

Corrie Vos

No-one enjoys being sick, and for children it can often be a scary and confusing situation. Corrie Vos knows how upset children can become and has spent the last seven years making over 1000 trauma teddies to help bring smiles to children's faces.

By Hayley Penrose



A knitter since the age of eight, Corrie Vos has put her skills to good use bringing happiness to many children and their families over the last few years by making trauma teddies for the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS). A teddy bear can make all the difference for an upset child and with seven children of her own and 57 grandchildren, Corrie knows this all too well.

Corrie started knitting bears for a program started by John Sands Greeting Cards. Bears were being knitted and sent overseas where they were then distributed by the Red Cross to hospitals. To keep up with demand, the

ladies of John Sands put out a call for help and Corrie responded. She was supplied with a pattern and quickly began knitting. Once she had a few ready she would send them from Queensland to Melbourne, costing about \$12 postage for 20 bears.

News of her efforts reached the emergency services in her local area and there were requests for bonnets for preemie babies and trauma teddies for the ambulance service. Corrie was eager to give more and began knitting, making 125 bears a year. Each bear can take up to seven hours to make and so far she has made 1437 and that number is only increasing. QAS Assistant

Commissioner Gavin Trembath has seen the difference a teddy can make in some of the serious situations they face. "The trauma bears assist the QAS paramedics by acting as an ice breaker and distraction when dealing with children who require pre-hospital care," he explains. "They help the child feel more comfortable with the situation and the strangers coming into their environment."

The QAS could not be more grateful for Corrie's efforts and in 2014 presented her with a certificate of appreciation and a QAS teddy bear for her hard work and generous donations. Assistant Commissioner Trembath says the QAS are indebted to Corrie for her commitment. "The QAS appreciates all the behind the scenes work that Corrie dedicates to making the trauma bears. She does so in a quiet modest way, for the love of children and to support the QAS paramedics to do their job."

A facebook post with photos of the presentation on the QAS page has received around 4000 'likes' and hundreds of comments praising Corrie's contribution and people sharing their stories of her bears.

When asked why she continues to make the teddies, Corrie told her daughter-in-law Lorelle it's because of the pleasure and satisfaction that comes with it and because she likes to keep busy. She also loves to hear stories back from the children who receive them and love them.

LEND A HELPING HAND



Corrie Vos with Assistant Commissioner Gavin Trembath and Jen Kinsela (Nerang QAS).



Corrie with her OAS teddy bear.

Assistant Commissioner Trembath says Corrie's teddies are making a difference and bring smiles to many faces. "They have helped hundreds of young Queenslanders at a difficult time in their young life."

Corrie has made a special friend in local policewoman Trudy who collects the finished teddies. Trudy takes them and distributes them to hospitals in the area. The pair hit it off, so much so that Trudy attended Corrie's 90th birthday celebrations on her day off.

When Corrie began making the teddies, for the first few years she received donations from Spotlight. Now she supplies all the material herself and asks for wool and materials from her family instead of birthday and Christmas gifts.

Knitting has been a regular activity in Corrie's life since she was eight years old and had to set aside time everyday after school for the craft to keep her busy. As well as trauma teddies, Corrie is also working on smaller bears for 'Shoobox Christmas' which is an appeal that send gifts overseas for children who may not receive a Christmas present otherwise.

Furthermore, Corrie's giving and caring nature has not been limited to

knitting or the already mentioned causes. She has also volunteered at St Vincent's Canteen, Blue Care and spent time at a local school as a teacher's helper.

Her work has been recognised by others. In 2009 Corrie was nominated

for the Premiers Award for Queensland Seniors and a year later received a nomination for the 'Fair Go' award for the 2010 Pride of Australia Award.

We certainly wish Corrie all the best and hope youngsters will continue to benefit from her made-with-love teddies.



Corrie surrounded by her trauma teddies.