

5TH GRADE PLASTIC BAG DRIVE HELPS THE HOMELESS

By Max Campana
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Did you know that millions of plastic bags pollute the Earth every day? Well Oberlin Methodist Church has worked hard to solve that problem. You may be wondering what they are doing to solve that problem. So let's answer that question by diving right in.

The Oberlin Methodist Church has made carpets out of plastic bags called "Compassion Carpets." Compassion Carpets are given to homeless people to make their bedding waterproof and insulated from the cold ground; and they are durable.

Jean, a participant in the project, was asked how long the carpets last.

"Until they're lost," she said.

"Plastic lasts almost forever.

That's why it's not so good for the environment."

Oberlin Methodist Church started this project on April 22, 2021, on the day before Earth Day. Other churches across the country have been doing this as well. It started in Oberlin when they had heard about the carpets from LaGrange Methodist Church.

The carpets are mainly distributed by the Salvation Army who have direct connection with the Lorain County homeless population, unlike the Oberlin Methodist Church.

To make Compassion Carpets, there is a very precise and long process. First, you need to collect the plastic bags. Then, you need to flatten the bags. Next, you cut the bags into small strips. Next, you hook the bags together. Then you make that into "plarn." "Plarn" is a combination of the words plastic and yarn. Finally, a person will either weave, crochet, or knit a beautiful Compassion Carpet.

Crocheting is the hardest method out of the three options on the last step. It takes around 750 plastic bags to make one carpet.

Oberlin Elementary School has contributed to this project by collecting plastic bags and flattening them. It is immensely appreciated that the school has flattened the bags because this is not incredibly common when it comes to bag donations.

Thanks to some help from OES donations, the Oberlin Methodist Church has made about 90 completed carpets and most of those carpets have been delivered.

If you would like to contribute to this project you can donate bags (AFTER FLATTENING THEM!) to Oberlin Methodist Church, located at 45 South Professor Street, in Oberlin.

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OES Student Max Campana (center) with Compassion Carpet volunteers.



OES Student Max Campana (right) interviews a Compassion Carpet volunteer.



OES students collected plastic bags that will eventually be transformed into Compassion Carpets.