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March, 2006 Newsletter

Project Linus was named after the adorable security blanket-toting character from the Peanuts comic strip. Creator Charles Schulz was aware of our efforts and delighted to have Linus inspire blanket makers to help comfort children in need. We are a national volunteer organization that celebrated its tenth birthday last summer. During that time over one and a half million blankets have been provided for seriously ill and traumatized children. Our chapter was established **four** years ago and we have distributed **10,676** blankets and quilts to children in our area. We have had over two hundred individual blanketeers and many organizations whose members provide us with the crocheted, knitted, quilted, or fleece blankets that we have distributed. Although our letterhead identifies us as the Montgomery/Bucks Counties, PA chapter, we also have an arm in the Lehigh Valley area. We sincerely appreciate the efforts of our contributors which have made our distribution numbers what they are.

Each year of our work has some different aspects to it. Of course we continue to supply blankets to the hospitals and agencies you are familiar with, and others, all listed below. In addition, this year we contributed to the hurricane ravaged areas (25,519 blankets were sent from chapters all over the country), and to the children of Fallen Heroes (over 1,500 children nationally).

Our volunteer base has also expanded to include more labelers, more delivery people and more drop-off sites. We continue to have a need for help in these areas. In fact, we have designated the third Monday of each month (from 1pm to 3pm) as a **Project Linus** work-party day. On these Mondays we gather to label, repair, and make blankets together. It is a good way to get to know other blanketeers and enjoy the camaraderie. We welcome any interested volunteers to join us. We meet at the Senior Adult Activities Center in Ambler, PA. The facility is at the corner of Spring Garden Street and Forest Avenue. The telephone number there is 215-619-8863. It is suggested that you call the center to indicate your interest in attending.

During the summer of 2005 Jean Larison and Barbara Epstein sponsored a Girl Scout in Palmerton, PA who won her Gold Award for executing a quilting event. This event produced 50 quilts, many of which were distributed in the Palmerton area eliciting a great deal of community support. Kudos and thanks go to Leah Danielson for achieving this goal in Girl Scouting.

In conjunction with Americorp and their CityYear event that was held recently, we had the opportunity to encourage a few young women to volunteer through their crocheting skills. Hopefully their experience will alert them to the opportunities in our organization.

*****If you have not received this via e-mail and have an e-mail address, please inform Barbara at bepstein1203@comcast.net. Help save our postage expenses.*****

The contributions from all of the people described above allow us to continue to distribute blankets to children in need in these local hospitals and agencies:

- Abington
- Lankenau
- Central Montgomery
- Mercy Suburban
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Pottstown Memorial
- St. Christopher's Hospital for Children
- Temple Children's
- Visiting Nurses Association of Abington
- Shriner's Hospital
- Cambridge-Point Pleasant
- Birthright
- Grand View
- Pottstown
- Laurel House
- Cribs for Kids

In addition, hospitals and agencies in the Allentown area have received blankets from:

- Lehigh Valley
- Turning Point
- Pocono Medical Center
- Camelot for Children
- Volunteers of America
- Lehigh Valley Fire/Ambulance Companies
- Easton
- St. Luke's

The relationship that we have developed with the A.C.Moore store in Montgomeryville continues. Those who drop off their blankets at that store receive a coupon for a 10% discount on their next yarn purchase (one coupon for each blanket). Often the store has a special Yarn Sale Day to which we are invited. We have gained many new blanketeers because of this relationship. Here, too, is another volunteer opportunity: we man a table for a few hours on these sale days, providing information about our chapter and **Project Linus** in general. Please come and join us at these events. Bring your knitting or crocheting and enjoy a few hours with other blanketeers. (Watch the store's ads about these events.)

We are grateful for people who offer their homes or work places as drop-off sites in Collegetown, Telford, Norristown, Doylestown, Warrington, Yardley, and Langhorne. Pottstown Memorial Hospital and the Lutheran Community in Telford are also locations where blankets can be dropped-off. The yarn store, Just a Knitting Basket in Warminster, collects for us, and the proprietor, Marie Matthews, also transports what she receives to our facilities in Ambler. Of course, the Senior Adult Activities Center in Ambler accepts blankets for us. This is where we process our blankets, preparing them for delivery, and we are, indeed, grateful to the staff there who supports us so generously.

Most of the pick-ups and deliveries are made by the Coordinator and Co-coordinator, but the deliveries to the downtown hospitals are made by Dick Butler, a very willing driver, whom we appreciate for his monthly route on our behalf.

To all who contribute, it is not for thanks, rewards, or recognition, but for the joy of helping children in need of comfort and caring – this is the spirit of our organization.

We often hear from the Mommies and Daddies of the children who receive our blankets. Here are a few of the thank you notes we have received recently:

- “On September 12, 2005 at 4: 13 p.m., my wife gave birth to our first child, a daughter, at Mercy Suburban Hospital. When the nurse brought her back to our room from the nursery she was wrapped in a beautiful crocheted afghan. We commented on it and that’s when we were informed it was ours to keep. We were so touched by the love and generosity that went into making it we were compelled to write you to say thank you for your thoughtfulness; it truly touched us.” – a proud Daddy
- “Thank you for the wonderful donation of blankets that you sent to the Houston chapter of Project Linus. We have so many children who have relocated in our area and your contribution has enabled us to provide comfort to them as they are dealing with a very stressful situation. Thank you for caring.” - Katrina relief
- “My daughter was hospitalized at Philadelphia Shriners for one of many back surgeries – she is four years old. When she came out of this latest surgery she was obviously in pain, afraid, and overall uncomfortable. We were allowed to pick a blanket for her and I gave her this one (picture of blanket). The first thing she said was “It’s so soft” and she wanted that blanket with her for the rest of her five day stay – even wanted it over her “favorite” pink blanket that she takes everywhere! We really appreciate the comfort you were able to provide to our daughter. I am always amazed at the kindness and generosity of complete strangers. Thank you so much!” – a Mommy
- “This thank you is sent in appreciation for the beautiful blanket Zachary received after his surgery at Shriners Hospital in Philadelphia. Zachary had scleroderma and had a crippled foot and ankle as a result of that disease. We are anxiously awaiting the removal of this cast to see what the results may be. Four previous casts were unsuccessful. Zachary is 8 years old, and wants to be very active. Please pray for him and thank you so much for the beautiful blanket.” - parents
- “Thank you one and all for the Project Linus Blankets. The N.I.C.U. and Pediatric departments were thrilled to get them.” - Abington Hospital

For your reference, here are the guidelines for the sizes of the blankets most requested by hospitals:

Preemie: 18 x 24 or 24 x 30 **Infant:** 30 x 42 or 26 x 36

Please use pastel colors of soft 3 ply or 4 ply yarns, Please do not double the yarn.

Toddler: 36 x 45 **Child:** 40 x 60 **Teen:** 45 x 72

Please use bold color of 4 ply yarn.

Flannel, fleece and quilting fabrics can be used within these size perimeters also.

The materials used must be new, clean and have a hand-made touch.

For those contributors who are looking for a new challenge, here are two blanket patterns. These patterns can be found on the Project Linus website www.projectlinus.org.

All Purpose Knitted Afghan Pattern

“This pattern goes so fast and is easy to remember.”

-- Margaret Roosevelt

Size: Large

Materials needed: 40 oz. 4 ply worsted weight yarn - Size 10 circular needles

Directions: For large afghan cast on 210 sts, for a small one cast on 144 sts.
Pattern is a multiple of 11 sts + 1.

Row 1: K1, *yo, k3, k2 tog, k2tog, k3, yo, k1. Repeat from * to end.

Row 2: Purl.

Row 3: Knit

Repeat rows 1-3 until desired length.

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Shell Stitch Baby Blanket

Courtesy of Guylaine Chalifour, Project Linus coordinator, Quebec, Canada

Size: Approximately 38 x 50 inches

Materials needed: Baby sport yarn (acrylic) 16 oz. Pink and 16 oz. White – Crochet hook size G

Directions: With pink, ch 163.

Row 1: 2 dc in 4th ch from hook, *skip 2 ch, 1 sc in next ch, skip 2 ch, 5 dc in next ch* Repeat from * to * until 3 ch remain, skip 2 ch, 1 sc in last ch. Ch 3, turn.

Row 2: 2 dc in the first sc, *1 sc in the 3rd dc of 5 dc group, 5 dc in sc*. Repeat from * to *, end row with 1 sc in 3rd chain of previous row.

Rows 3 - 7: Repeat row 2.

Rows 8 – 14: With white, repeat row 2.

Continue alternating colors every 7 rows until blanket measures 50”

Edging: Row 1: With pink, sc around edge.

Row 2: *4 sc, ch 3, 1 sc in the same st of last sc, skip 1 st *. Repeat from * to *, finish with sl st in first sc.

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