

Meet Jane Bower, Cancer De Mama Clinic Volunteer



When Jane Bower first arrived in Canada from Scotland 45 years ago, little did she imagine that the knitting skills her mother first taught her as a child would enable her to knit Tit Bits and help women living four thousand miles away in Mexico.

Tit Bits are hand-knit or crocheted breast form prostheses. They are an alternative to temporary silicone breast forms, and are both comfortable to wear in warmer climates, and affordable in places where access to healthcare and medical supplies may be limited. Jane first became involved in knitting Tit Bits ten years ago when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She and her friend, an ostomate, happened to be visiting their local Nightingale Medical store and learned about their role in collecting new or gently-used mastectomy products on behalf of Cancer de Mama Clinic, a group of volunteer Canadians and Americans that coordinates a 3-day clinic in La Penita,

Mexico to distribute donations of Tit Bits, breast prosthetics, bras and additional resources to local women recovering from mastectomy procedures. As a breast cancer survivor herself, Jane was dismayed by the lack of resources available to breast cancer survivors in countries such as Mexico, and felt compelled to try to help. And so began her involvement in knitting Tit Bits.

Since starting almost two years ago, Jane has knit well over 200 Tit Bits, in a variety of neutral flesh tones, areola colors and cup sizes, using everything from baby yarn to worsted wool. On a recent plane ride, she was even spotted knitting away by curious flight attendants and passengers. "These Tit Bits are international travellers", she quips.

What motivates Jane to volunteer with such passion? "Because I'm a cancer survivor, I feel it's my duty to help others come to terms with their cancer. I had my mastectomy 10 years ago. Cancer is survivable. You need to let friends and other people in to help and support you, even if it's just accepting their phone call or a meal. Talking about it minimizes the burden on your shoulders and then you realize that you're not fighting cancer alone".

To learn more about Cancer de Mama Clinic, please visit www.cancerdemamaclinic.com. Donations of new or gently used mastectomy bras and/or breast forms can be brought to your local Nightingale Medical store for forwarding; visit www.nightingalemedical.ca for store locations. 



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