

Extension Homemakers create quilts for shelter

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MICHIGAN CITY — The Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families in Michigan City is benefiting from the talents of several women from the La Porte County Purdue Extension Homemakers.

As a way to give back to the community, a group of approximately 10 women meet monthly to take part in a program making patchwork quilts using donated materials. The completed quilts are then donated to the shelter to be given to their clients.

Establishing this partnership in the spring of this year, the women of the homemakers group deliver handmade quilts to the homeless shelter one to two times per month, bringing 10 to 15 quilts in each delivery.

Sand Castle Shelter Executive Director Jim Musial met with the women of the extension homemakers during their first quilt delivery. He asked the group to continue the donations, focusing specifically on giving quilts to children.

Musial referred to the children's quilts as "comfort quilts," something that the children can "hold onto and snuggle with during their stay," he said.

"Every time a new family comes into the shelter we try to give the children their own quilt, something they can take with them, something their's right off the bat."

The group of quilters meets monthly and each member plays a role in the creation of the quilts. Some women cut out squares from fabric while others design the quilts. Some women sew the squares together while others piece together the layers.

According to group member Ruby McMahon, as the women work, they focus on "how pretty they will turn out."

"We think about how happy it will make some kid," she said. "Whether they are in a home or in a hospital, it has to make them feel better. That makes it worth it all."

The group has recently begun providing pillows for the shelter as well, McMahon said, stating that she started seeking out donations of new or lightly used pillows. Using some of the donated cotton material, McMahon and her group began making pillowcases to go with these pillows.

“They are so into their work. These women are a delight. Their quilts are beautiful and I couldn't be happier,” Musial said. “I envision a long term partnership with them.”

In addition to providing bedding for the Sand Castle Shelter, the organization also donates their handmade goods to other shelters, hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The women create hospital gowns, knitted hats and blankets for infants and children as well as catheter bags and tote bags for nursing homes.

In order to continue creating the quilts, blankets and other items for those in need, the group is seeking donations from the community.

They will accept new or lightly used material, preferably cotton, but any material is accepted. The group only uses new batting, which they usually purchase from JoAnn Fabrics. Other donations sought by the group include yarn, thread and standard sewing supplies. Monetary donations will also be accepted.

Donations may be sent to or dropped off at the Purdue Extension-La Porte County office at 2857 W. Indiana 2, Suite A, La Porte, Ind. 46350.

New members are welcome to take part in this project. The group meets on the first and third Monday of every month at different locations. More information regarding donations or joining the La Porte County Extension Homemakers is available by calling (219) 326-7362.