maybe I wanna do one more to hit that length, and then I'm gonna work one more to be my turning chain. You can use whatever stitches you want here, from really beginner stitches like single crochet or fancier stitches. I'm gonna just start with single crochet. So I'm skipping the first chain and just single crocheting in each stitch. These are really simple, but you can also use this opportunity to practice stitches you're not familiar with or to try new patterns and designs. You can also keep it super straightforward. If you want to find more inspiration for stitches or if you're super beginner and this is going a little too quickly for you, you can check out my crochet daily practice, which is called Crochet Sampler, and we go over all the beginner stitches very slowly, and we also have lots of other exciting stitches for more advanced crocheters. After you've finished your first row, you can kind of use your template and see what this looks like. This is looking pretty good, so I'm just gonna keep going. I'm just gonna chain one and turn and keep crocheting as many rows as I need to reach this length. Remember, there are no increases or decreases. You want your stitch count to be the same, and that's how you'll create your rectangle. The thing that I really love about Warm Up America is that they work with all kinds of organizations, from women's shelters to veterans' hospitals. You don't have to do that research. They work with these organizations, and they know which one is in the highest priority as far as needing blankets. So you might be wondering, "After I make my sections, where is this going?" And you might not know specifically, but I think you know that you're in good hands with an organization who's in touch with all these other places that are in high need. Here's my finished section. I don't even know how many rows it is. That's not important. That's sort of the liberating part of this project. When your section has reached the right length here, you can go ahead and break off. If you have some spots that are a little bit wiggly, maybe there's a section that's a little bit

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thinner or a little bit wider, you can also check out Faith Hale's class on blocking, which can help flatten out and relax the fabric. This looks pretty good to me. I'm not usually a blocker. I'm kind of lazy in that (laughs) regard. So just go ahead and weave in your ends, and this would be finished and ready to donate. I have a couple of other sections to show you. You can have fun with this project and kind of have fun designing things. This is a tapestry crochet where you play with lots of different colors. If you want this template, it exists on the Craft Yarn Council website. And this is a fun strawberry stitch. This lives on the Creativebug website, and I show you how to work in strawberry stitch. If you're a knitter, you can also knit these blanket sections since Warm Up America accepts both crochet and knitting, and it's a fun way that you can feel like you're also joining both communities at the same time and working together. See, even a small project can make a big difference.

Make a blanket section using swatches
- I showed you how to make a 7x9-inch section. And if your section didn't quite turn out big enough or if you have a lot of swatches and scraps that you would like to incorporate into a section, I'm gonna show you how to do that. I have this 4x4 swatch that I was playing with. This is the bobble stitch from my Crochet Sampler Daily Practice. And your strategy here is you need to build more length on this side, as well as on this side. And I think it's easier to start growing the swatch by inserting your hook into the last row that you worked of that swatch, just because you can easily see where to put all your stitches. So I'm imagining that I'm growing this section of the rectangle. So you would just join a different color, or you can use the same colors, but I think it's fun to play with different ones and then you'll more easily see which section I'm working on. And we'll just join our new color, and then chain one, and then just start single crocheting or whatever stitch you want in each stitch. So you're just continuing basically working on this square and giving it more length to reach this seven-inch mark. And we'll just chain one and turn and keep working in rows until you have enough of this new section to fill this area. I do recommend that you stick with the same weight of yarn. For this, it's just easier to know that stitch for stitch, everything will fit. If you start playing with different weights and you crochet the same amount of stitches, let's say with a bulky weight yarn, your rectangle is gonna get wider and wider. Let's measure and see. This looks great. You can just break that off. We'll have to build our rectangle in this direction, and that's a little bit more tricky because you might not exactly know where to put your hook because we're working in the sides of the rows. But generally, if you're working in single crochet, which these are, each row can basically be a stitch going this way. So let's just... I don't know how many rows this is, but let's say it's 30, then in each row, you'll end up having 30 new stitches across the edge. So we'll join in this corner. I'm gonna use pink this time. And I think I'll just try working in double crochet stitches. So chain two, work a double crochet, and then try to visualize working one double crochet in the side of each row. Let's check this out just to see. This is looking pretty good. So just keep working in double crochet or whatever stitch you chose until you reach the top. I have some examples to show you of other swatches that I agree to 7x9-inch sections. Here's a beautiful shell stitch, which wasn't quite 7x9, so I added some length and width just like we did on the swatch that I showed you. This is similar to the one we worked on, but I finished this in single crochet stitches. And you can also play with just going half and half or making stripes. You can have really a lot of freedom here as you fit your 7x9-inch template. Whenever you're working on any other crochet or knitting projects and you're swatching for size or practicing new stitches, remember to save those swatches and scraps. These little bits and pieces that you might not have a use for can really help someone else. If you

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want more details about Warm Up America! you can check out warmupamerica.org. You can find even more stitches and patterns, and you can also find the address to send in your blanket sections.

Make an easy fleece tie blanket
- Hi, I'm Courtney. I am not a knitter and I am not a crocheter, but I do like to make crafts, and this fleece blanket is perfect for charitable gifting. You can make it for a small pet in an animal shelter. You can make it for a baby or toddler in a children's hospital, or you can make it for an adult in another type of shelter. I've included a PDF for sizing for you. The preferred donation size for most things includes a four-inch fringe all the way around. That means your fleece needs to be eight inches longer on both dimensions. It's gonna be square, and that'll be in your PDF for your reference for cutting. I've got an anti-pill fleece. There are lots of fleeces to choose from, so you can pick whatever feels nice and cozy and festive. You'll wanna trim off the selvage, which is this edge here. You'll wanna have a pair of really sharp scissors for this project, it's gonna make cutting easier, and a tape measure of some kind. So first we'll start by trimming off that selvage edge. Just rotate this so it's easier to trim. No need to be exact with your line here, because you're gonna be tying fringe all the way around. Just wanna make sure you trim off the white part so it doesn't dip into the pattern. All right, so regardless of your size, you will have some sort of square. Your finished blanket, like I said, will be four inches shorter all the way around. And now what we're gonna do is we're gonna take out a four-inch square on every corner. And this is where we'll start and end our fringed edge. So this is where you're measuring tape is handy. Again, not super precise. You're gonna go in four inches and up four inches, which I think is probably right about there. So that little flower is my guide. And then you can use this as a template to do all four corners. In a single layer fleece blanket with this four-inch fringe all the way around makes this giftable to most charities that accept fleece blankets. Double layers of tied fleece blankets, which you may have done before, are not suitable for children because they're too warm, and also for small pets because they're too warm. So the single layer is the way to go. And they're really easy to do, and you can make a lot for gifting. Okay, so all four corners have that four-inch section trimmed away. Now we'll cut our fringe and we're just gonna eyeball it. Don't feel like you have to be exact here. If you're feeling like you wanna be more precise, you could always do a chalk line from corner to corner here to demarcate this four-inch band. You can also put a piece of washi tape here without having to use a ruler. I'm not gonna do either of those things. I'm just going to eyeball my fringe and I'm gonna be trimming about one-inch pieces all the way across this band and I'll do it on all four sides. What's great about working with fleece is that it does not fray, so there's no sewing required to make this blanket, which is perfect for easy crafting. You wanna eyeball about one inch for these fringed bits. Again, not too precise, we're gonna be knotting them. And like I mentioned earlier, there's not two layers here, it's just a single layer. So we're just tying each strip to itself. And depending on what charity or foundation you're gonna be donating to, be sure to check out their website to see what their specifications are. In most cases, the ones that I found like Linus Project, which is probably the biggest because it's national and has many, many branches. They require a single layer fleece blanket for the reasons I mentioned earlier. The double layers just get too hot and they can't as easily donate them. So this last little fringe is a bit wonky, it's like three quarters of an inch. That's not a problem. So you're gonna do your fringe just like this on all four sides. And I have a blanket here where you can see I've already tied the knots on the fringe and I have this one side left to do. This is a different fleece, it's a little bit thinner, but the thickness or thinness does not change the technique. And I promise you, this is so easy. So what you're gonna do is just put your finger at the

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edge where your blanket fringe begins and loop that over two fingers. You're just doing an overhand knot, so if you have a different way to do it, you don't have to follow my way. This is just how I do it. And then I just poke that tip through the loop I've created and then just pull it taut. You don't wanna over pull, because you can kind of create this like scooped ridge here and make this blanket look more like a bowl, which is not ideal. I played with the sizes of fringe, doing five inches and six inches. Those longer fringes are a little bit easier to tie, but most places require a four-inch fringe, and I think that's to keep it easy for children so that it's not like a choking hazard or something that could cause a problem. So I think that's what makes these blankets very giftable for lots of different types of charities. And you're just gonna continue all the way around all four sides until you've got all of it fringed. You can give it a little bit of a pressing along the edge if you want to, just to make sure everything lies really flat, but you don't have to if you don't want to. What I love about this project is that it's super simple to do, it's very straightforward, the steps are easy to repeat, so you can make a lot of them, which is ideal for charitable giving. Because the steps are so simple, this is a great project to get kids involved with charitable giving to teach them how they can create something that then can be gifted to someone in need. I found that the Linus Project is probably one of the easiest ways to donate. Their website makes it very clear for what they're looking for and where you can drop off blankets, but be sure to check out foundations in your own community as well. Sometimes retail spaces during the holiday season will also be drop off points for charitable gifting for blankets, hats, and scarves, and the like I know that places like JOANN Fabrics, for example, will also accept things like blankets and scarves during certain seasons, so check out their website as well. A scrap of fabric or a bit of extra yarn, while it's lying around your house might not mean much to you, but it could become something really meaningful to somebody else.

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