



APRIL 2023



Our Mission

The Sewing Labs is an inclusive and welcoming community teaching the legacy of sewing for employment, entrepreneurship, and enrichment.

Message from the Executive Director

As we approach Earth Day, I am reminded of the importance of the work we do at The Sewing Labs; being an open and welcoming community hub for sewists and providing workforce development opportunities supporting economic

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planet's natural resources.

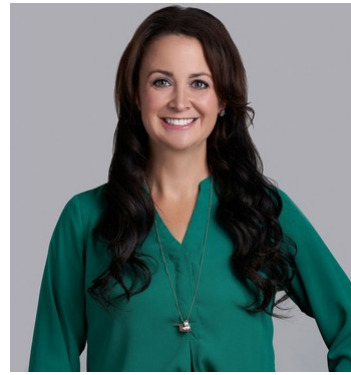
In recent years, there has been an increased focus on environmental sustainability in the workplace, with more companies recognizing the benefits of adopting green practices. At The Sewing Labs, we believe we must incorporate these principles to prepare individuals for the jobs of the future; providing training that takes into account the changing business landscape – incorporating sustainable practices, such as up-cycling, waste reduction, and improving production efficiencies to help minimize environmental impact.

We are proud to partner with organizations that share our commitment to sustainability. Our graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge to succeed in jobs that support the transition to a more sustainable future.

This Earth Day, let us all recommit ourselves to protecting our planet and building a more sustainable future. Together, we can make a difference and create a world that is healthy, equitable, and prosperous for all. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Robyn Kerkaert, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, CCEP, CHPC



**Robyn Kerkaert,
Executive Director**

Fabric Grab on Earth Day!

This year's spring Fabric Grab will take place Saturday, April 22, from 9 to 2. We fill the parking lot with tables covered with sewing supplies and fabric. These fabrics are offered by weight for a per-pound donation, and notions are labeled separately.

Sewing machines are also part of the Fabric Grab, and now there is a pre-sale of machines. These will be listed in advance TSL's FaceBook page and on FaceBook Marketplace.



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Volunteers are needed for the preparation as well as for the event. On the day of the Grab, at 6 a.m, we need volunteers to set up tables, haul out fabrics, and arrange them on the tables. During the event, volunteers also float about handing out shopping bags and helping customers. Then, at the end, we pitch in to pack up, break down, and bring the leftovers back inside.

Sign up [HERE](#) to volunteer!



Q&A With Robyn Kerkaert

1. Do you have any pets/animals?

I do! I have a dog named Bubba, who will be 16 years old on April 10th! He can be a bit of a grumpy fellow at times, but I think he's earned that right. I also have a 10-year-old dog named Miley and I raise chickens – at the moment I have 19 hens, 1 rooster, and 7 chicks less than 3 days old (and more that are hatching while I'm writing this letter!).

2. What word do you have a hard time remembering how to spell?

I feel like this is a trick question sent by my mother and the only proper answer is, “None!” My mother, the English major, insisted that both my brother and I use proper grammar from a very young age.

When my brother or I would use a word she felt might be a bit advanced for us, she always made us define it and then “spell it!” Because of her insistence on us spelling each word, we became quite skilled spellers. I think to this day, if someone randomly told me to spell a word, I wouldn't hesitate because it's now part of my DNA. Thanks, mom!

3. How would you describe your leadership style?

I believe that my leadership style would be considered transformative leadership. My goal is to lead a company to the next phase in its development by implementing new ideas and executing a vision that is based in sound strategy, driven by data, and is adaptable to the changing business landscape. I think when you embrace collaboration, vision, and transformation, leaders can create an environment where everyone feels empowered to contribute to the organization's success.

4. Who do you look to for inspiration?

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I honestly look to the women in my family for inspiration. I come from a long line of strong-willed, boundary breaking women who managed to simply make things happen, and I'm proud to carry on their tradition of living a life full of grace and love.

5. What's a personal pet peeve of yours?

People who excessively take pictures or record every moment; I want to be present in the moment and having a phone capturing every tiny detail detracts from being fully engaged.



Earth-Friendly Sewing at TSL

T-Shirt Quilts

One of the best way to recycle old T-shirts is to turn them into something new, such as a quilt. These can be simple or elaborate, plain rows of logos or sashed with colorful cottons, or arranged in clever patterns that recall a theme.

The shirts are stabilized to prevent stretching, then the designs are cut out and pieced together. Sometimes strips of sashing, color-coordinated to the shirts or a theme are added in for color, stability, and cohesiveness to the overall project.

Linna Stevens has been teaching a T-shirt quilt-making class, and the variety of projects

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baseball motif; and another is making the quilt as a housewarming gift. The class wraps up in April, but you can also [try this project](#) at home.

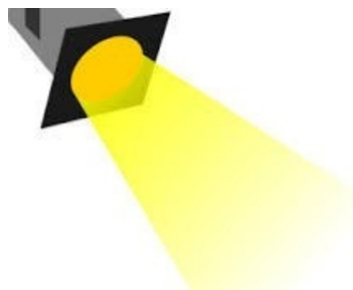
Whether you make your quilt at The Sewing Labs or at home, The Sewing Labs is the place to go to finish it. Learn to use the longarm quilting machines and choose from a wide-ranging assortment of quilting designs.

As Linnea says, “It’s a great way to recycle old T-shirts. And who doesn’t have plenty of those?”

Hand Mending.

There was a time, as many of our mothers and grandmothers remind us, when people didn’t discard clothing because a button was lost, or a zipper broke, or a hem ripped out.

And though times have changed, the growing wave of those who eschew fast fashion are ready to learn to mend rips, zips, buttons, and worn elbows. Keep an eye on the calendar for the next mending class to come up.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Highlighting our Students and Supporters

To All Our Board Members: Thank You!

The work we do at The Sewing Labs wouldn't be possible without the help of our board members. In addition to the board members listed on our website, four more people are joining the board roster.

Most recently, we've welcomed Amy Barickman, Christian Micheal Shuster, Katelyn Peter, and Ann Greenleaf to the board. Keep in touch with the TSL Thread to learn more about our board members in the future!

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Upcoming Classes

April 7: From 5:30 to 8:30 p.m, Heather Anacker will lead a Sewing Empowerment class. This class is ideal for new sewists or anyone needing a refresher. The class is \$40. Click [here](#) to register!

April 14: From 10:00 a.m. to 2 p.m, you can learn all about hand embroidery. The fee is \$20. Sign up [here](#) to join!

Did You Know...

Duck cloth, a heavy plain woven cotton fabric, has nothing to do with waterfowl but takes its name from the Dutch word for cloth: *doek*.



Sew What Now?

What causes birds' nests? Well, spring weather, a place to lay eggs. But if we mean the thread bunching and snagging on the underside of fabric, it could be a number of things, such as the machine not threaded correctly; or threaded with the presser foot down; or a wrong—or bent or dull— needle; or even when the spool cap is not secure. Or sometimes thread tails that are too short. Next time, we'll talk about the tension issues, too.

[Donate here](#)



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