



**AZ Blankets
4 Kids**

Azie's Blanket Coverage

Spring 2004 Edition

Phoenix, AZ

Blanket Delivery

Update

Thank you, volunteers! Your generous donations have made it possible for AZ Blankets 4 Kids to distribute **3,825** blankets to various agencies that assist seriously ill and traumatized children during our fiscal year ended 9/30/03, and another **1,505** since!

Total deliveries from inception to date :

14,124!

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Contact us:

(480)283-8746

Info@azblankets4kids.com

www.azblankets4kids.com

Quilters' Gathering

Attention AZB4K Volunteers—we're going to camp! Announcing AZ Blankets 4 Kids Volunteer Quilters' Gathering. Join us for the weekend of August 20—22, 2004 at Camp Emmanuel Pines, Prescott, AZ. The camp fee of \$100 includes two nights lodging, five awesome meals and lots of fun! This is a pleasure weekend. Work on your own project, bring your sewing machine or not. Quilting, sewing, embroidery, redwork, knitting, crochet, the choice is yours. We are hoping to include a few speakers

in our "unschedule." We'll share some quilting tips and tricks, and of course, lots of snacks and goodies. We are looking forward to getting to know our volunteers better and making new friends, too. Space is limited, so send your \$35 non-refundable deposit by January 31, 2004 to reserve your place. The balance of \$65 is due by May 1. Mail to: AZ Blankets 4 Kids, Inc., PO Box 11206, Tempe, AZ 85284-0021. For more information, please call Elliot at (480)857-0254.

Blanket Bee at Palmas del Sol East

Meet us in Apache Junction for a blanket bee at Palmas del Sol East on Saturday, January 17, 2004 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Bring your sewing machine and basic sewing kit.

Quilt kits, batting, etc. will be provided. Our thanks to Liz Gossett and Jeannine Denton of Palmas del Sol East Quilt Club for hosting this bee! (see directions-page 4)

Meet Volunteer Bunnie Williams

The volunteer we'd like to thank and recognize this month is Bunnie Williams. Bunnie was born in Brooklyn, NY, raised in Michigan, and later traveled all over the world as an Air Force wife. The Williams' have three daughters living in Colorado, California and Texas. The Williams' settled in Arizona in 1981 upon retirement from the Air Force. Bunnie was not ready to retire and continued to teach school in the Chandler district until 1991, where she continues as a substitute teacher today. Her favorite grade to teach is kindergarten, because that's where she sees the most progress and kindergarteners love their teacher! Bunnie related a humorous classroom experience: she allows the students to call her "Mrs. Bunnie" and by the end of one school day she had become "Mrs. Rabbit"!

Bunnie has supported our organization with donations from the very beginning. In fact, she named our bear mascot, *Azie*. Bunnie attended a bee at the Chandler Police Department and entered her idea in a contest to name our bear. Her idea was chosen from many creative entries received that day. Bunnie, who knits and crochets, has donated 144 blankets to date. These blankets have come from her mother, sister, and a special group she works with at Carestone Assisted Living in Tempe. She also has an arrangement with knitters from St. Matthew's Methodist Church to exchange her dark yarns for child friendly light yarns. Bunnie's most memorable event: being invited to her former kindergarten student's wedding! A warm hug and many thanks to you, Bunnie!

Preemie Bee at The Quilter's Koop

Mark you calendars! We're having a Preemie Bee on March 6, 2004, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Our thanks to Quilter's Koop for hosting this bee at their shop, 5053 E. Elliot Rd., Phoenix, 85044. Please be sure to bring your sewing machine in addition to your basic sewing kit. The pre-cut preemie quilt kits that will be provided require minimal hand sewing. See you there!

Agency Spotlight: St. Joseph's Hospital NICU

We asked St. Joseph's Hospital's Jerenda Ford, Liaison, Nursery ICU Development Program, for information to share with our volunteers about St. Joseph's Hospital, the Nursery Intensive Care Unit and the families they serve. St. Joseph's was the first hospital to receive blankets from our organization. AZ Blankets 4 Kids currently provides 50 to 70 blankets to St. Joseph's Hospital each month. Her own words best express what the beautiful blankets that you, our volunteers, create so lovingly mean to the families that receive them.

Christmas, 2003

To all of you at AZ Blankets 4 Kids . . .

My name is Jerenda. I am the person at St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix that has the privilege of accepting your gifts of love from Mary, an angel on your team.

I want you to know that what you do means so much to us as a staff here at St. Joe's. It is so wonderful to watch the gaze of a new Mom or Dad when they see that their new baby has a beautiful blanket of their own. The knowledge that someone has taken time to give a special blanket to their baby lets them relax just a tiny bit and know that the nurses care for their baby, and will take good care of him/her when Mom and Dad can't.

I also want you to know from the parent's end how much your labors of love mean.

Twenty years ago I had a beautiful baby boy. We named him Christian. He ended up in the Newborn ICU at St. Alexis Hospital in Bismarck, ND. On Christmas Day, they passed out Christmas blankets to all of the babies in the NICU that had been made by a group like yours. They had an extra one, and our son received two that day. When I took him home, I remember saying to my mom, "What am I supposed to do with THESE?" I knew he wouldn't be alive by the next Christmas. My Mom, in all her wisdom, told me to put them away, that not now, but someday I would know what to do with them. So that's exactly what I did. I washed them and boxed them up and sat them on a shelf. Three years later my second son was born in September. We named him Landon and he was the joy of our lives. When Thanksgiving rolled around and my thoughts turned to Landon's first Christmas, suddenly I knew what I wanted to do with those blankets. I got them out, washed them again, and used them to wrap him up whenever we went for the whole month of December. So many people noticed and commented on how nice it was that I had Christmas blankets for him. Later I washed them and boxed them up . . . not really thinking of them again for several more years. Five Christmases went by. Then we were blessed another son in February. I dug those blankets out again and used them with love again for Bryson.

When we were ready to box up the Christmas decorations that year, my husband, Paul, suggested that we keep the blankets with the Christmas stuff and use them somehow in our home from then on. I thought he was crazy, but I agreed. The next year when we were getting our decorations out, out came Christian's blankets. Paul put one under our nativity set and draped one over the back of a chair. Every year thereafter, we used these two blankets in our home. One is always under the nativity set, and the other changes places each year.

Two years ago, when we were packing up Christmas stuff once again, Landon asked me, "Mom, when Bryson and I are old enough, and have our first babies, will you give each of us one of these blankets?" My first thought was NO! They are MINE! Everything I have left of his fits in the bottom half of a brown paper bag along with these two blankets. That's all I have to remember my beautiful firstborn son. But no more had that thought gone through my head, when the tears started to fall and the words came out of my mouth. "Well, of course I will!" These boys wanted something that belonged to the brother that they never knew, that had come before them, that they love, to remember him by and use in their own family traditions. All three of my boys have used those blankets. They are the ONLY things that all three of them have used. Now that will go on in their own families.

So you see, what you do so beautifully out of love . . . isn't just for today. It goes on and on. Christian would have been 20 this year and I am still using those blankets and loving them . . . I used them for the two boys that followed him, and these traditions that we have will go on for many years and even generations to come. Keep doing what you are doing. We as staff and we as families thank you for it. You are awesome.

Blanket Guidelines

We have developed the following blanket guidelines based on feedback from our recipient agencies.

Materials

100% cotton fabrics in child friendly patterns and colors. For knitted or crocheted blankets, please use washable, acrylic yarns. We have had an increasing number of requests for flannel receiving blankets and fleece blankets.

Construction

All blankets should be machine or hand quilted, or tied every four to six inches with a square knot (except Premies). These blankets are well-used and need to be durable and washable. If tied, agencies request that we use pearl cotton or embroidery thread as opposed to yarn. Visit our website at www.azblankets4kids.com for pattern ideas or use your own.

If you are using a kit provided by AZ Blankets 4 Kids, *please follow the directions* provided to ensure consistent finished sizes.

Spring Blanket Bee at Chandler Police Department

Join us for our Spring Blanket Bee on February 21, 2004, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It will be held at the Chandler Police Department Community Room, 250 East Chicago, Chandler. Even if you do not sew, there is a job for everyone! Layering, closing, attaching labels, tying—your help is needed! If you do sew, bring your machine and basic sewing kit. We'll supply quilt kits, batting, etc. Bring your talents, bring a bag lunch (water, coffee, tea and snacks will be provided) and bring a friend!

We appreciate the support of the Chandler Police Department in allowing us the use of their facility for our bees. Our third annual Autumn Blanket Bee was held there on October 18, 2003. Betty Riffl of Child Protective Services was our guest that day and gave a very touching and informative presentation about her agency and how our blankets bring comfort to the children in their care. At the bee we received donations of 75 blankets and 14 quilt tops. 132 blankets were prepared for delivery of which 57 had been completed at the bee. Thank you to all who attended!

Knitted or crocheted blankets should be closely knit to protect tiny fingers and toes and **no smaller than 36" X 36" in size (not suitable for premies).**

Sizes

Premies 16" x 16" to 18" x 18" Blankets must have flannel backing, no batting and minimal quilting. Either stitch from corner to corner in an X or stitch 2" from edges on all four sides. Do not tie. Infant-themed colors and prints are preferred.

Infant 36" x 36" or larger

Toddler 36" x 44" (one yard of fabric)

Child 36" x 44" or larger

Teens 40" x 60" or larger

We often receive requests for more blankets suitable for boys or in gender neutral colors and patterns, especially in the Teen size. Thank you for keeping our teenaged recipients in mind.

Gold Wing Road Riders Association



Thanks once again to the Goldwing Road Riders Association, Chapter F, for their generous support!

Keeping in touch

Thank you to all of you who have supported AZ Blankets 4 Kids with your generous donations of finished quilts, fabric, batting and other supplies and to the quilt shops who participate as drop off points for us. We would welcome the opportunity to acknowledge your donations and keep in touch with you through our newsletters and email updates. Please note that we do not share this information with anyone outside of AZ Blankets 4 Kids. When you drop off your donations, please include your name, address, telephone, email address, and quilting group if applicable. Also let us know if you need a receipt for tax purposes and whether or not you wish to be included on our mailing list.

AZIE thanks our local shops!

Next time you are out shopping for blanket making and quilting supplies, please thank these shops for providing drop off points for AZ Blankets 4 Kids. We appreciate their support!

Bernina Southwest

7143 E. Southern Ave.
Mesa

Cutting Edge Quiltworks

1949 W. Ray Road #38
Chandler

Quilter's Delight

8230 E. Raintree Dr. #106
Scottsdale

Quilter's Ranch

1030 E. Baseline Rd.
#178, Tempe

Jo-Ann Fabrics and Crafts

12228 N. Cave Creek Rd.
Phoenix

Quiltery

10757 NW Grand Ave.
Sun City

Sun Valley Quilts

9857 W. Bell Road
Sun City (623)972-2091

Zoe's Trunk

2986 N. Alma School Rd
Mesa

Quilter's Companion

Longarm
Goodyear (623)536-5882

Quilter's Koop

5053 E. Elliot Road
Phoenix (480)785-0710

Upcoming Events

Saturday, January 17

Palmas del Sol East Blanket Bee
Apache Junction , 9 a.m.—4 p.m.
From Hwy 60, exit at Ironwood Dr.
turn right. Enter at Palmas del
Sol guard house.

Saturday, February 21

Spring Blanket Bee
Chandler Police Department
250 E. Chicago, Chandler
9 a.m.—3 p.m.

Saturday, March 6

Preemie Bee - Quilter's Koop
10 a.m.—4 p.m.

First Wednesday of the month

Sunrise Village Clubhouse
5402 E. McKellips (NE corner at
Higley) 9 a.m.—3 p.m.

Third Thursday each month

Las Palmas Grand
2250 S. Ellsworth Rd. (1 mi. south
of Baseline) 9 a.m.—3 p.m.

AZ Blankets 4 Kids, Inc.
P. O. Box 11206
Tempe, AZ 85284-0021

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED