

Seamstress Best Practice for Providing Angel Dresses to Bereaved Families

We believe there are best practices to meet the needs of a grieving family in a personal manner. When you sew for us we believe;

- ❖ The giving of an Angel Dress should be done in a way that shows respect to the baby and the family.
- ❖ We believe this is best accomplished by having project managers first establish a relationship with the leadership of a hospital to determine their dress needs based on the number of losses at their facility annually and gestational ages of the majority of their losses. Hospitals are then presented with an initial supply according to their needs and be able to reorder through our website. This prevents dresses from being sent that are not needed and will not be used.
- ❖ Through discussions with other established Angel programs we understand that receiving an Angel Dress in a manner that honours and respects the loss of a precious life is key in the start of their grieving process. Dresses will be presented to them by their medical care team or directly from an organisation when a request is received from the family.
- ❖ Many hospitals, due to funding, cannot provide clothing to a bereaved family in the above manner, and most donated gowns and clothing are placed in buckets, baskets or bins that have to be sorted through each time a baby passes away. We want to ensure our angel gowns are stored carefully and presented in pristine fashion to a family.

It is with this information that the Alberta Angels created best practice guidelines surrounding sewing and distribution of our Angel Dresses.

Policies for Angel Dress Volunteers

The following are policies we have created for volunteers wanting to work with our Group to provide Angel Dresses to hospitals and bereaved families. We respectfully request that the following policies be followed when working with our Group so that we can provide families with the absolute best experience.

- ❖ We need volunteer seamstresses to commit to sewing for us so we can provide gowns to families and hospitals in the above manner.

WE WILL SEEK TO PROVIDE GOWNS TO YOUR LOCAL HOSPITAL:

If you are a volunteer seamstress and would like to request a specific hospital be contacted please make a request with the program. Prior to dresses being provided, we need to establish a relationship with the hospital to ensure these beautiful garments make it into the hands of bereaved families in an appropriate way.

Volunteer seamstresses for Angel Dresses Alberta will return gowns to the leadership group so that we can follow established best practice. Shipment of completed Angel Dresses will be reimbursed when required (\$10-15 for a box in most cases). Based on seamstress location, pick up may also be available.

We need your name and mailing address in order to send you wedding gowns to work with and to provide you support as you sew for us. If you have a gown you would like to start working on that would be wonderful as well, just let us know. However, we have wedding gowns we can provide to you, so don't feel you must purchase used gowns or collect them to be able to create Angel Dresses. Our goal is to follow a first donation in, first used practice when possible.

ANGEL GOWNS ALBERTA SEWING INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANGEL DRESSES

As you make the garments, you will refine your own method of construction. These basic instructions are to get you started. We do not take any credit for the creation of these patterns and we would like to acknowledge and thank Angel Gowns by Michelle for having shared them with us. The patterns are just outlines of the patterns. Line up the lines, tape together and cut out. These can be copied onto heavy weight interfacing since it holds up to repeated pinning and accidental clipping better than paper – then when those start to wear out just copy another.

SUGGESTIONS:

❖ *If a dress you receive is visibly soiled or has a musty smell wash the dress in the washing machine on the gentle cycle, hang dry or tumble dry on a very low heat cycle -it will be fine. For discoloured fabrics you can try soaking overnight in the bathtub with water and soaker.*

❖ *You can cut a piece from each gown to send back to the bride who lovingly gave her gown if you choose. Try to cut a piece that is particularly beautiful or representative of the gown which the bride will recognize. We often provide a keepsake piece – a 12” strip of the gown that can be used to wrap a bridal bouquet for a daughter or granddaughter’s wedding.*

❖ *Cut the skirt from bodice, and then separate each section at the seams. Much easier to work with as the bodice of the dress typically has too many seams to use for a gown, but there is often a lot of lace or beads that can be removed and applied to other parts of the gowns.*

❖ *The bottom of the skirt is a great place to line up the bottom of your pattern with for an easy no sew and beautiful hemline.*

❖ *You’ll have odd size pieces left from which you’ll cut a neck facing, approx. 4”x4” round. Larger or smaller depending on the size of the gown you are sewing.*

After completing your Angel Dresses please send back to Angel Dress Alberta so that we can properly package them for giving to a family. We believe this is a best practice in caring for bereaved parents and we thank you for helping us serve them in the best possible manner.

Thank you so very much for helping us provide such a blessing to families across Alberta.

BECOMING A SEAMSTRESS IN ALBERTA

Thank you for your interest in our program. We are asking seamstresses to please complete the volunteer application below and return with one sample gown and vest (satin material, premie or small in size) to Alberta Angel Dresses. If approved, we will contact you and start sending you wedding dresses. If you would like your sample garments returned, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope, with postage paid. Your application and sample garments can be mailed to **ATTN: Michele O’Callaghan, Box 646 , Sangudo, Alberta T0E 2A0**

Upon approval volunteer seamstress team support and general gown guidelines for Alberta facilities will be provided from within the group. Donated wedding gowns are provided to you.

All completed Angel Dresses must come back to Alberta Angels for tracking against the donating Bride as well as the Seamstress. This information will be kept on file for future reference. Dresses will then be packed and delivered to hospitals.

Name:

Address:

Phone
Number:

Email

Brief Current / Past work history

Brief description of sewing experience and skills

Please provide one reference / referee that we may contact to confirm the above details

Name	Phone number	Relationship to Applicant
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Please read, check each box and sign

- I agree to follow all processes outlined in the Best Practices for Seamstress document
- I will respond in a timely manner to all communication from Angel Dresses Alberta management
- I understand that I will have no direct contact with families or hospitals receiving my gowns unless approved by Angel Dresses Alberta
- I give permission for photos of gowns created by me to be posted on the website or Facebook site, as well as used in any marketing materials to promote the organisation
- I agree that if I choose to discontinue involvement with Angel Dresses Alberta, that I will return all completed gowns, donated dresses, material and supplies to the organisation.
- I verify my home is smoke free and sewing areas is both smoke and pet free

Signed

Date