

Bolton Caledon Comfy Cases heads into third season

By Riley Murphy, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Comfy Cases is a Canadian non-profit organization run by volunteers who stitch fun, colourful pillowcases for children with cancer or other life-changing illnesses in hospitals, and the Bolton-Caledon group is entering its third year of making a difference.

The Bolton-Caledon group began a few years ago with a small team of volunteers and has since made hundreds of fun and colourful pillowcases for children in nearby hospitals.

This year, they began their monthly sewing nights again at the Kin Club of Bolton, and at their April meeting, volunteers could be seen scattered across the room at various stations, all helping out in one way or another.

Even for those without sewing skills, there's a way to help: stations for ironing, assembly, and setup were seen.

Looking around at the group of volunteers, Bolton-Caledon Coordinator Chris Millar has watched the group grow from its beginnings.

Millar began sewing for Comfy Cases back in 2022, dropping off her completed cases at various meetups in surrounding communities.

Millar then met the now Bolton-Caledon Coordinator, Kristi Shotter Bryant, and, from there, the two helped build the Bolton-Caledon organization into what it is today.

‘Everyone is helping each other, that's how far we've come,’ says Millar, looking around the Kin Club. ‘It's incredible, because before it was us sort of teaching them.’

Millar adds now they can barely keep up fast enough with the work of the hard-working volunteers.

To date, they've donated 288 pillowcases to Headwaters Health Care Centre.

‘We've all had family or friends in the hospital, and you think about little kids in the hospital and how sad and lonely it is at night, and to have something meaningful that's theirs that they can have and keep, I think it's something special,’ says Bryant.

‘Kristi is a cancer survivor, so she, more than anyone,’ adds Millar. ‘I got involved in it during COVID, it warms my heart.’

‘I've seen pictures of some of the people we've been able to give pillowcases to, it's very heartwarming.’

Not only that, but the group has become its own community, with volunteers supporting and helping one another.

‘Our friendship that's come from this has been really nice. We go to Fabricland together and go shopping,’ says Bryant to Millar. ‘We have tea and cut material and put together the kits to bring.’

A large part of what they've been able to do is thanks to the community support around them.

The Kin Club has supported them for three years now, in more ways than one, the two say.

‘We just nervously came and did a presentation a few years ago, and they gave us more funding than we even asked for, and their facilities, their people,’ says Bryant.

The Kin offers its facilities for Comfy Cases sewing nights, and both Kin Club members and community volunteers have contributed countless hours sewing, ironing, cutting, and assembling pillowcases.

Kin member Kathy Clarkson was seated behind one of the sewing machines, working on completing a case. She joined the cause after Comfy Cases made their presentation to the Kin Club. After working to coordinate the partnership, she decided to help out herself.

Across from her was community volunteer Marie VanderDoelen, who originally met Millar after volunteering at ecoCaledon's Repair Cafe.

Sitting at her own sewing machine, VanderDoelen added she loves to sew and be useful, and it seemed like a great fit.

Bolton Caledon Comfy Cases also has volunteers who sew cases from home and drop them off.

As they head into their third year, they are always in need of 100% quilting cotton donations.

With the current cost of fabric, Millar and Bryant shared that it can get quite expensive to acquire what they need to make the cases.

Looking ahead over the next year, Millar adds she hopes to secure more funding to continue their mission.

For those looking to either volunteer or donate, visit their Facebook group for information @Bolton-Caledon Comfy Cases.