

TIPS FOR A VIRTUAL CHARITY GROUP

CAROLE LYLES SHAW



How We Got Started

In summer 2016, I put out a call on Instagram and to my personal mailing list asking for friends who might be interested in joining a virtual team to make a charity quilt. I thought it would be fun for quilters I had met online to connect across geography to be part of a global team.

The Virtual Charity Quilt Team #1 [#VCQT1 on Instagram] was formed with 20 members. We were from the US and Canada so the team truly was global!!

We held a video call using www.Zoom.us to plan and we decided to use the plus block, also known as wonky crosses. We also wanted to play with scale so the blocks would be in various sizes. (See email on pages 3-5 for the info that went out to all of the team members.)

The team would make blocks and send them to me to make a completed quilt. I created a basic layout and asked each member to make three or four blocks in one of the four block sizes. In addition, one team member made a set of smaller blocks which added another scale dimension—great creativity!!

The palette we would use had been decided in advance. I purchased the fabric and divided it up amongst the team and sent with detailed directions to each member.

When I received all the blocks, I created an asymmetrical layout, posting in progress photos on Instagram to get feedback from the team and others. As I worked on the layout, I realized that I had MANY more blocks than I had originally planned for. Rather than make a two sided quilt, I made two Sister Quilts! The two quilts were quilted by Karlee Sandell, www.SewInspired2day.com.

Donation Recipient

The two finished quilts were donated to Hopes & Dreams Quilt Challenge for ALS run by Quilters Dream Batting Company. They donate quilts to ALS patients and families. hopesanddreams.quiltersdreambatting.com/home.html

Our Lessons Learned

Planning/Logistics

- Creating a virtual team is exciting!
- Use technology to have video conference face-to-face meetings for planning. This also gives team members a chance to meet and get to know each other.
- Announce it on social media to get a wide range of participants.
- If possible, have a locally based sub team that will have time to put the top together and make the quilt back.
- Ask members to donate a small amount of money to purchase the fabric, pay for postage, and if necessary, pay to have the quilting done. You can gather the finds through a PayPal account even if members do not live in your home country.
- Allow at least 3 months for team members to make and mail their blocks.
- Decide if you will open it up internationally—this increases postage costs if fabric is sent out and when blocks are returned.

Design

- Choose a block that doesn't need precise piecing and measuring. I gave members the sizes, but then cut the blocks down to the sizes that I needed. Our design was very improvisational so that helped quite a lot.
- Decide on a palette if you want a quilt that looks unified—this is especially important if team members will choose and use their own fabric
- If you are making a modern quilt, I recommend using only one fabric for negative space—this will tie the quilt together if members choose their own fabrics for the blocks.

ON THE NEXT PAGES, I'VE INCLUDED A COPY OF THE EMAIL INSTRUCTIONS THAT WENT OUT TO THE TEAM.



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VIRTUAL CHARITY QUILT TEAM INSTRUCTIONS EMAIL SAMPLE

Hello Charity Quilt Team,

We had a wonderful planning meeting—it was fun to see and hear each other on our video call.

Here is our design plan. The design theme is **SCALE SCALE SCALE**... and we decided to make blocks in 4 different sizes. The block we selected is the Plus Block—also called Wonky Crosses.

A great tutorial for this block can be found here: sewmamasew.com/2010/04/wonky-cross-block-sew-along

QUESTIONS: If you have questions, email [insert name] and s/he will try to answer them as soon as possible.

PALETTE & FABRICS:

1. We will make our blocks from [INSERT FABRIC COLORS] from [suggested manufacturers IF RELEVANT].
2. Everyone will receive a 'starter bundle' of some of the fabrics from [insert name] in the mail by [insert date]. This starter bundle will have two or three of the 8 colors in the palette.
3. You can add additional colors from your own stash as long as you stick to the palette. Please—do not add any prints, tone-on-tone or near solids. You do not have to use the fabrics you receive in the mail—it is your choice if you want to substitute similar color solids from your stash. The fabrics you receive are yours to keep.
4. Please do NOT add any gray fabric from YOUR stash—only use the gray that has been sent to you. We want everyone to use the same gray fabric for consistency because the gray will be used in our negative space as well as in some of the blocks.

MAKING BLOCKS:

- Everyone has been assigned a size and number of blocks to make. (see chart following).
- Each block is made from 2 colors—one color for the background and one color for the Plus. Make your blocks without repeating a color—that way we'll have a lot of variety. For example, Block 1 can be dark blue and yellow; Block 2 can be Silver and Hyacinth; Block 3 can be Pink and Yarrow.
- **Go for very high contrast when you choose the two colors!** For example, do not make your block using the two blue shades because the contrast will be low. Instead, you might pair up the deepest blue with one of the pinks or yellows. An easy way to check for contrast is take a picture with your camera phone or digital camera and then change it to monochrome or black and white. (Most camera phones have a filter for this.)
- Press your seams open as you go.
- Please do not use perfumed starch or sizing. If you have pets, please try to shake off any pet hair before mailing your blocks to [insert name].

OVERSIZE YOUR BLOCKS: We want you to send us slightly oversized blocks-- see the cutting instructions below for more specific instructions! Finished Block sizes for the quilts will be 3.5 inches, 5.5 inches and 8.5 inches but the team that puts together the top will cut your blocks down to size.

DUE DATE: All blocks are due on or before [INSERT DATE]. Please mail your blocks to [INSERT NAME & ADDRESS]. It's OK to fold them into regular size envelopes to save postage. Be sure to put your name on a slip of paper in the envelope with your blocks so Carole can track who has completed their blocks.

LAYOUT: The layout team will create a unique layout using as many of the blocks for the top as possible. We'll also use any remaining blocks for a pieced back.

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BLOCK CUTTING INSTRUCTIONS

A great tutorial on the process can be found here: sewmamasew.com/2010/04/wonky-cross-block-sew-along/

All blocks are slightly oversized so that the layout team can square them up as needed. Also, you can cut your cross strips freehand—in other words, they can vary in width from one end to the other for an even more improvisational look.

| YOUR UNFINISHED BLOCK SIZE | CUTTING INSTRUCTIONS |
|--|---|
| You do NOT need to add a quarter inch seam allowance. | Choose pairs of fabrics that give you high contrast. All X strips should be at least 2 inches longer than the diagonal length of your block (see tutorial) |
| 4" x 4" | Start with a 5 inch square and 2 strips measuring between 1 and 1.5 inches wide |
| 6" x 6" | Start with a 7 inch square and 2 strips measuring between 1 and 2 inches wide |
| 9" x 9" | Start with a 10 inch square and 2 strips measuring between 1.5 and 2 inches wide |
| 14" x 14" | Start with a 16 inch square and 2 strips measuring between 2 and 2.5 inches wide |

Here are the assigned blocks [SAMPLE TABLE].

| Team Member | Number of Assigned Blocks | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| | 4" x 4" | 6" x 6" | 9" x 9" | 14" x 14" |
| ADCDE | 2 | 1 | -- | -- |
| XYZ | 2 | -- | -- | -- |
| RSTQ | -- | 2 | -- | 1 |
| JKLM | -- | -- | 2 | 1 |

If you have questions, contact me through my blog, I'd love to hear from you! CaroleLylesShaw.com

ABOUT CAROLE LYLES SHAW

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UNDERWRITTEN BY:

