

PRESSRELEASE

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Project Cool at Michigan City Public Library

Michigan City, IN (July 6, 2004) – Bring your sewing machines to the Michigan City Public Library and participate in a Project Cool event on Saturday, July 10th. Project Cool is a unique community project sponsored by the City of Michigan City and the Great Lakes Museum of Military History that supports our troops in the Middle East.

“Cooling scarves are one of the top requests from our troops,” said Terrye Mansfield, director of the Museum. “The neck scarves are filled with hidden water-soaked polymer crystals which feel cool against the neck. The scarf is reusable...over and over again...which makes it perfect for our troops.”

Don Glossinger, director of the Michigan City Public Library, said, “We wanted to support Project Cool, so we are offering a location where people can come together for a day and sew these much-needed scarves with materials provided by the library.”

Sewing sessions at the Library will be from 10 – 11:30 a.m. and from 1- 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 10th. The Project Cool sewing event will be held in the library's meeting room.

“We will provide all the cotton fabric, thread and polymer crystals for the scarves,” said Robin Kohn, public relations manager for the Michigan City Public Library, “and those who join us should bring their sewing machines and pins. If you have a tool for turning tubes of fabric inside out, bring that, too.”

Kohn said that there will be space for up to 15 people at each session, and participants are encouraged to register for the project before Saturday. “We want to be sure we have space for everyone who wants to participate,” Kohn said. “You can register by calling 219/873-3049.”

“The scarves are very easy to create,” said Jan Kostielney, marketing and community relations consultant to the City of Michigan City. “There is one long straight seam and two short straight seams. An instructor will be on site to provide assistance. If you don't have a sewing machine, come help us cut the fabric for the scarves and iron the fabric before the crystals are inserted.”

Mansfield said the goal is to collect 1000 cooling scarves which will be sent to The Ships Project for delivery to U. S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. “The Ships Project began in October 2001 when one woman received a letter from the USS Bataan requesting warm items for the ladies on board. Since then the project has grown to serve many different ships as well as Marines and Special Forces on the ground in Afghanistan and members of the Air Force who are deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom. The project has collected a total of 96,116 handmade items for America's troops.”

“The Ships Project accepts knitted, crocheted and sewn items,” Kostielney said. “In winter months, they request hats, slippers and socks. But in the warm months, the cooling scarves are the number one request. These are very simple to sew and use 100% cotton which is relatively inexpensive.”

A free pattern for the cooling scarf is available at the Great Lakes Museum of Military History, the Michigan City Public Library, the News-Dispatch, and in the Mayor’s Office at City Hall.

“We hope that auxiliaries, church groups, neighborhood groups, scouting troops, youth groups and individuals will join us in our goal to make 1000 scarves to send to our troops,” Kostielney said. “Some of our community members who do not sew have donated funds toward purchasing materials for those who do.”

“All items are mailed to The Ships Project, and they send them to their contacts,” Mansfield said. “This project has been approved by each ship's or unit's command, and they are expecting the packages from The Ships Project. Postage help is always appreciated but is not required. If you would like to donate toward our shipping costs or those of The Ships Project, you can deliver the funds to the Military Museum. Postage costs from The Ships Project in Florida to the ships and ground troops have topped the \$80,000 mark to date.”

The deadline to donate completed cooling scarves is July 31st. The scarves will be shipped to The Ships Project which must receive them by August 7th for shipment overseas.

“We intend to continue sending hand-made items to our troops,” Mansfield said. “So if you can’t sew but want to participate in this community project, start crocheting or knitting hats and slippers that we can ship this Fall.”

Additional shipments of cooling scarves are scheduled to leave Michigan City on August 31st and September 30th. Warm items will be shipped on October 30th, November 30th and December 30th.

Contact:	Jan Kostielney	Terrye Mansfield
Phone:	219/873-1400 x350	219/872-2702
E-mail:	jkostielney@emichigancity.com	terrye@militaryhistorymuseum.org
	Robin Kohn	
	219/873-3049	
	rkohn@mclib.org	