

# Project Boomerang



Every Wednesday afternoon in Lake Barcroft, Virginia, there's a party going on! As with any party, there's a great hostess (Vicki Haugen), longtime friends, fun, food, laughter, sharing and wonderful companionship. But, this party has another dimension. The group that gathers at this time and place are the Scrappy Ladies, members of Project Boomerang, with a mission to create cards for our soldiers here at home and deployed overseas.

The mission began simply in July 2006, with an idea inspired by Peace Lutheran Church's WRAP (Women's Renewal at Peace) to create blank greeting cards for delivery to deployed chaplains. The chaplains would then distribute them to the deployed troops overseas, who could add their own messages and send these cards to their loved ones.

In the fall of 2006 240 cards were sent to Iraq through Chaplain Christine Blice-Baum who was serving at Peace Lutheran. As with most good ideas, the original premise evolved and expanded.



The ladies of WRAP - Women's Renewal at Peace (pictured at the left)

and a non-denominational group of neighborhood women (shown below) began producing the greeting cards.

In 2007 the group began sending cards with amputee Tom Porter to those healing, and their families, at Walter Reed Medical Center. The project then christened itself Project Boomerang. The boomerang, with its ability to be sent out and return, perfectly conveys the concept of the group's mission. The blank cards, prepared and sent out to our soldiers, return as completed cards to the soldiers' family and friends. Last year 2,161 cards were delivered to Walter Reed.



Greeting cards are made in advance for every season and major holiday. Birthday, thank you, and thinking of you cards are made throughout the year. The truly unique cards are designed using stamps and recycled materials. New and used cards, magazines, stickers, and ribbons are transformed into works of love. The finished cards are completed using the Handmade with Love and the [www.sharingpeace.org](http://www.sharingpeace.org) stamps. The groups' penchant for using recycled materials resulted in the group being designated the "Scrappy Ladies."

Production has increased each year since Project Boomerang's founding. Friends and visiting relatives are invited to the parties, to join in the mission and the fun. A few of the 9 members work at home or while vacationing, helping to increase productivity.

In 2008 deliveries to Karen Shilling for Soldiers' Angels were added as well as seasonal care cards for National Lutheran Home and Sunshine Cards for Peace. Strong positive feedback from recipients, Tom Porter and Karen Shilling spurred the ladies' efforts. In 2009 they started mailing Christmas card fronts to St. Jude's Children's Camp in Colorado for them to create for their fundraising efforts for abused children. In 2010 John' Hopkins Hackerman-Patz Pavilion, for families with cancer, was added to their list of recipients.

Sometimes, Project Boomerang gets an extra boost from special events. The Scrappy Ladies have helped lead card making workshops during Peace Lutheran Sunday School intergenerational events or Girl Scout troop meetings. The enthusiasm for the project bridges the generations. Generous individuals and four Thrivent Financial for Lutherans grants and have made this work possible.

"Dear Project Boomerang,

Thank you so much for all of the handmade cards. They are so cool and unique. Several of my soldiers have asked about them, and are so grateful to have a card to write home with. They truly are amazing.

God Bless,

Tiann Smith  
SPC, USA  
Chaplain Assistant  
93D Military Police Battalion  
HHD, 93D MP BN  
APO, AE 09344"



By May 2010 the Scrappy Ladies had already created over 2400 cards this year for delivery divided between their deserving groups. In four years over 11,500 cards will have been distributed to our troops at home, needy recipients at home and abroad. How awesome is that!

Project Boomerang is special. It brings together friends, benefits others, uses a green approach by recycling, and supports our wounded and deployed troops. Quite frankly, we are proud to be a part of it!

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