Knitting: From Sheep to Scarf

FYI for Kids!

"I'm cold, Mom!" "Put on your hat and scarf." Suddenly, you're warm as toast, thanks to your mom's knitting.

Knitters make things people use every day. They also make works of art. Different yarns create different looks and textures. Texture is the way an object feels. Some yarns are made from the wool of sheep, goats, or llamas. Their wool is cut in spring, when the animals no longer need heavy coats. Some yarns are even made from hair shed by dogs and cats.

Animal hair is collected, then spun into long strands. These strands are called yarn. People use knitting needles to loop and connect the yarn to create fabric.

People knit for many reasons. Some create a sweater or mittens to keep someone warm. Some create a new fashion. Some also create useful objects, such as pot holders.

Some people donate their knitted items to charities, or groups that help others. Knitters often make hats and sweaters for charities. One organization, called Emily's Hats for Hope, accepts knitted hats and other warm clothing made by people all over the country. These items are then distributed to people who need them.

Kids knit for charity, too. Fourth-grade children in a school in Teaneck, New Jersey, donated hats they made to babies born in local hospitals. "It's amazing to start with 'strings and sticks' and end up with something," said their teacher, Mrs. Gallagher.

Another group, the Mother Bear Project, makes knitted bears and sends them to children around the world.

If you want to learn to knit, ask a teacher or family member to help you find a knitting class or teacher. There are lots of knitting videos, too, but have an adult help you find the right one.

Knitting is a great way to make gifts and to help others. It can also be a great way to experiment with colors and designs. In addition, knitting is fun.