



# Sewpportive Friends

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*Please join us on our journey to empower women in challenged areas through providing healthy, handmade feminine care products and the education to produce their own.*

**“Helping one person might not change the world,  
but it might change the world for one person.”**

## The energy of kindness.

“Good morning.” “Good Afternoon.” A smile that passes your way.... The opening of a door by a stranger, allowing someone to get in line before you because they have less items to buy, giving a donation for a cause that touches your heart, no matter what, these are kind gestures. Kindness comes in many forms. It is human nature to be helpful and considerate. The impact of our behavior is not always known. For every action there is a reaction. Let our energy be that which creates a sense of understanding, appreciation, importance, support, comfort, and provides hope.

A lovely new friend in Zimbabwe recently wrote to me and said “Sewpportive Friends has given us a sense of belonging, supported, and empowered.” Through generous donations, we have been able to provide the tools, supplies and training for communities that have needs different than those in the USA or other parts of the world.

Our basic human needs are the same no matter where one lives yet some have greater challenges to get the basics like water, food, let alone feminine hygiene. Some of the communities we work with have faced terrible drought issues again this year. Their food supply has been limited and water sources reduced. For some of us, these difficulties are hard to imagine. They are very real. We have a lot to learn from one another.

We should each also realize the power of our own words and actions.

My parents always said be kind, considerate and respectful. It is not only because that is the proper way to engage with others, but is also how we hope to be treated.

I have had days that could have been better, and then was kindly greeted. It changed my thoughts at that moment which



altered the way I approached the rest of the day. It did not remove the challenges of the day but changed the way I looked at things.

In 2024, we have reached our largest number of communities and individuals in one year. By December, we will have worked with 16 communities providing supplies and training. It has been a busy eleven months.

In November, we will visit six communities in Zimbabwe working with a Doctor's Program hosted by Imvelo Safari Lodges. Sewpportive Friends will be provided a tent and we will teach girls and women how to sew the washable, reusable pads while they are waiting to see a physician. We have already purchased and delivered the sewing machines, fabric, scissors, thread, table cloths, needles, etc. to the Imvelo team. Each of the communities will receive the tools to continue sewing.

It is an honor to be invited to participate in such an impactful program. We are grateful for the Imvelo Safari Lodges team for the amazing work they are implementing – humanitarian efforts and wildlife conservation. <https://imvelosafarilodges.com/>

From Zimbabwe, we will travel to Kenya working with Elevate Her Foundation in Kendu Bay. They have already received their sewing machines and supplies, and the initial training was taught by Irine, Co-Founder of Elevate Her Foundation. We are excited to meet them and provide additional training.

Our friends in Africa are true warriors changing lives. They motivate, inspire and are dedicated in uplifting others.

Thank you to all our contributors, volunteers and sewing team members for your kindness! We each have a purpose and need to continue to work with a gentle, kind heart, expecting nothing in return.

There is not a solution for every issue, but by continuing to give and be kind that provides hope. Hope provides courage which brings change in thought and action.

Thank you for YOUR kindness and support.

With gratitude and love,  
Julie



## Sustainability - A note from Julie

I have been asked numerous times about financial sustainability for the communities where the sewing program has been implemented. I have come to realize that even if sustainability is not always attainable, the project is still successful. Why? Because they have learned a new skill (sewing), have been provided tools and hope which initiates change.

Change in thought through education and generosity brings many resolutions. Sustainability is a difficult goal for the communities we work with. Not all have access to market and sell their sewn products due to their remote location. Many are farmers who work hard providing for their families and community. Who do they sell to? How do they make the project financially sustainable? This is a challenge. The Sewpportive Friends project provides them the skill of sewing which allows them to produce feminine pads to keep girls in school and provide healthy feminine hygiene items for the women. The sewing skill allows them to mend uniforms for the children, fix their clothing, create household items from fabric they currently have. There are many projects being produced now that they know how to sew and have tools which Sewpportive Friends has provided. The smiles we see show the success of the sewing programs.

*"Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome."*

~ Arthur Ashe



## Thoughts from our African Friends

*Written by Isabel Ndebele,  
Zimbabwe Team Leader*

Growing up in the city, one does not have a feel of what other women, mostly in rural areas go through. It takes someone who has been there with them to understand them. Women out there face a lot of difficulties. Working with the groups in the different provinces of the country, I have noted their predicaments are the same. Our society has always put aside the rural woman. Education is not a priority for them. Theirs is to grow up and get married and take care of the children. Men are there sometimes but it's the mother who goes through most of the hardships to bring a smile into their family. And so empowering these women brings change to their lives and community as whole. Sewpportive Friends has touched one critical aspect of a woman's life, that is the feminine hygiene. Thanks to the program because our women today have not only managed to get the sanitary wear, but also the skill to do it, and even some have gone on to sell them as a source of income. It is also commendable to note that some communities through their own initiatives have learnt how to produce dresses, uniforms and bags. This brings a smile, to know that our children will not go to school with torn clothes if our mothers are there, women are unstoppable.





## Empowering Each Other, One Stitch at a Time.

By Violet Nhawu  
DAMBANEVANA SEWING GROUP

As we approach the end of the year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible impact Sewpportive Friends has had on our lives. This community has provided us with more than just sewing tools and resources. But it has given us a sense of belonging, support, and empowerment. Through Sewpportive Friends, we have gained access to the written sewing instructions, fabrics, threads, scissors, snaps, Velcro dots and sewing machines. These resources have not only improved my sewing skills, but have also given the ability to take on new projects and share my passion with others. My group, Dambanevana, has been working on offering various sizes, absorbency levels and adjust designs for better quality, comfort, and fit. We have been firsthand with the positive impact that sewing reusable pads can make a significant impact on menstrual health.

Michelle Obama says, "There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish." This program is touching the rural woman and their different communities, changes in their lifestyles have been noted and it is our duty as women to continue to stand up and support each other, and reach out to others who need help, sisterhood is powerful. We might not change the whole world now, but as we grow our existence will be felt. We appreciate the community leaders in all the places we are working, allowing the group to work in the community means a lot to us, and this with enable women to take part in the development of their communities.



Keeping girls in school and giving them the opportunity to participate in the local soccer games is why the program was introduced to the Dete area and the Young Sable Soccer Academy.

~ Julie

### Young Sable Soccer Academy, Dete, Zimbabwe

Provided by Munga P.

YSSA's sewing project, launched earlier this year, has empowered local women with vital skills and economic opportunities. The project provides training and resources for women to create clothing, bags, and other textiles, promoting financial independence and self-sufficiency. The girls have been able to produce washable pads through machines donated by



Sewpportive Friends. All thanks go to Julie Phippen and DJ Nyathi for such a great gesture in supporting us with sewing machines and training.



## Sewing is a special activity

*Written by Yvonne Maphosa - Dete Project*

The activity targeted kids from Makwandara Primary School.

Sewing is a special activity that requires a certain degree of skill, generally not everyone can do it. With the training and practice, our group is improving and enjoying the experience.

This learned skill also allows them to be able to fix their torn uniforms and clothing.

To the sponsors we greatly appreciate the machines and they starting to bring positive development interims of sewing and appreciating how sewing on its own is important.



We are glad that even those who had never seen us work on the pads, now have an appreciation of what we are doing

It's a blessing having been identified for such a valuable initiative. we believe it will grow.

Many people are interested in the project, with time we see ourselves diversifying the items we make.



***"In a world you can be anything, be KIND."***

*~Unknown author*



## Ladies working together bring out the best

*By Pepsie, Shingani Sewing Club*

Take a pair of super sharp fabric scissors and a piece of fabric and make a huge difference to a girl child. With sewing we never stop learning; each day is a day with its beautiful and special designs of reusable washable sanitary pads.

From thirteen to twenty-one members this year, thus a huge growth among our club in Chisuma, Dibutibu in Victoria Falls. Thus, how our group has grown creating everlasting fantastic memories that benefits individuals and the community at large. Sewing bridges generations but it also bridges future and past.

The tools we receive from Sewpportive Friends that is the fabrics, scissors, pins, threads, machines and many more other things helps us in many ways. They make our sewing easy and efficient. The sanitary pads are then donated to the girl child in need of them either in our community or outside the community. These pads put a smile on them, especially the schoolgirls as they will attend school with much confidence. Thank you a million times Sewpportive Friends!!





Sewing allows us to connect with people with experience and expertise that one may not have in their life. We continue learning every day. We are always finding ways to improve our skills, discovering something about ourselves whether it is the approach to solving problems, ways to build patience or how to value our time.

The ladies working together to bring out the best.

As we meet every weekend, teamwork is our number principle as different ideas bring out perfect things, we work on the reusable washable sanitary pads which are effective and efficient as they are environmentally friendly, cheap, comfortable, more breathable and boosts one's confidence. During the sewing time, we chat, socialize, share jokes, and keep smiling all the time.

Sewpportive has helped us not only to make sanitary pads, but we also mend and alter our clothes amongst other benefits. Sewing is the best! It improves our physical fitness, reduces stress, and helps us to make new friends and socialize happily.



**A special thank you to  
Kathy and Steve Taylor, Askari Safari.  
([www.askarisafari.com](http://www.askarisafari.com))**

## Giving season

It is through the generosity and kindness of others that allows Sewpportive Friends to purchase the following items for sewing groups in Africa.

Singer non-electric sewing machine	\$125
Electric sewing machine	\$170
Overlock sewing machine	\$250
Hemp fleece	\$18/meter
PUL fabric	\$9/meter
Snapping tool kits	\$30
Washable table cloths	\$15

We also provide thread, scissors, Velcro, table cloths, measuring tapes, patterns, underwear, pad kits and lots more.



**No gift is ever too small.  
Every dollar makes a difference.**

**Donations may be made on the website  
[www.sewpportivefriends.org](http://www.sewpportivefriends.org) or by mail:  
Sewpportive Friends  
PO Box 5223, Beverly Farms, MA 01915**

## Working together

Thank you to our friends who are dedicated to uplifting communities in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia and India, and for their assistance in overseeing the Sewpportive Friends sewing programs.

**Thank you to all our supporters.  
Your contributions have and  
will continue to change lives.  
Your gift provides HOPE.**





2024

