

Volunteers offered demonstrations on needlepoint and crocheting

By Samantha Carr / National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

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COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — It takes an average of 10 minutes to sew the 108 red stitches around a baseball. And the red waxed thread is 88 inches long. Visitors learned these and other baseball facts at the Stitch 'N Pitch program Sunday at the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Stitch 'N Pitch, a program of The National NeedleArts Association, has taken baseball by storm over the past few years.

"It was started in 2005 when the Seattle Mariners had a knitting event where they expected about a hundred people. 1,200 people showed up to participate and The National NeedleArts Association built a Web site and started the program," said Libby Gluck, publicist for TNNA.

Stitch 'N Pitch visited 26 Major League teams, 26 Minor League teams and even the Chiba Marines in Japan last summer alone. The next logical place for them to hold a program was at baseball heaven in Cooperstown.

"It's a huge honor for us to be here," said Gluck.

Nancy Nash, owner of Knitting It All Together, a shop in Oneonta, went to the TNNA national meeting a few years ago in San Diego, where she heard about the program and told them it had to come to Cooperstown.

Barbara Paley, a master knitter and the marketing specialist for Stitch 'N Pitch, contacted Nash about four months ago to be the local chair and recruit volunteers to help with the event. The volunteers taught visitors how to needlepoint a baseball bookmark and crochet wristbands in the Education Gallery of the Museum.

One of those volunteers, Bess Kirnie, helped Destiney Chamard learn to needlepoint for the first time. Nine-year-old Destiney came to Cooperstown with her mother, father and 4-year-old sister, Samantha, because her dad wanted to see the Hall of Fame.

"I am very impressed with the whole thing. I have been a Red Sox fan my whole life," Bob Chamard said.

Destiney is also a Red Sox fan and enjoyed making her baseball bookmark and learning a new skill. She thought it was difficult at first, but overall, it was "pretty cool!"



This glove and ball, crocheted by Lily Chin, appeared at the Stitch 'N Pitch program in the Education Gallery. (Samantha Carr)



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She looks forward to learning more about the needlearts from her mom, Patti.

Stitch 'N Pitch already has a long list of stadium visits scheduled for the 2009 baseball season which can be found at StitchNPitch.com. They do everything from having a reserved fan section to throwing out the ceremonial first pitch with a ball of yarn. After all, there are 369 yards of yarn wrapped inside a regulation baseball.

"Baseball games typically last two to three hours where people sit and are social and watch the game. The needlearts are very similar to that, and baseball has really reached out to us with open arms," Gluck said.

Samantha Carr is media relations coordinator for the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.



"Few were better or more deadly with two strikes than Appling. He just waited for the pitch he wanted and lashed into it."

— sportswriter Arthur Daley on Luke Appling

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