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### Kim Downs, Gardner-Webb First Lady, Sews Pillowcases for Children in the Hospital

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CAMPUS NEWS

# Kim Downs, Gardner-Webb First Lady, Sews Pillowcases for Children in the Hospital

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON MARCH 12, 2021



## Handmade, Cheerful Designs Donated to Spartanburg (S.C.) Regional Healthcare System

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—For a child, going to the hospital can be an unpleasant, frightening experience. Volunteers have discovered a way to help ease the fear and tension by donating hand-sewn, colorful character pillowcases that children can call their own. Joining the ranks of those volunteers is Gardner-Webb University First Lady Kim Downs, wife of president Dr. William M. Downs.

On March 11, Kim donated 100 pillowcases to Spartanburg (S.C.) Regional Healthcare System, which were accepted by Georgie McAbee, assistant nurse manager for the Neo-Natal ICU, Pediatrics, and Peds ICU. Also on hand for the presentation were College of Health Sciences Associate Provost Dr. Nicole Waters, Hunt School of Nursing Director Dr. Tracy Arnold and Undergraduate Clinical Coordinator Dr. Sarah Tate.

Before McAbee took the pillowcases, Waters said a prayer of blessing over them, which she adapted for the occasion from a prayer by Ralph Waldo Emerson.



*Little ones, this is our prayer for you.*

*We pray these pillowcases bring smiles when sadness intrudes, comfort on difficult days, rainbows to follow the clouds, and hugs when your spirits are low. We pray for the faith in healing so that you can believe and accept the truth of the Great Physician. We pray for blessings upon the hands that created this work, the courageous hands that will surround this work daily to provide care, and the tiny hands of the little ones as they seek comfort in this beautiful work. We give you thanks in all circumstances!*

*May God be the Glory for this Joy! Amen.*

Kim first heard about the need for children's pillowcases from Maynard's Children's Hospital when she and Dr. Downs lived in Greenville, N.C. "It was an ideal ministry for me, because as a pharmacist, I had an odd work schedule that often prevented me from getting involved with weekly, set time ministries," Kim related. "After we moved here, I met Gardner-Webb alumna Barbara Greene, and that's when the idea of a Gardner Webb pillowcase ministry really took off."

Greene and others from Boiling Springs Baptist Church have been sewing pillowcases for various children's nonprofit organizations for several years. During halftime at a GWU men's basketball game last season, Downs and Greene shared pictures of the pillowcases they have made. "Barbara even gave me a tutorial of how to sew the pillowcases with French seams, so that there are no frayed edges on the inside," Kim elaborated. "In hindsight, the timing was fabulous, because soon COVID shut everything down, and all of a sudden, I had a lot of free time on my hands. So, I sewed."



When Leah Clevenger, director of Alumni Relations, and Nate Evans, vice president of Advancement, saw the cheerful pillowcases with koala bears, mermaids, dinosaurs, kittens, dogs, flowers, planets, airplanes, etc., Clevenger immediately had an idea. "She suggested donating them to the hospitals where our nursing students train," Kim explained. "I love that these pillowcases will bring some sunshine to hospitalized children. It's a blessing to me to sew them, and I hope they will be a blessing to the children as well."

Kim plans to keep sewing to have more pillowcases to donate. "I've since recruited several friends who love to sew, and they are making pillowcases as well," she shared. "My hope is that we can make 500 pillowcases per year for the hospitals, but I'd love to expand the ministry to some of our United Way partners, as well. I encourage others to get involved too—either by sewing or making donations to help cover the cost of fabric."

Monetary donations to the Bulldog Pillowcase Ministry, may be made to Clevenger at [lclevenger@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:lclevenger@gardner-webb.edu). Those who want to join the "Seam Team" and sew pillowcases, may contact Kim at [kdowns@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:kdowns@gardner-webb.edu).

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at [Gardner-Webb.edu](http://Gardner-Webb.edu).



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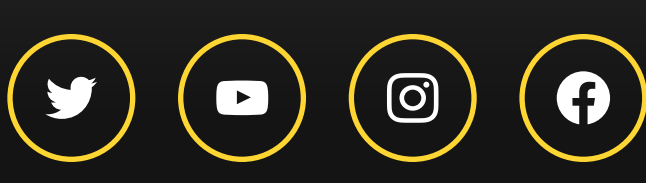
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