

Meet the Incredible People Who Are Turning Plastic Bags into Mats to Help the Homeless

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When we hear the word crochet we immediately think, “Oh geez, more ugly hats and mittens that I will pretend to love and then hide in my closet until they can be re-gifted.” But [Karen Lower](#) has found a way to make crocheting cool – and waterproof! She always loved to crochet but when she saw people crocheting with old plastic bags on Facebook, she had a brilliant idea. Why not make mats for the homeless out of plastic bags? She immediately reached out to [Buffalo’s Good Neighbors](#), a group out of Buffalo, New York that is dedicated to homeless outreach and community building, and the organization was equally excited about the project and so – Mats for a Mission was born. [Gail Potter](#), the project manager says that these mats will provide a much-needed buffer between Buffalo’s homeless and the biting winter elements, “It’s a little something to keep their sleeping bag or their blankets...dry.” The pair has started showing the community how to make “plarn” (plastic yarn) and everybody is pretty excited about the project.

Gail recently stopped by the 7th grade home room at West Seneca High to teach them how to turn their plastic bags into treasures.

They took to crocheting immediately.

It takes anywhere from 700-1000 plastic bags for each mat.

If not for Mats With a Mission, this disposable plastic waste would end up in a landfill.

Between the enthusiastic community and lots of hard work from Potter and Lower, Mats for a Mission has hit the ground running. And not only is the project helping the homeless, it’s also providing an invaluable service to the environment. Each year we produce around [300 million](#)

[tons of plastics](#) but only [15 percent of these items are recycled](#). The rest of these disposable plastics make their way into landfills and eventually, into our oceans. We toss [100 billion plastic bags](#) annually, and when these find their way to the ocean, marine species easily confuse them for jellyfish and accidentally end up consuming them. This has a devastating effect on the world's marine life, and over [700 species](#) are in danger of extinction due to the threat plastic poses.

If we all make an effort to identify where we use plastic and actively look for alternatives, we can drastically cut down on the amount of plastic pollution that finds its way into the oceans.

As the leading organization at the forefront of the conscious consumerism movement, [One Green Planet believes](#) that reducing everyday plastics from our lives is not about giving up anything or sacrificing convenience, but rather learning to reap the maximum benefit from the items you use every day while having the minimum impact.

Image source: [Buffalo's Good Neighbors/Facebook](#)
