

Make/Do at the Smithville Community Gardens

Bernadette Noll

Reduce Reuse Remake

Sunday: Moms' Crafternoon (no children)

14 people attended the moms crafternoon including some older moms who happily answered parenting questions from the younger moms. Connections were strengthened and the moms were happy to be able to share parenting ideas, struggles, hacks and inspirations. It was decided that this should be at least a monthly event, preferably bi-monthly. Holding the event at 4:00 on a Sunday afternoon allowed the parents to more freely leave the house and leave the kids home with a partner or family member.

We made mobiles using paper cranes and beads, did collage blocks, made windchimes and more, all while engaging in meaningful and important conversation. All attendees were fortified by the experience, including myself.

Tuesday: Sewing machine round-up

Meagan from Fix Your Stitch 104, a Smithville company, was on-site to help people with maintenance and basic usage of their sewing machines. 13 people attended and 7 brought in old machines that had been gathering dust somewhere in their house for MANY YEARS! People were excited to bring their machines into the light and learn basic ways to take care of their machines and how to properly use and maintain them. One of the attendees found out her machine was a very rare WWII era Singer machine worth a few thousand dollars! Several said they were afraid to move forward without guidance and now they would start using their machines on a regular basis.

Wednesday: Smithville Yarn Bombers

A few representatives from the Smithville Yarn Bombers were in the house to teach crochet and knitting to attendees. There were 16 attendees total, half of whom learned crochet for the first time. The round table format for learning and teaching was a lovely way to learn a new skill and meet new people. A large community weaving was begun and will be kept in the garden house for attendees to work on over the next several visits.

Thursday: T-shirt remake

This night was all about using the ubiquitous t-shirt. We made reusable totes, t-shirt string for weaving and gardening, screen printed and stitched up several different designs. It was a small crowd of 9 attendees but all stayed all evening and many skills were learned and ideas exchanged. One woman came specifically to learn how to make the t-shirt string for craft projects and ended up guiding another attendee with sewing instruction all evening.

Friday: Open Studio and Bag making

A great day with 50+ attendees total all utilizing the garden house both inside and out. We painted bags, stitched bags, tied bags, reused old totes, painted canvas to make bags, explored using grommets, made handles out of an assortment of materials on hand, including the t-shirt yarn which was twisted into rope! The ages ranged from 2 months to 75 and all were excited to be in the space, learning to sew, exploring new ideas for using materials, and going home with prized possessions made by them!

A future spin-off of this project will be screen-printing by the Smithville High School robotics club with a screen made especially by them so they can make their own merch and sell it at the Smithville Farmer's market.

Total attendees: 102

Age range: 2 months to 84

Skills learned: countless

Connections made: countless