



Stroke survivor crochets for her health, and her community

A former Hamilton Health Sciences patient is turning her passion into productivity. Marilynne Adair's crochet hobby has become a way for her to improve hand strength after a stroke, and give back to the community.

She experienced a [stroke](#) seven years ago. It caused serious weakness in her right arm. An avid [crocheter](#), she set a [rehabilitation](#) goal of regaining her ability to crochet. To get even stitches, a crocheter must hold the yarn and needles with consistent tension. Practicing this skill helped Marilynne rebuild the strength and agility in her arm.

A reason for her rehab

When she learned about a project at Hamilton General Hospital (HGH) that provides warm winter accessories to people in need, her hobby went into overdrive. HGH's Mitten Fence is

located in the hospital's front courtyard. Donations of hats, mittens, and scarves are collected in bins around the hospital campus. They are then hung on the fence to be taken by people in need.

Since we started this initiative three years ago, we've distributed hundreds of items to people in our community, says Ann Higgins, senior consultant on improvement, innovation and alignment at HGH. As an anchor organization in a high-needs area, we know how important it is to care for our neighbours beyond their medical needs. This is just one small way that we're able to do that.

Anybody can benefit from it

When asked about her crochet skills, Marilynne confidently shares that she is just as good as before her stroke. Maybe even better, she says. I'm doing much more of it now.

To date, she has donated more than 60 items to the mitten fence, an accomplishment she didn't think possible in her early recovery. Jennifer Robinson, who was Marilynne's physiotherapist at HHS Regional Rehabilitation Centre after her stroke, and is now clinical manager of the Stroke Rehabilitation Program, is proud to see her doing so well.

She really set her mind to achieving this, and it's wonderful to see her skill benefit people in need, Jennifer says.

Still seeking donations

Donations of clean, new or gently used items are always needed. Donation bins are located outside the gift shop in Hamilton General Hospital, and the lobbies of the Regional Rehab Center, David Braley Research Institute, and Ron Joyce Children's Centre.

Marilynne encourages people to give. Anybody can benefit from

it. It makes me feel good.