



Kaplan, left, and Simonic together in Maine

Jennifer: I thought it made so much sense. We started the Loose Ends Project in August of 2022 with Patti's blankets, and now we have nearly 2,000 projects being finished and 18,000 volunteers from every state and in 61 different countries signed up to take one on. There's no charge to families other than the cost of whatever materials may be needed to finish the project and shipping both ways, if necessary. We even try to find a finisher who's local so there are no shipping costs.

Masey: We started by posting flyers in yarn shops, nursing homes and libraries.

Jennifer: I put one up at a yarn shop in Mount Auburn, Washington, and the next day, a young widower walked in, holding a scarf that his late wife had been knitting for him. The owner of the shop gave him our contact information, and he reached out immediately.

Masey: Our finisher took on the project, learned a new stitch to do it and marked the last stitch of the original crafter by making a duplicate stitch. That way, he'll always know which stitches his wife made with her own hands.

Jennifer: It's a privilege and a gift to be able to facilitate this. Some of these people have been carrying these projects around for weeks. Some have been carrying them around for 40 years. And the Loose Ends Project is not only for bereaved families either. Our volunteers also work on projects for crafters who are unable to complete handwork due to illness or disability.

Masey: There's something really profound for the finisher in being entrusted with this precious and meaningful work. So for me, helping complete someone's gesture of love is a way to spread that love even farther. —As told to Robin Westen

Masey Kaplan, 54, lives in Falmouth, Maine. Jennifer Simonic, 53, lives in Seattle. To learn more about their nonprofit, visit looseendsproject.org.

The Finishing Touch

Friends Masey Kaplan and Jennifer Simonic help bereaved families of crafters find closure

MASEY KAPLAN: It's a gesture of love to hand-make something for somebody else. You're thinking about the person when you choose the materials and while you're working on it. So if the crafter passes away before the project is finished, that gesture is incomplete. And every crafter who passes away has an unfinished project.

Jennifer Simonic: We're both knitters, and we have both completed projects for grieving friends. Once people know that you knit, they'll bring their loved one's project bag over. Everyone's got a

bag; some have project rooms.

Masey: Last year, we were both visiting our friend Patti, whose mom had recently died. Among her mother's things were two unfinished blankets for Patti's two brothers. Expressions of a mother's love.

Jennifer: Patti asked if we could finish the blankets. But they were crocheted, not knit, so we weren't the best people to work on them.

Masey: That's when I mentioned an idea that had been in the back of my mind for two or three years already. I said to Jen, "What if we created a website that matches unfinished craft projects with volunteer finishers?"