



REUSING PLASTIC TO HELP THE HOMELESS

4/22/2019

by Andrew Butler

AN ARIZONA KNIGHT TURNS PLASTIC BAGS INTO SLEEPING MATS FOR THOSE IN NEED



Bryant Sayers is helping the homeless — one recycled plastic bag at a time.

A Knight of Columbus from Bishop Salpointe Council 4584 in Sierra Vista, Ariz., Sayers leads

neighborhood cleanups where he collects plastic bags to crochet into sleeping mats for those most in need.

"I was at our State Convention here a few years ago and I saw this lady – a wife of our brother Knight – crocheting and so I went up and started talking to her and asked what she was doing," said Sayers.

She told him about the sleeping mat she was making, and taught him how to crochet. He took the skill home to Sierra Vista, a town located 80 miles from Tucson.

Now, brother Knights help him collect plastic bags – it takes about 700 to make one mat – and Sayers works his magic.

"We've got a bunch of people collecting the bags and cutting them and rolling them up and then they give them to me," said Sayers. "Then, when I'm sitting in my chair and I'm not doing anything else, I start working on them."

Creating sleeping mats is just one way Knights serve the most disadvantaged members of their communities. Through the [Helping Hands](#) program, Knights worldwide assist the homeless, the addicted, the elderly who may feel isolated and others in their local community.

Sayers takes "helping hands" quite literally by crocheting. His mats have caught on,

and for several reasons. First, the mats protect one from the wet ground. Second, insects don't like plastic, so a person can sleep on it without that added worry. Finally, the mat can be rolled up and easily strapped onto one's back for carrying.

He has now distributed dozens of sleeping mats to the homeless, including several veterans.

"It was a big hit. People ask if I have any more or where they can get some," Sayers said. "And I've gone around town and I've seen guys and gals walking down the streets with these things strapped to their back so I know that they're being used."

[\(Click here to learn how to make the sleeping mats.\)](#)

A Catholic convert, Sayers was welcomed into the Church on Christmas Day 2000 while serving in the Army. That same day, a fellow serviceman — who happened to be a Knight — invited him over for Christmas dinner. It was there that he decided to join the Knights.

Sayers became heavily involved in the Knights, serving in many different leadership rolls. A past state deputy in Arizona, he currently serves as district master. A testament to his dedication, he said Knights of Columbus t-shirts are "the only shirts I have."

Sayers was awarded the 2018 Environmental Merit Award by the city of Sierra Vista for his work cleaning up local neighborhoods. When he's not making sleeping mats or cleaning up the city, Sayers crochets blankets for babies with Down syndrome. He also crochets blankets for his own grandchildren and "anybody that wants them."

Exemplifying the Knights of Columbus' first principle of charity, Sayers proudly serves those most in need.

"I try to do whatever I can to help our veterans and all the homeless down here in this area."

Join Bryant and the nearly 2 million men who are putting their faith in action every day. [Become a Knight.](#)

Share your Knights of Columbus story with andrew.butler@kofc.org.