



## Starting a Successful Pediatric Trauma Doll Program

Before undertaking the Trauma Doll Service Project there are a number of things you must consider:

- a. Club Interest: This is obvious but if your club is not committed to the program then it won't succeed.
- b. Do you have club members that can and are willing to sew? Or do you have a local sewing group that would be willing to do the sewing for you?
- c. Do you have a "home" for the dolls? The entire purpose of making the dolls is so they will have a positive impact on the lives of children. If they don't have somewhere to go your efforts will go unused.
- d. What is your long-term plan for the project? Are you looking to do this as a one-time project or will you commit to replenishing the dolls as they are used?

Our club was looking for a Signature Service Project and we had heard of the Trauma Dolls. We thought it would be something that would engage our members, be a way to connect with our SLP & make a lasting connection in our community. Here is a basic outline of what we did for our project (and would have done differently).

1. We first came up with a budget (dolls cost about \$1.15 each to make) and then enlisted the help of folks we knew could sew. The plan was presented to the Board for approval, along with a plan for contacting our local hospital for the placement of the dolls. This was in October 2016.
2. Once the material was received 2 members traced & cut all the dolls using a template and then handed out the dolls to be sewn by the various individuals who volunteered to sew.
  - a. The dolls were sewn by a church ladies group, club members, friends and even an inmate from a local jail where they have a sewing program.
3. Sewn dolls were returned, trimmed, iron-on added and prepared for the "Stuffing Party".
4. During this time conversations were had with South Sacramento Kaiser. It was a long process to find the "right" person to talk to get the approval and buy-in and then for them to decide if they wanted the dolls. They did and then they needed to establish a protocol for the use of the dolls. We had representatives from Kaiser attend our launch meeting where we had a speaker who once received a

Trauma Doll as a young child share her story. They also shared with the club their excitement about our partnership and how the dolls would be used in the ER.

5. The “stuffing party” was held as a big day of service; we had club members, 3 Key Clubs, a Builder’s Club, an Aktion Club, another local Kiwanis Club and some of the ladies from the sewing group. In total we had about 30 people showed up to stuff. This was in February 2017.
  - a. We also made sandwiches for the homeless that day.
6. We stuffed about 400 dolls. Initially we tried using chopsticks but found that they were too cumbersome. Most people just used their fingers. It was also very important that the dolls were not over-stuffed and that the stuffing wasn’t rolled into balls as it was put into the doll. It needed to be nice and loose for the best appearance.
7. A few stuffers also knew how to sew so they helped stitch the dolls closed. One member taught a few Key Club members how to sew and then those same members would then end up teaching others how to sew!
  - a. One of the Key Clubs even went on to do their own project and eventually did a joint project with our Builder’s Club.
8. The dolls were delivered to South Sacramento Kaiser ER Dept. They only took a portion of the dolls initially due to space limitations. As they need more dolls they tell us, and we provide more.

#### Notes:

- It is helpful to have someone walk around during the stuff process making sure that all the dolls are uniform in the amount of stuffing they are receiving especially if you have youth working on the project.
- Laguna-Elk Grove has reusable templates available for donation for \$5 each (including shipping). Contact Kirsten at [kireton@surewest.net](mailto:kireton@surewest.net) to order.
- Use a good quality muslin or cotton fabric for the dolls. Cheap cotton fabric will not hold shape as well.
- You can use colorful fabrics if you wish but think of your audience. We were going into a hospital and our goal was to provide dolls that could be used by staff to show what treatments were going to be done (maybe drawn on). Therefore, plain fabric seemed more appropriate.
- Look for sales at the fabric store to best leverage your dollars.