

Project Warm Embrace

– *donating quilts for foster children in Northeast Kansas including the counties of Atchison, Douglas, Johnson, Leavenworth, and Wyandotte.*

At the January 30, 2018 Board Meeting, Starlight Quilters Guild adopted Project Warm Embrace as a community service project.

Project Warm Embrace is a statewide partnership between the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) partners and community quilters. It benefits the foster children in our local communities in Johnson County and surrounding counties of Atchison, Douglas, Leavenworth and Wyandotte. Quilts made by Kansas quilters are distributed at Christmas time to children in foster care in Kansas. KVC (once known as Kaw Valley Center) is the agency that places children with foster parents, offers education classes for anyone interested in becoming a foster parent, and annually distributes Christmas Baskets containing quilts and other handmade items received for children in foster care.

History of Project Warm Embrace

In 2008, the Warm Embrace Project began as an ongoing collection drive organized by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services' (SRS) South Central and Wichita Regions. In 2011, the project gathered 717 newly made quilts, afghans and fleece blankets, in addition to crocheted hats, gloves and scarves. In December, case workers distributed them to the children who had entered state care within the last 12 months.

The Warm Embrace Project started out as the Quilt Project, but underwent a name change in 2011 to reflect the expanding varieties of blankets accepted for donation. It is known today as **Project Warm Embrace**. Initially the seven SRS locations in south central Kansas were drop off points for donations, including El Dorado, Emporia, Hutchinson, McPherson, Newton, Wellington and Winfield service centers. In 2015, Project Warm Embrace was implemented in Atchison County, and in 2016 in Johnson County. The goal is to expand this Kansas state-wide initiative to the other counties within the Kansas City Region (Douglas, Leavenworth, and Wyandotte Counties).

Quilted Memories, a Lenexa-based quilt shop, became involved in 2016 when one of its customers Angela Block brought the Project Warm Embrace initiative to the shop's attention after seeing an email about it. Block works for the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).

There are about 6,600 children in foster care throughout Kansas. In 2016, the average age of a child in foster care was 8. The children who receive the quilts are 0 to 18 years old. The greatest need is for 40x60 sized quilts (or larger) for youth and teenage boys as well as teenage girls.

When children come into DCF's care, it is a time of insecurity and instability. Many times a child is given only 15 minutes to gather up their belongings when being removed from their home. They often leave with their possessions in a paper sack! Since children arrive with very few possessions, providing a keepsake quilt during this traumatic time in their life sends an encouraging message letting each child know they are special and that someone cares about them.

Quilt Donation Requirements:

- 45" x 60" or larger
- Cotton, denim or fleece
- Tied, hand quilted or machine quilted
- NO embellishments as they may not be child safe
- NO puff paints
- Fabric bags to hold a child's personal belongings are also welcome.

Benefits of Project Warm Embrace for the Starlight Quilters Guild

- Quilters are such giving individuals. Project Warm Embrace, a Kansas-based community service project, is a perfect opportunity for members of the Starlight Quilters Guild to positively affect foster care children in our local communities...simply by sharing their time, talents and treasures to make and donate quilts.
- There is no cost to the Starlight Quilters Guild.
- All members with varying quilting skill levels are invited to participate.
- There are no requirements or expectations for the number of quilts to be donated from the guild or individual members. All donated quilts will be genuinely appreciated by the Kansas DCF.
- Provides a wonderful opportunity for SQG members to work together should they choose, e.g., one quilter can piece a quilt top, one can donate batting, one can quilt the quilt (or pay for machine quilting), and one quilter can attach the binding.
- Fabric bags can be simply made by adding a draw string to a pillowcase.
- Offers SQG members a chance to use their stash fabric and create cheerful quilts for children ages 8 and older. It also may inspire UFOs to get completed and/or quilt tops to be quilted as donation quilts for Project Warm Embrace.

Drops off location in Johnson County Kansas for quilts and Dream Bags is:

Angela Block, Human Services Assistant
Kansas Department for Children & Families
DCF Office for Johnson County
8915 Lenexa Drive
Overland Park, KS 66214

913-942-3236 (NEW work phone number as of March 2019)
angela.block@ks.gov

Project Warm Embrace Contact for Kansas City Region:

James 'Jim' Harmon, Kansas City Regional Supervisor
Kansas Department for Children & Families
DCF Office for Douglas County
1901 Delaware
Lawrence, KS 66046

785-832-3860
James.Harmon@ks.gov