

MISSION STORIES

“You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.”

Matthew 5:14 (The Message)



SHARING THE LIGHT: ONE STITCH AT A TIME

75

YEARS

Rakmi Shaiza, executive director and founder of Stitching Change, a non-profit in Kansas City, Kan., which serves refugee women, has been sharing the light in her community. She knows that success in her endeavor has one foundation: community. Building and sustaining community is essential for bringing about positive change in people’s lives.

Shaiza founded Stitching Change in 2014 to provide training in sewing and business skills, with the goal of participants learning how to set up a small business. In 2015 and 2016, the non-profit received a start-up grant from Prairie Baptist Church which enabled them to hold sewing classes at the First Baptist Church of Kansas City for the next five years. Stitching Change moved to their new, larger location in 2022.

Volunteers teach students to sew reusable tote bags, pouches, gift bags, phone cases, and woolen hats made from pre-owned sweaters. These items bring in much-needed supplemental income



Practicing new skills brings joy.

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Beautiful relationships and tapestries are being made at Stitching Change.

to the women, all of whom are low-income. As they take the classes together, they enjoy fellowship across ethnic, language, cultural, and religious lines.

In addition, Stitching Change is committed to creation care through reuse of fabrics in their projects. They help their community to repurpose fabric, and teach how to repair items of clothing, all of which would have ended up in the landfill. Upcycled tote bags are in demand; for example, the Presbyterian Women's 2024 Churchwide Gathering contracted Stitching Change to manufacture 800 conference bags for them.

A One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) development grant awarded by American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) to Stitching Change has enabled the non-profit to expand their classes and impact even more lives. "The grant made me think that God is opening the door for us by ABHMS believing in us," said Shaiza. "Our empowerment is not short term, nor is it only about making money. The students' lives will not be the same, because they will become leaders."

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you help organizations like Stitching Change share the light by equipping refugees and new immigrants with the skills and tools necessary to become financially independent and to develop the confidence to transform their lives. Give generously today!

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