

Sew Much Comfort!

Sew Much Comfort is a nationally recognized, non-profit organization providing adaptive clothing free of charge to all service men and women wounded in the Iraqi conflict. Adaptive apparel is provided to every military hospital in the United States, Landstuhl (Germany) and at Combat Surgical Hospitals overseas. Sew Much Comfort creates and/or adapts clothing to meet the unique needs of the wounded. For many service members the only clothing available is a hospital gown. These gowns are drafty, do not cover properly and are generally impractical for optimum recovery. By creating custom adaptive clothing, the hope is to make the recovery of wounded service members more comfortable both physically and emotionally.

The adapted clothing gives medical personnel and service members the ability to have ready-access to the injuries of service members by utilizing special adaptive openings. Specially-designed clothing permits easy access during exams and physical therapy, as well as helps to facilitate the difficult process of injured service members dressing themselves in their everyday lives. The adapted clothing allows injured service members to have their clothing appear the same as normal civilian attire; an attribute which helps facilitate a more natural and comfortable recovery.

Sew Much Comfort is currently making clothing to fit over fixators (36" metal halos that go around an injured limb) as well as other devices for either arm or leg injuries.

They also create and adapt full-length access pants, basketball-style athletic shorts, boxer shorts, and adaptive shirts to cover upper body injuries. These items are available for both men and women. The



The James Musick Sew-Hers

copyrighted designs and instructions of Sew Much Comfort were created by working in conjunction with both medical staffs and wounded service members.

The driving force behind the success of the Sew Much Comfort organization is the volunteers that span the United States, Canada and Europe. Regional Representatives for Sew Much Comfort keep in contact with the thousands of volunteer seamstresses in their areas. The Regional Representatives have helped develop the patterns and directions that reflect the wishes of the wounded and the medical staffs. Sew Much Comfort also has "ambassadors" who deliver the adapted clothing to hospitals and see if they are meeting the needs of the wounded service members. They also have a wonderful staff and volunteers at their distribution facility in Ohio. According to Michele Cuppy, co-founder of Sew Much Comfort; "...truly we are blessed with so many that have made us a fabulous organization to be [a] part of. But the biggest thanks we have and why we are all here is to thank the service members for

their service to our country and for our freedom. They are our heroes. It is because of them [that] we will be here for them as long as they need us." Since 2004, Sew Much Comfort has provided more than 30,000 items of adaptive clothing!



As Michele Cuppy also says; "We went from conception to.... WOW.... we are a business". The organization got its start by sewing a pair of fixator pants for a wounded servicewoman. Fixator pants are pants in which one leg is enlarged and seams are replaced with velcro closures. The pants can be completely opened to allow for ease of medical exams and/or dressing. The servicewoman for whom the first pair of pants was made had nothing to wear but a hospital gown since the time her injury occurred...nearly nine months earlier. Once the first pair of pants were made, and they saw the response of the female servicemember, the founders of Sew Much Comfort then recruited ten additional women to sew adaptive clothing for wounded soldiers at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. Several years of trial and error went into the design of the adaptive apparel.

In 2005, Sew Much Comfort created their website; www.sewmuchcomfort.org to help spread their message and their mission. Sew Much Comfort has also been featured in "Sew News" Magazine, as well as several military and civilian newspapers and Guard and Reserve magazines. The features generated numerous inquiries from volunteer seamstresses looking to help.



Michele Cuppy says; "We wouldn't have been able to come as far as we have, were it not for the Internet. The Internet has allowed us to network with volunteers throughout the country in a way we would not have been able to otherwise."

In 2006, representatives from Sew Much Comfort were invited to the White House and were thanked by President Bush for their work for the wounded troops.

According to Michele Cuppy, the work that Sew Much Comfort does is truly a "labor of love and gratitude". For more information on the Sew Much Comfort program, or to volunteer/donate to the organization, please visit www.sewmuchcomfort.org .