

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 2-year 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 and offers education classes for anyone interested in becoming a foster parent. DCF and KVC Staff distribute quilts and fabric bags to children in foster care thought out the year and at Christmas time.

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 worked for the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) Johnson County Office at the time.

There are over 6,500 children in foster care throughout Kansas. In 2016, the average age of a child in foster care was 8. many are teenagers up to age 18. **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 (twin size)
- Cotton, denim or fleece; use youth and teen friendly fabrics
- Tied, hand quilted or machine quilted
- NO seasonal fabrics
- NO embellishments as they may not be child safe
- NO puff paints
- Fabric bags to hold a child's personal belongings are always welcome.

Benefits of Project Warm Embrace for Community Quilters

- Quilters are such giving individuals. Project Warm Embrace, a Kansas-based community service project, is a perfect opportunity for quilters to positively affect foster care children in the NE Kansas communities... simply by sharing their time, talents and treasures to make and donate quilts.
- Quilters with varying quilting skill levels are invited to participate.
- There are no requirements or expectations for the number of quilts to be donated. Kansas DCF genuinely appreciates all donated quilts and fabric bags (example: quilted/corded backpacks or simply a pillowcase with a drawstring/cord).
- Donating to Project Warm Embrace offers quilters a chance to use their stash fabric along with purchased fabric to create cheerful quilts for children ages 8 and older. It also may inspire UFOs (UnFinished PrOjects) to get completed and/or quilt tops to be quilted as donation quilts for Project Warm Embrace.

Drop off location in Johnson County Kansas for quilts and fabric bags is:

Kansas Department for Children & Families
DCF Office for Johnson County
8915 Lenexa Drive
Overland Park, KS 66214

913-826-7300

Please label your donations **ATTENTION: James Harmon for Project Warm Embrace**

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

Current as of October 4, 2023