



WARM WELCOME PROJECT GIVES NEWBORNS A "GIFT OF LOVE" FROM THE COMMUNITY; ALZHEIMERS PATIENTS ALSO BENEFIT



Sue Ellington and Jeanne Kinney prepare quilts for final review before delivery the MCDH maternity unit. Kinney made 275 quilts her first year as a Warm Welcome project member.

Started Eight Years Ago, Ocean Wave Quilt Club Has Made More Than 2,550 Quilts for Infants

In 2002, Fort Bragg resident Shirlee Paoli had an idea: she wanted to make sure that every new mom and her baby knew that they were an important part of the community by presenting them with a handmade baby quilt. That was the beginning of Project Warm Welcome.



"I decided to ask the OB department at Mendocino Coast District Hospital if they would be willing to present all new moms with a small quilt," recalls Paoli. After receiving an enthusiastic response from the department, she began to sew quilts using the fabric and supplies she had on hand. "When I found out there were about 25 babies born each month I realized I could not do this on my own," she laughs. "My sister began to sew quilts and we soon had enough to begin the project." Shirlee is a member of the Ocean Wave Quilt Club, and soon other

club members got involved. By February 2003 they began to deliver quilts to the hospital.

Over 2,000 quilts and counting

Today Warm Welcome is going strong, and has delivered an estimated 2,550 quilts to moms and their newborns. The project has been expanded to include the midwife practice in Mendocino. "We're hoping to include any other births on the coast," says Paoli. The club also makes texture quilts for the Senior Center Day Care program and lap quilts for Sherwood Oaks Hospital.

"All members of Ocean Wave contribute to the project," says Paoli. "Some club members commit to a certain number of quilts each month while others contribute when they are able." Donations of fabric and other supplies come from club members and also from others in the community. The Ocean Wave Club treasury purchases the batting needed for filling the quilts. The quilts are generally made at home, although members occasionally sew in groups. There are about 50 members in the club.

The group uses washable fabrics, cotton is preferred, and synthetic batting. The quilts are small, most about 40" square. Sizes and designs vary depending on the maker. Paoli says each quilt takes about five hours of work.

The goal is to keep enough quilts at the hospital so the parents can choose one that appeals to them. "I deliver them as often as needed," she says. "The staff calls when they need more. I try to keep 8 to 12 in their cupboard at all times."

A creative, satisfying endeavor

"The project is not only making and giving the quilts," says Paoli, "it is a creative process that helps us become better quilters. By using leftover or unwanted supplies that might otherwise be discarded, it allows us to try new designs in a small format, or colors we're unsure of — and of course we get the satisfaction of giving a surprise gift."

"We do hear from the recipients from time-to-time, and we love



Dee Goodrich



Shirlee Paoli

seeing one of our quilts in use around the community," she says.



Ocean Wave Quilt Club President Robin Wheat

Want more information?

Anyone interested in learning more about Warm Welcome or the Ocean Wave Quilt Club is encouraged to call club president Robin Wheat at 707-616-5231. The

club meets the second Sunday of each month at Fort Bragg Senior Center at 2:00 pm, and visitors are welcome.

"We love what we do and enjoy sharing our quilts with others," says Paoli, noting that each quilt bears a tag saying, "This little quilt is a gift of love from your community and Project Warm Welcome".



Nodja Jones

Mendocino Coast Hospital • 700 River Drive • Fort Bragg, CA 95437 • [Click for Google Maps](#)

707-961-1234 (office) • [Contact Page](#) • [Privacy Policy](#)

© 2013, Mendocino Coast Hospital • All Rights Reserved.