

STERLING HEIGHTS

Daughter's gift to her mother turns into a niche business for cancer patients

By Gina Joseph
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It was out of love for her mother that led Karen MacDonald to create Wrapped in Love, a small business helping cancer patients all across the country who need comfortable but stylish clothing.

"It was about 10 years ago that I went to visit my mom in the hospital," MacDonald said, of her mother who had been suffering with cancer and pulmonary fibrosis for several years. It was Christmas Eve and while her mother usually enjoyed people stopping by this time she asked to be left alone.

"She told me she no longer wanted to receive visitors," MacDonald said, recalling the visit that broke her heart and inspired her to create something to make her mother feel better. "She felt she looked too bad in her state of illness."

Having worked as a public relations and marketing



Karen MacDonald of Sterling Heights displays some of the socks created by the Soyad Brothers Textile Corporation for Wrapped in Love, a business that provides comfy and stylish clothing for cancer patients, a business inspired by a wrap MacDonald made to comfort her ailing mother.

specialist for retailers, MacDonald knew a little something about fashion but nothing about sewing. So, she took some fabric that she had at home and with

a decorative flower pin that her mother loved fashioned a no-sew-wrap that would fit over a hospital gown.

It made all the difference in the world.

"You could see the difference in her mood as soon as she put it on," MacDonald said. "She was talking more. She wanted to open her Christmas cards, the transformation was just amazing."

The nurses noticed it too. And one by one they convinced MacDonald that she was onto something leading not only to more wraps but more conversations about other apparel that cancer patients might need to make them feel better until eventually it became a business.

Today, MacDonald's line of clothing includes everything from soft head covers and mastectomy camisoles to tops that keep cancer patients cool throughout hot flashes and warm during



Karen MacDonald, right, founder of Wrapped in Love looks at a sampling of socks presented by Laba Soyad, co-owner of Soyad Brothers Textile Corporation in Fraser.

chemo sessions.

Oh, and socks.

Super cozy socks featuring cheerful sayings on the sole that make everyone feel better such as, "Hello Beautiful" or "Tough Cookie."

Once the company proved to be successful MacDonald starting giving back by using the apparel to raise awareness for cancer and donations. This past September she partnered with actress and talk show host Kelly Ripa on a limited edition knee-high sock to raise awareness and donations for ovarian cancer. During the campaign every dollar from each \$20 pair went directly to Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance. During October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month she and Soyad Brothers Textile Corporation in Fraser and the manufacturers of her cozy socks have partnered with several automotive dealerships to raise money for breast cancer research.

"I don't know of anyone who hasn't had someone in the family impacted by cancer. What she's been doing is phenomenal," said Laba Soyad, whose grandfather brought the technology for sock manufacturing to Michigan more than 50 years ago. As a family-owned and operated business, Soyad said they've always made a point of giving back and were happy to support MacDonald's mission.

"We've been working together for six years," Soyad said. "It's always been a joy to work with her."

During October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Rafih Auto Group's four Michigan dealership locations will offer pop up shops featuring exclusive Wrapped in Love clothing and accessories for women fighting breast cancer. Also part of the promotion will be limited edition dress socks featuring the Audi, BMW, MINI and Porsche brands. During the promotion 50% of sales from the Wrapped in Love collection and 100% of all proceeds from the socks will go to the Dynami Foundation.

"My mother was my inspiration," said MacDonald. "Now I get my ideas from patients, survivors and health care workers. I think she would be very pleased with what she started."

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