

Project Linus

Providing Security Through Blankets

Montgomery/Bucks Counties, PA Chapter
www.projectlinusmontgomery-buckspa.org

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Many new individuals and groups have found us through our new website. It has been up and running for almost a year now. A webmaster found us, volunteered her time to set it up, and has posted pictures and details about our chapter. We think she did a great job. If you haven't seen it you can access it through the Project Linus headquarters website, or you can go directly to www.projectlinusmontgomery-buckspa.org. Have a look and let us know what you think of it.

The sixth end of year report has just been completed. We've distributed 19,725 blankets in these six years. In April we will be giving away **our 20,000th blanket!** The number of blanketeers from churches, community organizations, businesses and clubs has increased, as has the number of individuals. Just to show how our distribution has grown each year as a result of our increased number of workers, here are some numbers of interest.

End of first year	1,211
End of second year	1,910
End of third year	3,310
End of fourth year	4,245
End of fifth year	4,215
End of sixth year	4,834
GRAND TOTAL	19,725

And here is a list of the facilities that have been receiving our blankets during these years:

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
St. Christopher's Hospital for Children
Shriner's Hospital of Philadelphia
Temple University Hospital for Children
Abington Hospital
Mercy Suburban Hospital
Central Montgomery Hospital
Doylestown Hospital
Visiting Nurses Association of Abington
Visiting Nurses Association of Lehigh County
Jerusalem Community Food Pantry
Community Cupboard, Ambler
Children of Fallen Heroes

Lankenau Hospital
Lehigh Valley Hospital
Pottstown Medical Center
Laurel House
Cribs for Kids
Easton Hospital
Cambridge Point Pleasant
Libertae
Turning Point
Funeral Homes
Fort Benning, Georgia
Michigan National Guard
Palmerton Ambulance

All of these facilities distribute blankets to children 0 to 18 years of age in accordance with our mission: **“to provide love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need through the gifts of new, handmade blankets and afghans, lovingly created by volunteer “blanketeers”.**

We recognize the hundreds of individuals whose hands have worked hard to knit, crochet, or quilt them for distribution. We thank all of you for your generosity.

In April, 2007, we were called by Kristina Amodei, the Helping Little Hands Club advisor at Hatboro-Horsham High School. This club publicized a blanket drive and contest within their school. The Senior Advisory Board donated the largest number of blankets and won a pizza party for their efforts. They collected many blankets for us.

Another interesting project developed this year. Penny Larrisey called last spring and told us of her interest in delinquent boys and quilting. Penny devotes many hours of each week making quilts with the boys at the Bucks County Youth Study Center. The quilts are just the right size for infants to cuddle in and play on. And the boys are so pleased to be able to make this contribution to little kids. Now the girls are involved, too. Penny is a bundle of energy, working with funds that have been granted from the Bucks County Commissioners. About the same time as we heard about Penny’s efforts we had a request from Libertae, a residential treatment program in Bensalem for women and families recovering from chemical addiction. Many of the women bring the children into treatment with them. It is these children to whom we have given blankets. But there’s more to it than this. Libertae is also supported by the Bucks County Commissioners. So one day this summer we had a “hand-down” in front of the Commissioners at one of their regular meetings. Penny presented her blankets, passed them to me; I explained what Project Linus was, and then passed the blankets to Jude Aptaker-Shine for the children at Libertae. It was an impressive ceremony wherein we all received compliments from the Commissioners. To date this effort has produced over 300 quilts for us.

Students at several schools have made blankets for us – Hollicong Middle School, Chestnut Hill Academy, Germantown Academy, the PenRyn school and Franconia Elementary School. There have also been many church and scout groups, too numerous to mention here.

Last summer we heard from Kate Suyo, a high school student who attends The Pennington School in Pennington, NJ. She sought a Congressional Award and set a goal to produce over one hundred fleece blankets for us in order to meet the requirement of Voluntary Public Service for that award. She actually made 102 beautiful blankets for us and achieved her award. She has been awarded a scholarship to the University of Notre Dame because of her athletic skill. This is one of the leaders of tomorrow that we know will make a difference.

Some of the places that received our blankets were new this year. One I have explained to you in a previous paragraph. Then there are two neighborhood programs, Ambler's Community Cupboard and the Jerusalem Community Food Pantry, which collect items to distribute to less fortunate people. In a thank you note from the Jerusalem Community Food Pantry, the writer noted: "There were two little girls who were so excited to be able to choose a blanket for their bed. They clutched them tightly and would not put them down while their parents received the food provided by the pantry. Many of those families do not have the funds to pay for the fuel oil necessary to keep their homes very warm; heat is kept low to save."

The patriotic blankets which you make are set aside for use with combat-related programs. We have been asked to provide blankets for the children of several fallen heroes from our area. We have also sent several blankets to the mini-"Good Grief" camp that was held in Michigan recently. The next camp is a big one – held over Memorial Day weekend in DC, where the children visit their hero loved one in Arlington National Cemetery. This organization is called TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) which is the first organization to provide a support network for families facing the loss of a military member. So if you make a red, white and blue blanket it will be sent off to support one of these events.

As you can tell, we have a continuing great need for the beautiful blankets that you knit, crochet, quilt or make of fleece. We thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts. If you wish to be more involved, we do have an opportunity for that, too. On the second Monday of each month, a group of labelers meet at the Senior Adult Activities Center in Ambler. Without the help of these people we would never be able to distribute the four or five hundred blankets that are requested of us each month. It takes lots of people to carry out the mission of our chapter. We need blanketers, labelers, sorters, packers and deliverers. Let us know if you wish to contribute more time to our cause.

We have found that the sizes of blankets that are requested of us now are somewhat different from before. The exactness of the measurement is not as important as the approximate size – blankets vary in size; so do children. Here are the new sizes:

Premie: 24 x 30 **Infant:** 36 x 36 or 36 x 42

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

Toddler: 38 x 48 **Child:** 40 x 60 **Teen:** 45 x 72

Please use bold colors 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.

Knitting and crocheting stitches are varied, many of them quite beautiful. However, one cautionary note is to not provide large holes where little fingers can get entangled. Sure, little holes are fine, they often make the pattern quite special.

Without question there are a lot of sick and needy children in our area. Here are some thank you notes from their parents:

- I would like to say a special thanks for your foundation. It truly lives up to its saying. The Dalmatian blanket that my son received at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia truly did provide him with a sense of security and made his stay a lot more cheerful. He suffered a severe broken arm and will be at home with recovery for about 6-8 weeks, and because of one of your generous blanketeers his recovery seems to be going well thus far. I can't tell you how much your organization's generosity has meant to me and my family and my son.
- Our son was hospitalized for a ruptured appendix and many associated complications. He received a wonderfully soft red and black blanket from Linus. As you can imagine, it's been a hard road for him, made even more difficult by the fact that he's autistic and cannot verbalize his feelings – emotional or physical. What nobody could have known is how much this child loves a soft blanket. There simply aren't proper words to thank you for what has been given us – a gift well beyond that of the blanket.
- My daughter had surgery at Shriner's Hospital and was blessed to receive one of your blankets crafted with love. We thank you for the time you spent knitting her blanket and for wrapping her in love for her post-op recovery.
- Thank you so much for your gift of the baby blanket for our son. He received the blanket at Mercy Suburban Hospital on February 11, 2008 and instantly bonded with it. The blanket will be a wonderful gift for him to enjoy for many years. Thank you for your loving and caring gift.
- My daughter was admitted to St. Christopher's Hospital and was given a blanket which turned out to be such a comfort and "lovie" to her. It certainly helped her during this difficult time. Thank you for your kindness and compassion.
- Thank you so much for everyone involved with Project Linus. You all bring happiness to many of our families who give birth at Central Montgomery Medical Center's Family Birth Center.

One can easily see the need and the appreciation of those receiving blankets by all the information in this newsletter. The ongoing efforts of hundreds of people have made our chapter successful in satisfying the needs in our large community. We encourage you to continue to produce such lovely blankets. Drop them off at the most convenient drop-off site and we'll see that they get labeled and then distributed appropriately.

You are participating in a mission shared by 403 other chapters which have contributed almost 2,300,000 blankets to children across this country. Read more information about our organization by logging onto the Project Linus website – www.projectlinus.org – and subscribing to "The Blanket Beacon", a quarterly newsletter featuring stories, patterns, coupons and the latest and greatest Project Linus News.

"The best kind of sleep under heaven above is under a blanket handmade with love."