

Allen kids are a close-knit group

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Knitting needles and yarn aren't your normal school supplies.

But for about 20 Allen Elementary School students, they are as important as paper and pencil.

The Strongsville students have knitted and crocheted more than 50 hats for children who are undergoing chemotherapy.

Teacher Lynne Krug began The Knitting Club in April as a student service project. Being a knitter herself, the idea just seemed to fit. The Strongsville City Club provided her with a grant to buy the staples needed to start the club.

"The students give up two recess periods a week where we knit," said the sixth-grade teacher. "They have done a remarkable job. It's been fun seeing the progress."

Most of the student didn't know the difference between a knit and purl stitch prior to joining the club.

Jon Sedlak and Dana Specht are two sixth graders who sat together last week trying to complete their hats prior to summer break. Dana's mother died from cancer in late December. Jon said his grandmother wore wigs to cover the effects of chemotherapy.

Dana said the knitting helped her deal "a bit" with her loss.

"I'm doing this in her honor," she said. "It has helped me."

Kathryn Fleischer, 10, takes a chemotherapy medication to treat her arthritis. She said she has found a few clumps of hair after shampooing.

"So I know what the kids are going through who will receive these hats," said the fifth grader.

Kailyn Sapienza, 10, said she gets "bored" during recess so decided to join the club.

"It took me three weeks to make my first hat. I found the hardest thing to learn was putting the needle through the hole, which is casting on. We learned two ways and we have to do the harder one, which is OK," she said.

Elisabeth Bruckner, 12, has by far knitted the most hats in the group -- 16. She's been knitting for about one year....

