

## LOCAL NEWS

# Athens Regional welcomes Quilts for Kids to pediatrics

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Betty Wright, the Northeast Georgia chapter president of Quilts for Kids, recently reached out to Athens Regional Pediatrics to offer a new volunteer partnership. Her team is passionate about quilting — so much so that their overflowing stock of quilts begged for homes. But who could benefit?

The group decided that children in need would receive these cheerful, bright reminders that someone cares for them. In the last three-and-a-half years, Wright's Gainesville-based quilting group has provided more than 1,400 quilts to children in need in that area — be it a medical need, homelessness or a foster care situation.

“Our quilts are filled with love and it's apparent when a child receives one; it makes them smile,” Wright said.

Susan Rice, who organizes a Nicholson-based quilting group, hopes to partner with Athens Regional Medical Center's pediatric unit using Wright's model. They plan monthly visits to share a smile and a quilt with a child. Along with quilters Chris Harmon and Deborah Landress, Rice and Wright toured the pediatric unit for the first time Oct. 26, pulling their red wagon and giving quilts to patients. Landress also represents the Athens-Oconee Junior Women's Club, a part of the General Federation of Women, and she will be tracking this project for that organization as well.

The group takes great care in its efforts — all quilts are made from 100 percent cotton fabric and are machine-stitched to withstand years of use. All are washed and bagged in a large Ziploc bag for storage until presentation. Volunteers work together at regularly-scheduled quilting sessions organized by Quilts with Friends in Nicholson. Quilters of all experience levels, from experts to beginners, can participate.

At this first visit of many to come, the group found the children eager to receive these hand-made treasures.



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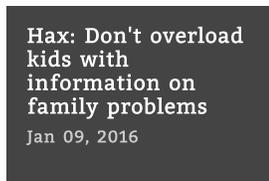
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"I only hope I can keep up with the needs and wants of the kids at ARMC. I know I'm going to enjoy trying," Rice said.

While the ladies imagine a day when they might provide every child at Athens Regional with a quilt during their stay, Rice stresses that their motto helps them keep perspective on their mission: "one stitch, one quilt, one kid at a time."

For more information on Quilts for Kids, visit [www.negaquiltsforkids.org](http://www.negaquiltsforkids.org).

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