Heather Mann 00:00

Welcome to the WeCrochet Podcast brought to you by crochet dot com. Today we're going back to school!

Heather Mann

Alright school is out summer is here. So I'm here with Katelyn. Hi, Katelyn.

Katelyn Moll 00:20

Hey, Heather

Heather Mann 00:20

What are your thoughts on high school?

Katelyn Moll 00:22

High school wasn't a bad time for me it but it was fast. I don't know that I want to go back to high school just because I feel like myself now. Not that I wasn't me in high school but I also wasn't as crafty in high school. And I definitely like being crafty. Now. I'm playing with yarn, so I'll stay here. But High School was fine. I mean... you get to learn a lot. You have less responsibilities. Okay, maybe I do want to go back to high school!

Heather Mann 00:46

I just want to have fun like I was able to have in high school. Sometimes I feel like that's missing from my adult life. Like being that close to having fun at any any moment about any random thing. Like anything is fun when you're in high school. At least that's how it was for me.

Katelyn Moll

Even if it wasn't fun, you somehow made it fun, right?

Heather Mann

Right. I have to find fun more now. It's like, let's plan some fun.

Katelyn Moll

Yeah, you gotta like schedule it into your every day

Heather Mann

Yeah. From 11 to 11:15. I'm having fun. Yes. I was talking to a Producer Sarah about high school stereotypes and who we were and I was trying to figure out who was I in high school. I was definitely the plucky, journalism, nerd girl. That would definitely be me. So I don't even know like the quirky, nerdy, girl but not too nerdy. Not cool enough to be the main character, but like definitely cool enough to be the sidekick.

Katelyn Moll 01:46

Yeah, I wasn't a main character type either. But I was definitely more of the sporty person. Like I did a sport every season. And I was also kind of- not nerdy or anything, but I was definitely a straight A student, studious. Yeah, it was just a requirement in our house

Heather Mann 02:01

I would imagine that. So yeah, I got good grades. But that was- I didn't get a straight A grade average. Because I did not work at all. I just got like mostly A's and didn't work for anything better than sometimes I got a B. Anyway, I don't know if that's good or not. But you know, at a certain point in life that kind of stops working and you still have to work for things. I'm good at it. Now. I can work for things really well now.

Heather Mann

Today's episode is completely inspired by being out of school in school summer. So we're celebrating summer and school being out. The first step Katelyn's going to talk to Selin Kocalar of Woolly Wishes, a nonprofit organization founded by a high schooler that is dedicated to using handicrafts to heal Syrian refugee communities affected by war, then crochet summer school is in session and we'll come back to talk all about the top ways to learn more crochet this summer. Stick around.

Katelyn Moll 03:10

Hi, everybody, it's Kailyn and we are back with Selin Kocalar from Woolly Wishes. And we are so excited to have her here today. She is a high school student. So we're bringing in our little school theme here. She is doing some amazing things.

Selin Kocalar 03:25

It's a pleasure to be here. Thanks for having me.

Katelyn Moll 03:27

So Selin is here from Wolly Wishes, which is a non profit organization founded by high school students. And they are dedicated to using handicrafts to heal Syrian refugee communities affected by the war. So this is a great group of women, girl-led power here. And I'm so excited to get to talk to you, Selin. And thank you for joining us. And let's start out by just talking about Woolly Wishes and giving us a little bit more detail about the organization

Selin Kocalar 03:58

Of course. So Woolly Wishes is a non-profit organization dedicated to using the handicrafts to help heal Syrian refugee communities. Specifically by providing knitted, crocheted, and hand sewn items such as sweaters, hats, and blankets to these displaced children and their families. I'm also really excited to announce that we were just recently approved for 501 c three nonprofit status. So we're officially tax exempt. And we're looking forward to the new opportunities that this has opened up.

Katelyn Moll 04:25

Congratulations. That's super exciting. I mean, that's a big deal that's really moving you forward, and you're going to be able to help so many more people, which is so exciting.

Selin Kocalar 04:36

So Woolly Wishes is different from other charity crafting organizations in that first we are completely student run. Our executive board is comprised of students from across the US and Canada and we're all in high school. So we're really challenging the norms and showing that age isn't at all a limiting factor in what can be achieved. We're also different from other charity organizations in that we have really flexible donating guidelines and we'll get more into that later. And lastly, we foster a really close relationship with the camps we visit. And we do visit them in person and meet the refugees, of course, when there isn't an ongoing global pandemic. And I also just wanted to touch a bit on why there are refugee camps in the first place and what's going on in the Middle East because we're not only interested in supporting the refugee situation, but also advocating for relief in the Middle East and trying to inform others of why this deserves their attention.

Selin Kocalar

So the Syrian refugee crisis is a result of the Syrian civil war, which broke out in early 2011 when the Syrian authoritarian regime suppressed civilian democratic demonstrations. And soon this escalated to a full fledged Civil War and the Civil War is still ongoing today. Since 2011, approximately 5.6 million Syrians have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety and shelter. Many have moved into neighboring countries like Turkey. Lebanon, and Jordan, while others have crossed the Mediterranean toward Greece and Sweden. Turkey, the country where my family is from, has received 3.5 million Syrians making it the largest recipient of refugees. And on top of the challenges that refugees face after losing their homes and being forced to move into completely foreign land. Students are also facing increasing xenophobia and resentment making the process of recovery even more challenging. Unfortunately, after evacuating a household seemingly superficial items, like stuffed animals are rarely considered to be priority items that must be brought along. So they're oftentimes left behind. But if you were anything like me, when you were a child, stuffed animals and blankets and toys meant so much and provided so much comfort. Syrian children are being forced to grow up too guickly, they're being forced to take care of their siblings because they've lost their parents and war, or they're being forced to work jobs at a young age of 10, or 11 years old. Because their families need money, and they're the only ones who are fit enough. So starting a new life is difficult. And sometimes something as simple as a stuffed teddy bear can bring a smile to a child's face for the first time in months. So by creating Woolly Wishes, I wanted to create this large impact that's difficult to accomplish alone. And I wanted to bring together the crafting community to tackle this major humanitarian crisis.

Katelyn Moll 07:14

That's so wonderful, and how you're focusing on the kids. And you know, you're talking about how they potentially lost family members, or they're the only able body able to work. So are you focusing more on

donations for kids? Like the bears, the hats, the garments? Or are you also covering everybody in the family in your donations,

Selin Kocalar 07:35

We target our donations toward children. But of course, we also try to meet the needs of everyone else in the family. Sometimes with some things like beanies (hats) and sweaters, those can be shared among family members. But our major target is for children helping them relive their childhoods.

Katelyn Moll 07:51

That's so wonderful, and very touching. So when you collect these items, are you looking for a special fiber content specifically? I know, you said, you know, you accept a lot of things. But there are organizations that really do have limitations on fiber content. And so I was just wondering if you could speak to that for us, for sure.

Selin Kocalar 08:09

So Woolly Wishes is actually really flexible with its donation requirements. We actually don't have strict restrictions on yarn content. Although we still do ask that high quality yarn that would otherwise be used on a friend or for a loved one or for oneself is selected. And in addition to yarn content, we do ask for darker colored yarn, simply because of the limited access to washing facilities and camps.

Katelyn Moll 08:34

So along with the darker colors and the fiber content, are there specific items that you look for? Are you looking more for hats? Or are you focusing more on the stuffed animals that are kind of giving the kids back their childhood?

Selin Kocalar 08:46

So we typically receive scarves, hats, shawls, a lot of clothing items, and we also do receive the toys. We love seeing the creative toys that people craft and the children in the refugee camps love them, too.

Katelyn Moll 08:57

So now that we know what you're looking for, how can people get involved with your mission and help you in collecting these great items for kids and their families?

Selin Kocalar 09:06

You can help us by joining our community and lending your support to providing aid by donating your time and your crafting skills to helping these children and their families recover. So we actually have a very straightforward donating process, all you need to do is, you need to craft whatever it is you're interested in creating. And then on our website, we have a shipment forum which you just fill out. And then you ship your items to our postal address, which is also listed on our website. And it's as simple as that. And we'll make sure that your items reach the Middle East and bring a smile to a child's face.

Katelyn Moll

That is so wonderful. And I hope everybody can join in on this mission to bring some happiness to some people with the love of yarn crafts.

Katelyn Moll 09:50

I do want to take a minute though to talk about your team and who makes up your team and who runs Woolly wishes behind the scenes. You are a group of young women. You are truly making a difference in the world. And I just wanted to know, what is something that you can share with other young adults or teens out there who feel like they're too young to be making a difference?

Selin Kocalar 10:12

For sure. So to answer your first question, we're, like I said earlier, we're made up of high schoolers from across the US, and also a few high schoolers from Canada. And we're all brought together by a shared passion for crafting and helping other people. So one piece of advice that I'd like to share to other teens or to other young adults who feel that they're too young to make a difference, is that your age is not a limiting factor. Because with dedication and drive, you can achieve whatever it is you set your mind to. Starting Woolly Wishes at the age of 16, I would have never expected it to grow to such a high. But I found that you don't need extensive resources or connections, you really just need a vision. I am a firm believer in my vision to alleviate the Serian refugee crisis. I just shared it with others, and together, we created a powerful force of crafters. And together we work to collect thousands of handmade items. And I learned that at the end of the day, all I did was I acted as the glue that brought people together. So don't be intimidated by the prospect of pursuing your ambitious idea. Because you'll soon find that there are so many other people in the world ready to support you, you just need to figure out how to act as the adhesive that'll bring them together,

Katelyn Moll 11:23

I think it's so special that you took this passion that you have, and you really turned it into something that other people could come together and support people who need help. And to just make other people feel good. That's just really something that we need in the world right now is just helping other people to feel good. So when you collect all of these donations, you're hand delivering them over to these refugees. Is that correct? Yes. That's so awesome. So you're collecting them at your central location? And then you're you ship them over and you travel with the samples? And then you're handing them out? Is it just you or do other members of your team also get to go and make that connection,

Selin Kocalar 12:06

We have a connection of volunteers in the Middle East to especially help with that process. Of course, during like a time, like the Covid 19 pandemic, that's, that's been very difficult for us. And so we haven't been able to make those trips ourselves. But we've had people who are also just as dedicated and committed to our mission to help us deliver these items to the camps in the Middle East. So we've brought these two different parts of Turkey to Northern Turkey and to Western Turkey. And this is only

possible with the help of our volunteers in the Middle East who have helped to take these items, and also to Turkish Airlines who has helped us to ship these items to the Middle East.

Katelyn Moll 12:45

That is amazing. And we are so excited to have you here on the podcast today. Can you please tell us we talked about what kind of donations you're looking for? But could you tell us when the next shipment might be going or if you have any deadlines for when any project should be coming to you? And just one more time? Could you please remind us of your website or where they can get all of this information?

Selin Kocalar 13:07

For sure. So we do have shipping deadlines throughout the year. And we just encourage you to send in your items before these so that we can send your item to the Middle East as soon as possible. So our next shipping deadline is in late June. And so we'll be accepting it until the very last day in June. And our next target shipping date to the Middle East is expected to be in early July. And you can learn more about our work on our website through our Ravelry group and through our Instagram page. So our website is www dot Bulli wishes.org. And sometimes people forget that there are two L's in Woolly. But yes, it's Wolly Wishes.org. We also have a Ravelry group, which is Woolly wishes netting for Syrian refugees. And we also have an Instagram, which is just well he wishes. So we encourage you to connect with us through our different platforms and help us spread our message. Wonderful.

Katelyn Moll 14:00

And we'll have all of that information in our show notes. You can easily find everything you need to know about Woolly wishes. And we hope everybody will get involved in this next shipment or if not by the end of June. Hopefully you can get involved sometime this year to make a difference for this organization and all of the Syrian refugees that they're helping. Thank you so much saline for joining us today and sharing about Woolly wishes. We really appreciate it.

Selin Kocalar 14:26

Yeah, thank you so much for having me on today. It was a pleasure speaking with you.

Heather Mann 14:37

Heather here. Hey, producer Sara, have you heard about the Summer Sale?

Sarah Nairalez 14:41

Oh, I love sales where

Heather Mann 14:43

the Summer Sale at knitpicks calm and crochet.com save up to 60% off on yarn. And it's fun because each week different yarn weights are on sale.

Sarah Nairalez 14:52

Sounds good. Good Time to stock up on yarn. Oh wait, what about tools

Heather Mann 14:56

and you can save up to 40% on tools now would be a good time to start. And supplies for holiday crafting. Oh, and each week there are different deals and freebies with purchase.

Sarah Nairalez 15:05

Oh, and love free stuff,

Heather Mann 15:07

check knitpicks dot com and crochet dot com to find out all about the Summer Sale

Sarah Nairalez 15:11

looks like I'm going to Knit Picks calm and crochet calm to stock up and save. This sale goes through July 18 2021.

Heather Mann 15:26

And we're back. I'm here with Katelyn and producer Sarah. And we are chatting about the top 10 ways to learn more about crochet. And who

Katelyn Moll 15:35

doesn't want to learn more about crochet. That's right. Cool. Yes, summer school buddy system like summer camp. Oh, which is like one of our reads. Or one of our ways to learn more, find a friend. You know, you can do your own projects. But finding somebody else who might be more skilled than you is a really great way to keep learning more things and push your skills.

Heather Mann 15:57

And if you don't know who to connect with on that, you could always join a crochet along, which is not on our list, sorry, but this is falling under make a friend. So you can visit stitch together, and they have a crochet along every month. So you'll definitely be able to find something there to participate in.

Sarah Nairalez 16:14

Also in that regard. So you might even just tap a family member I bet if you talk to some family members, maybe even ones you don't normally talk to you might find a crochet ER and they might be able to help.

Heather Mann 16:25

That's a good point, my cousin's crochet, I love it. Alright, number two is try a new pattern. Maybe even a pattern that's a little bit intimidating, because that's a definitely, definitely a good way to learn more.

Katelyn Moll 16:39

Yeah. And that goes back to The Crochet along to that if you're finding a pattern that's a little bit more challenging than what you did a crochet along really is a great way because you've got that community aspect to be able to ask questions along the way.

Sarah Nairalez 16:51

As a relatively new crochet, I-- you know, I only started maybe two years ago. So every time I look for my next project, I'm always looking for a project that has an extra skill that I didn't have before the project. Our third suggestion to learn more about crochet this summer, is teach someone how to crochet, this is something that I really resonate with, because I really learn more as I teach people things and it's kind of like I'm recruiting more people into our secret society of crochet errs,

Heather Mann 17:21

I find that when you have to instruct someone in how to crochet, you really do have to kind of back out of your head and kind of like really examine what it is that you're doing when you crochet. So it really does help you understand crochet in a much more nuanced way.

Katelyn Moll 17:37

And if you haven't taught somebody before it, one of the great things to do is to purchase a kit that has like the pattern, the yarn, the hook all put together for you. So that new person who's learning has everything that they need without feeling overwhelmed by having to go to a store or go online and try to individually pick all of the pieces

Heather Mann 17:56

We have learned to crochet kits on crochet calm which are perfect for that.

Sarah Nairalez 18:00

It's all yeah, it's also just helpful to when you're teaching someone to revisit the way you do something, you know, because there's different grips to how you hold your hook. There's different places you can even just put your hook that have different results. So to teach someone is also to be relearning things that you might have lost or forgotten over time.

Heather Mann 18:18

Number four is read a book or stitch dictionary. There are lots of crochet books out there lots of inspiring crochet books, you know, you might find your new pattern, which is our number two in a crochet book. But stitch dictionaries are really interesting because you can learn all kinds of new ways to combine the simple stitches you already know into great new stitch patterns. So I think that that's pretty fun.

Sarah Nairalez 18:44

That's how I learned to teach in stitches was just looking up stitch dictionaries and just playing around with making rectangles. And I feel like you You feel like you're really making progress if

Heather Mann 18:55

you're learning new stitches and you can just make dishcloths or something small you don't have to make a big project with it. But by the end of a dish cloth which will take you an hour or two you'll be pretty you'll know how to do that stitch really well

Katelyn Moll 19:08

and along with doing stitch dictionaries are, number five way to keep learning more about crochet is, trying new techniques. And this is kind of stepping past just a stitch and looking at techniques as a whole like tapestry crochet Tunisian crochet corner to corner. A lot of things that we have on our Learning Center or in the mini books that we have on the WeCrochet website are going to show you different techniques within that technique. For instance, you can do corner to corner crochet with a half double crochet or a double crochet and you're going to get a different look in what the final pattern comes out. So there's just different variations and it's always great to kind of keep building your own internal library of how to do things.

Sarah Nairalez 19:53

Katelyn, you just blew my mind. I thought corner to corner was only with double crochet. Now I'm going to dive into doing it with have double crochet and I hadn't considered that but I'm stoked to try it. Thank you. I have my first summer school skirt, a summer school homework assignment,

Katelyn Moll 20:08

Maybe our bonus number is, as Katelyn, a new tip.

Heather Mann 20:14

Just hit Katelyn up for some new information about crochet.

Sarah Nairalez 20:18

So number six, this feels pretty obvious maybe, but dive into YouTube crochet tutorials. There's a lot of great information on YouTube. But this also kind of goes into what kind of learner Are you because some people really need to see, like a video to understand how things are going. And some people just need words, and some people are happy with pictures. And there are even people who need a human person. But YouTube, thankfully has been a huge, like resource for the craft community.

Heather Mann 20:47

I like that you can slow things down or back them up to Oh, is that what you're gonna say? Katelyn?

Katelyn Moll 20:51

Yeah, I like that too. Because if you miss something, or you're not quite sure, you can really slow it down and pause it and see exactly where the hook is going. And you know, photo tutorials are great for that as well. But it's also nice to actually see it in action with a video.

Heather Mann 21:07

Sometimes things are just a little more clear when you can see them in in motion. There's a couple of my favorite YouTube channels are Tony lipsy, who does really great Tunisia crochet tutorials. And Hart hook home who does really good stitch tutorials. And then you can of course visit our channel too. We'll have links to all of these in the show notes and all the things that we're mentioning in this list. Oh, it's my turn now. So number seven is crochet tic tock, which is kind of like a mini version of the YouTube tip. So I don't know, maybe we need to put the Katelyn to ask Katelyn tip in as one of our number tips.

Sarah Nairalez 21:46

I don't know let me just advocate for Tick Tock is that it's a joy, though. Tick Tock creators are amazing. And I feel like if you sometimes as a crafter it might feel like you're alone in your room, playing with your sticks in your yarn, or single stick. But Tick Tock just shows you you're not alone. People are doing it and they're having a lot of fun.

Katelyn Moll 22:11

I think Tick Tock and Instagram and other visual mediums also kind of just show you where you might want to go learn next like you might be inspired by a really cool pattern or stitch and then you can start diving into these other options that we're talking about to learn about them in more detail.

Heather Mann 22:28

And a little known fact we crochet is on Tick tock, barely. But if you want to follow us we are we crochet official on Tick Tock

Sarah Nairalez 22:36

So number eight, our virtual classes or in person classes, like I said different there's different kinds of learners, some people might need an actual human to ask questions and interact with. So virtual classes or in person classes can work for that. But virtual classes, where can you find them?

Heather Mann 22:52

So where can you find them? Caitlyn, do you have any idea of where you could find crochet classes online or in person? Sure,

Katelyn Moll 22:59

unfortunately, I have yet to kind of find like a really great full virtual learning experience or like event for just crochet. But there's a lot out there that are geared to knitters. But they always usually have a selection of crochet classes that kind of piggyback off of it, or tied together. And don't be afraid to look at the knitting events. Because no, you may not want to learn about the knit stitches and things like

that. But a lot of times they have color classes that you can learn about putting colors together to help your crochet projects as well. You can also look at designers, they sometimes have virtual summits that they're doing with other designers and teach you different techniques and things like that. So those are some really great resources. And don't forget, it also goes instead of just a virtual class, you can just check out on Facebook, and YouTube, like the little tutorials that they put together, that's still a class in itself, if it's, you know, surrounded by a technique, so there's different options for you.

Heather Mann 24:00

And in person, you could go to your local craft store, a lot of them have crochet classes or local yarn store. Obviously, even you can even set up one on one lessons or a small group lesson. Or libraries sometimes have that and now that we're kind of opening up a little bit more unable to get out and about that might be something that we can do the summer. Yes, shout out to libraries, shout out to local yarn stores. We love you both word.

Katelyn Moll 24:29

So our number nine way of learning more about crochet is to go on Facebook. I mean, we're probably already on social media a lot Anyway, let's you know, be honest. But there's a lot of great groups out there that you can join. This could be for a knit along this could be following a specific designer or a specific brand out there. You know, like the week crochet Facebook page, make sure you like and subscribe to all of our channels. But you know, really great. These are really great ways to interact. With people a lot of designers will go on and do Facebook Live. So it is like that night aspect that you can just sit with a group of friends and talk and crochet at the same time whether or not it's the same project. But so Facebook really does offer a lot of opportunities to communicate with others and ask them questions

Heather Mann 25:17

From a group that I really enjoy on Facebook is the crochet foundry group because people are actively making the crochet foundry garments, which is really fun that you frequently get to see new finished objects which is really exciting, which different things made in different yarns, different colors. So that's really fun. And then of course you can join our Facebook group but just we crochet family.

Sarah Nairalez 25:39

Yeah, it's just nice having people I think that's my for me, this is one of the most important things is finding other craft people to keep me motivated.

Heather Mann 25:47

And the number 10 way to get more crochet learning into your summer stay. Just like we did when we said that, listen to a podcast such as the WeCrochet podcast. I mean, you're already listening right now. So you're getting a head start on your summer curriculum. Yeah, and make sure to sign up for our email. The week crochet emails are full of tips, tricks, inspiration, patterns, yarn, all the things so that's a great way to keep learning more about crochet. Yes, yes, it is. I agree. I concur. go sign up now

please. Yes. Be willing to sign up for our email. Okay, Sarah, your friend, Sarah and Katelyn, thank you so much for meeting up with me and helping me brainstorm all of these ideas on how to learn more about crochet. Everyone out there. Thanks for listening.

Heather Mann

The WeCrochet Podcast is produced and hosted by me* Heather Mann, the marketing manager for Knit Picks and WeCrochet. This episode includes Selin Kocalar, Katelyn Moll and Sarah Nairalez.

Katelyn Moll

The WeCrochet Podcast is produced and edited by Sarah Nairalez. With Production Assistance by Remi Ostermiller. Transcripts by Michelle Fitzgerald.

Heather Mann

Camden Hill and Zoey Stencil make our artwork. Katelyn Moll does our Outreach. Regan Nishikawa is our photographer.

Katelyn Moll

We recorded this episode in the Pacific Northwest where it's currently not raining. A big thank you to our friends over at Connecting Threads and Knit Picks where we're all keeping the craft in crafting.

Heather Mann

From everyone here at WeCrochet, thank you for joining us. The views and opinions expressed in this podcast are those of the individual participants. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the Crafts Group LLC or Premier Needle Arts.

Katelyn Moll

All the yarn, tools, and patterns mentioned in this episode along with all the inspiration a crocheter could need can be found on our website at crochet.com.

Heather Mann

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Heather Mann

Fix it in post Sarah!

WeCrochet Podcast Episode 39

Hooks up, Summer's Here and Crochet Summer School is in Session

Sarah Nairalez 28:43 I do all the time