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ORGANIZATIONS: QUILTS FOR KIDS

Candice Dyer

Quilts for Kids helps tuck in about 30,000 children a year.

The organization started 13 years ago when Linda Arye found some fabric samples thrown away near a dumpster in Pennsylvania and decided to repurpose them for a child in need. Since then, the organization has grown to include around 100 chapters of members who convene regularly at quilting bees to stitch patches into cheery-colored 36"x 48" coverlets, which are distributed to children who are hospitalized or lodging in shelters for homeless families and victims of domestic violence.

Georgia claims busy chapters in Waycross, Mur-rayville and Gainesville.

"I call the local hospitals ahead of time to find out the ages and genders of the pediatric patients," says Betty Wright, founder of the Gainesville group, which has given away 452 quilts since starting in 2012. "I go every other Friday and every holiday. When a child is in the hospital, that family's life is on hold, and just a small gesture can make a big difference."

Quilts for Kids supplies kits to help groups get started and welcomes donations of fabric and sewing supplies.

"We have 184 members signed up who vary in attendance, but we meet twice a month for quilting workshops that last around four hours," Wright says, "so it's a relaxing outlet for us while doing for others. One person will iron, while another sews, and we all talk."

Delivery days can turn social and therapeutic, too.

"I don't ask questions, but sometimes parents and children want to tell me their story," she says, "and if they want to talk, I'll stay there and listen as long as they like."

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