



Sherry Duquet (left) and business partner Sandy Boulton meld their passion for handicrafts with their desire to help families.

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Links of Love

This Mother's Day, Sherry Duquet is wrapping up hope for kids and moms living in shelters.

Present plan Three years ago, as Mother's Day approached, Sherry Duquet thought about the children living in a nearby First Step shelter and how they wouldn't have anything to give to their moms. "As a little girl I was so excited to surprise my mother with something," she says. "I didn't want other kids to miss out."

Women in need But she didn't have only the kids

in mind; she was thinking of their moms as well. As the co-owner of a new jewelry company, Solstice Designs, she and business partner Sandy Boulton were reveling in their accomplishment. "We felt empowered and wanted to share that with other women," says Sherry.

Mother's helper They decided to create and donate jewelry the kids

could give their moms. The gifts fostered a sense of hope among the women, who realized people outside the shelter cared about their well-being. "They said wearing the jewelry made them feel better," says Sherry.

Reaching out After receiving positive feedback, Sherry and Sandy knew they had to continue the program, Project Mother's Day,

"Kids get to experience the joy of giving, while their mothers receive love from their children—and the community."

year after year. To raise money for necklace materials, Sherry and Sandy host events at local restaurants and sell raffle tickets. Last year more than 125 attendees raised money for 80 necklaces—one for every woman living at the shelter and every woman who visited for counseling.

A crafty cause Each year Sherry designs a new piece of jewelry, which she and Sandy make by hand. Though the designs vary, Sherry makes sure they are inspiring. This year's necklace includes the word "courage" and a heart. "Hearts symbolize love for the women, from the community, from the kids and from within themselves," she says.

Cross-country Responding to requests from beyond their community, Sherry and



Sherry aims for a design that speaks softly but carries a big message.

Sandy added the necklace to their online store. For every Project Mother's Day piece sold, \$5 goes to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, which will also distribute 400 necklaces in 10 cities nationwide.

Healing gifts Sherry hopes the project continues to grow. "Shelters take care of immediate needs like food and clothing, but we nurture hearts and souls in other ways." ●

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