



The Story of Power Socks

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Saint Thomas Church

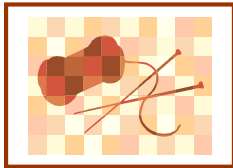
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Question: What do you do if you are a single mother working at a minimum wage job and you can't afford to pay the additional 50 cents per gallon of gas that it takes to run your car?

Answer: You put off paying monthly bills for electricity and heat so that you can still get to work and put food on the table your children.

Few of us can imagine being faced with this kind of choice. But I have learned that for many low-wage earners who are working to feed their families, it's not a matter of choice, but a matter of necessity.



Power Socks forms a partnership between women who love to knit socks and women who have been left out in the cold by rising heating or cooling bills. Here is the way it works. A knitter donates the time and materials to make a pair of hand-knit socks, then sells the socks for charity. I sell all the finished pairs that I make to friends and ask the buyer pay by check to Saint Thomas Episcopal Church, Deacon's Discretionary Fund. (You could set up a fund at your own charity or place of worship as well). The Fund writes a check to Greater Birmingham Ministries, a consortium of local institutions and agencies that serve the very poor. I designate the money raised to pay utility bills for people who are literally living at the edge of poverty.

Power Socks directs the money responsibly to people who need to be self-sufficient. The Deacon's Fund is part of my church budget and must be audited regularly. Because donations and disbursements are made by check through a recognized community agency, I can track where the money is coming from and where it ends up. All we are trying to do is to give a little extra help to people who are already trying to stand on their own two feet. Socks create the power that makes a difference.

Power Socks gives back to the local community. One of the tasks of a deacon ordained in the Episcopal tradition is to recognize and call forth the gifts of others. I have been given the gift of knitting and the gift of loving to knit socks. What better way is there for me to affirm the gifts of my sisters who work at local nursing homes or local fast food restaurants than to "knit us together" in a circle of care and concern!

Power Socks can use your gifts as well. I hope you will talk to me about ways you might become part of this worthwhile project.