
SANDEE LEE WRITES

A Christmas Gift for a Colombian Girl



What girl does not enjoy a new dress? Because of the coordination and promotion efforts of Melinda Martyn and Rita Butler, many Colombian girls will receive new dresses that have been lovingly made and prayed over.

Last summer Melinda heard about a **Hope 4 Women International** project called **Dress a Girl Around the World**. Melinda mentioned it to Rita. Both thought it was an admirable idea but were not moved to action. A couple of months later, Rita overheard Julia Byrd mention that she would like to start a sewing service project at our small church. That was all it took for Rita to see the possibility of making a few dresses.

Melinda Martyn and Rita Butler display two of the dresses which will be sent to Colombia this December.

Rita, Melinda, and Julia met to make a sample dress. The instructions were found on the Internet and a project was born. The original pattern called for dresses to be made from pillowcases, a few inches of elastic, thread, and some bias tape. These ladies quickly realized pieces of fabric and surplus pieces of trim in their sewing supplies would make darling dresses.

Millie Young is our “local missionary.” Actually Millie is a retired missionary who spent most of her forty-nine years on the mission field in Colombia deeply involved with children’s ministry. Millie immediately became excited about the project because she is planning a short-term mission trip to Colombia in December and another one in January. She knew the girls in three of the Colombian Christian day schools would feel very blessed if they were presented with new dresses. The project went from making a dozen dresses to providing dresses for three hundred girls.

Church-wide sewing days were scheduled. Thread, trim, bias tape and elastic were either donated or purchased. Ladies went through their stashes of material and found many pieces of cute material the sizes needed to make the basic tubes for the dresses. People who are not seamstresses volunteered to create kits for those who sew. Kits were given to volunteers. Ladies who cannot attend church sewing sessions grab the kits and sew when their schedules allow. Because of chance encounters, visiting family members, and comments made to friends, dresses are being assembled in Massachusetts, Oklahoma, and in Towanda, a Kansas town just nine miles down the road.

The sewing project has brought friends and family together. Steve Koontz, one of our church men who can operate a sewing machine, brought his teenage daughter to the scheduled events and taught her how to sew. The Sellers family always performs a Christmas charity project instead of having a Christmas gift exchange. This year they will be making dresses. This project has captured the hearts of so many.



Steve Koontz teaches his daughter Hailey how to sew.

All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

Galatians 2:10