

COURTNEY HERGESHEIMER | DISPATCH

Kenyon students, from left, Audrey Bebensee, Peter Moore and Elizabeth Thorne work on scarves, which will be donated to the needy of Knox County.

Knit one, donate, too

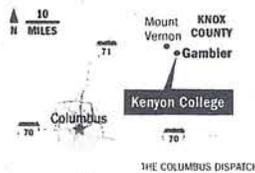
Kenyon students find relaxation, charity in needle and yarn

By Dylan Scott
FOR THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

GAMBIER, Ohio — It's not unusual for Kenyon College students to plunk down into the comfy leather chairs at the school's bookstore for some last-minute studying during exam week.

These days, however, they're just as likely to be working intently with needle and yarn as textbook or laptop.

Audrey Bebensee, student manager of the Kenyon Craft Center, said



THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

she hoped her Knitting-for-the-needy project would inspire students to pick up the craft while doing some good in the area. It seems to have had the desired effect. More

than 20 scarves will be donated to Mount Vernon's new Winter Sanctuary Homeless Shelter and the New Directions Domestic Abuse Shelter of Knox County.

The knitting will continue through at least Valentine's Day.

"I wanted to get different sorts of people doing it," said Bebensee, a native of Georgetown, Ky. Her friend Peter Moore of Chicago pauses long enough from his work to confess that he had never knitted before but plans to continue.

That's exactly what Bebensee was

See **SCARVES** Page B2

SCARVES

FROM PAGE B1

hoping.

"They're enjoying an art that they probably wouldn't otherwise," she said.

The needles got to clacking right after Thanksgiving break. Students come in, work as long as they like and leave the unfinished scarf for the next person.

The collaboration is noticeable in the finished product.

Bebensee holds up a recently completed red and beige creation and points out all the different stitching patterns. Each knitter leaves his or her own mark on the scarf, but the differences come together to make a cohesive whole.

"It's a nice way to see everybody's different personality," she said.

Bebensee said she has no idea how many people on the 1,600-student campus are participating in the project. But with 20 scarves completed and each taking 10 to 20 hours to finish, it's safe to say the project

is a hit.

Because of the response, Bebensee said she plans to pull out the needles and yarn again next year.

The Kenyon Craft Center, which offers extracurricular workshops, had to add a knitting class to keep up with demand. Bebensee, along with instructors from the craft center, also gives lessons to the less-experienced.

"I've met people doing this that I didn't even know went to this school," Bebensee said.

But the more skilled are turning out, as well. Elizabeth Thorne of Washington, D.C., said she used to knit for the homeless with her mom and shares Bebensee's goals.

A little break from studying doesn't hurt either.

"It's very de-stressing, especially during exams," Thorne said.

And for the homeless of Knox County at Winter Sanctuary, opened Dec. 8 by a coalition of community churches, and the women at New Directions, it'll be a nice way to keep warm this winter.

psouhrada@dispatch.com