

Program Idea: Denim Pillows

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Submitted by: Mickie Stiers, mstiers@westervillelibrary.org Library: Westerville Public Library, Westerville, OH Audience: Teens Group Size: Any size Season: Any time of year

A part of Westerville's Teen Crafts series, Denim Pillows is a great program to run any time of year. Each pillow can be accessorized with different notions and bling for each season. For instance, Fall is back-to-school season so pillows could be decorated with dorm-themed notions, or summer pillows could be decorated with travel-themed notions. The possibilities are endless and your teen community will love finding a new use for that favorite pair of jeans!

This program comes from *More Teen Programs that Work* by RoseMary Honnold.

Supplies List Old blue jeans, corduroys and slacks of any size, color or material. Sewing Machine, scissors and thread Crafter's poly-fill Notions. Ask for donations of fake fur, rick-rack, buttons, lace, ribbons, etc from library staff, friends and family Hot glue gun and glue sticks (optional for decorating if time doesn't allow hand sewing notions and "bling") Dry Erase Board explaining craft steps and stations (optional) **Preparation** Takes about 20 min to throw materials into a cart prior to event Room set-up takes around 30 min **Preparation Steps** Set up a room with 3 stations on long tables. Make as much room as possible by removing chairs or moving furniture away from the work stations. Leave one chair for the sewing machine station. This gives plenty of space for teens to stretch out and work on their pillows on the floor. One station (Choose your Jeans) will be loaded with the donated jeans. The next (Sew your Jeans) will be set up with a chair and the sewing machine. The last station (Bling your Jeans) will be set up with all the donated notions. A computer or mobile phone connected to speakers provides some nice, library-appropriate music as teens work. Pandora.com and Spotify.com are two great music streaming services. Write out the station steps on the dry erase board. **Activities** As teens come in, introduce yourself and explain each step on the dry erase board. (approx. 5 min) Teens choose a pair of jeans from the first table. Then cut the legs off the seat and turn the seat inside-out. (approx. 10 min) Next staff members either sew pants shut for the teens, or help guide them through using the machine themselves. After sewing turn pants right side out through fly. (approx. 15 min) Note: If you are sewing low rise jeans with short zippers, you may need to cut a hole in order to turn the pants right side out again, and then sew it up after. Next, teens stuff pillows with poly-fill and zip up the fly. (approx. 10 min) Finally, teens pick out notions and hot-glue onto their jean pillows. (approx. 20 min) Tear down stations and clean up area (approx. 1 hr) **Extra Hints & Tips**

A good rule is to not leave the sewing machine unattended at any point in the program.

In general, teen girls and boys were reluctant to use the sewing machine, but felt very proud of themselves afterwards. This is a great way to boost confidence and teach life skills. Westerville received a great response from teens and parents and plan to offer more sewing programs following the success of Denim Pillows. Teens will likely find "Bling your Jeans" the most enjoyable part of the program, so a larger amount of time should be set aside for this activity. If teens aren't able to finish decorating their pillows before the program is finished, they can pick out some notions they liked and finish at home.

Note: Cleaning up after the program can take a while because teens like to cut up notions like faux fur that create a lot of mess. But as Mickie Stiers at Westerville says: mess "is proof of a fun program."

Additional Resources

For more great programming ideas, check out more of [RoseMary Honnold's books](#).

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