

Hospice Doll Volunteer Social

ORCA holds a Thank You social for Volunteers to celebrate the making of the 1,000th Doll

Over the last 5 years, dozens of Ocean Ridge women have spent hundreds of hours crafting hundreds of dolls and angels, as well as heating pads, for hospice patients and their families at [SECU Hospice House of Brunswick](#). In fact, they've spent over 1,300 hours making these products. The Hospice doll makers recently completed their 1,000th project and Ocean Ridge Charities Association Inc. (ORCA) held a Social at the Plantation Club on August 2nd to thank all the wonderful volunteers who have given their time so that others may be comforted. While the event was planned to celebrate the 1,000th project, by the time the event occurred, the group had made 107 more for a total of 1,107. The Social's centerpieces (below) displayed the group's handiwork.



The dolls project grew out of a similar effort of making dolls for children at a Texas hospital. When that was about to fold in 2011, former ORCA Board member, Merriane Orndoff, stepped in and started the program in the Ocean Ridge community. In 2012, Peggy Burris took over when Merriane moved out of state. Since that time, the ORCA dolls and angels project has delivered 390 dolls, 667 angels, and 50 rice filled heating pads to [SECU Hospice House of Brunswick](#). On August 18, Pam Bank (L) and Peggy Burris (C) presented the 1,107th doll and angel to Haylie Long, the Lower Cape Fear Hospice Community Outreach Coordinator.



There have been 81 women who have helped make these items since the program began. Every one of the volunteers are valuable to making these products, although special recognition goes to the following residents who have been critically involved from the very beginning: Karen Arnold, Pam Bank and Sue Carano, who cut and sewed almost all of the doll shirts and pants, and did so almost every month of every year. Diane Hotop drew the vast majority of the doll faces, along with hair, hats and poseys. Every single one was different and always cute and matched the doll outfit and gender. Motoko Hatfield cut and sewed most of the doll forms while Mary Pat Lynch and Mary Ann Mahoney have helped in practically every aspect of the doll and angel production while also attending the most number of meetings and helping from home. To see the complete list of volunteers, go to www.orcharities.org, see 'How You Can Help' and click on 'Hospice Dolls'.



The Hospice Doll Thank you Social began by Mike Gildea, President of ORCA, making a few remarks and extending a sincere Thank You to the volunteers for their efforts. Peggy Burris, then, spoke and provided some eye opening statistics of just how many steps it takes to make the dolls, angels and heating pads and how many hours these wonderful volunteers put in to make it all happen over the years.

Lindsey Champion, the Development Manager for the Lower Cape Fear Hospice Foundation, then shared with the group some stories about how these dolls have brought joy and comfort to not only the hospice patient but to their families and friends as well. She also mentioned that one of the missionaries, visiting patients from their congregation, noticed the dolls at the Brunswick facility and asked if they could have some made for them to take to a Haitian Christian school for the youngest children entering kindergarten. The Hospice Doll volunteers got to work making 6 dolls especially for these students and dressed them in bright colored clothing to help them associate their culture with their new dolls. These dolls were the children's very first dolls.



Many volunteers attended the Social, where the treats included a selection of cheese, veggies, fruit, wine and sangria and, of course, cake. It was a wonderful event and chance for ORCA and the [SECU Hospice House of Brunswick](#) to thank all of the wonderful and generous volunteers who have made these dolls, angels and heating pads in support of patients and their families facing the challenges of advanced illness.



If you want to be a Hospice Doll Volunteer, please go on to the ORCA [website \(www.orcharities.org\)](http://www.orcharities.org) to find out more about the program, or contact Peggy Burris at peggyb@atmc.net.