

Project Linus

Providing Security Through Blankets

Chapter Coordinators Convened for Charity & Comfort

Equipped with products donated by industry leaders, Project Linus Chapter Coordinators and their guests from across the U.S. gathered in Illinois to be educated, inspired and to learn new techniques in creating quilts and blankets that will provide love, warmth, and comfort to children who are seriously ill or traumatized.

Nearly 200 participants attended the 10th annual Project Linus National Conference, June 18-21, at the Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center, in Bloomington, IL. The conference is held each summer as an educational seminar and is open only to Project Linus Chapter Coordinators.

Organization President Carol Babbitt said, "Project Linus Chapter Coordinators came together for four days of education, inspiration and networking and fun. It is a unique opportunity to meet one another and share experiences. And of course, everything in which they participate is taken back to their local chapters to be shared with an estimated 40,000+ blanketeers and volunteers."



Meryl Ann Butler with samples of 90-Minute Quilts that were made in her class.

Photo credit: Tracy E. Locke.


Mark Hyland, CEO of Handi Quilter and author of *Help! I Married a Quilter*, was the keynote speaker for the Saturday Symposium. Chef J. Warren, Five-Star Executive Chef and bestselling author, tempted energetic stitchers who had worked up an appetite with a cooking class on Friday afternoon. Cathy Miller, The Singing Quilter, provided entertainment at the Friday dinner. And Saturday night's closing event mixed humor and inspiration in a presentation by speaker and author Kirk Weisler (www.KirkWeisler.com) who offered a message of encouragement to the quilters and blanketeers to continue to share their talents and abilities with those in need.

Meryl Ann Butler taught techniques from her book, *90-Minute Quilts: 15+ Projects You Can Stitch in an Afternoon* (www.90minutequilts.com) in two classes. She has created and designed many quilt-related community service projects, including the First U.S.-Soviet Children's Peace Quilt Exchange Project (1987-88), and the Anti-Apartheid: Love for All Mankind Quilt (1993), now in the collection of Nelson Mandela. In the days following the Virginia Tech shootings in 2007, she created healing quilts for both the school, and for her daughter, a student there.

Meryl Ann noted, "They don't call quilts 'comforters' for nothing!"

Several dozen quilts for the Project Linus coffers were made in Meryl Ann's classes. All of the materials for these quilts as well as door prizes were donated by industry leaders: Quilting Treasures provided fabrics from their Marie Osmond Heirloom Gardens and Paddington collections, and backing and binding flannel fabrics were supplied by Henry Glass. Fairfield Processing provided Nature-Fil Bamboo Batting, a new blend of sustainable bamboo fiber/organic cotton batting, and threads were courtesy of Coats and Clark.

The use of 100 Brother sewing machines was provided by Galesburg Sewing Center, Galesburg, IL. Owner, Dave Gillette, also donated the grand prize, a Brother SE270D sewing machine, which was won by Kathy Atha of El Paso, TX. Other door prize donors included: Clover Needlecraft, Cut for the Cure Rulers (Brewer), Fairfield Processing, Island Batik, Pym-Dritz, and *Quilting NOW* and *Quilter's World* magazines.

Project Linus is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation that provides love, a sense of security, warmth, and comfort to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need, through their gifts of new, handmade blankets. An estimated 50,000 volunteers in 400 chapters across the U.S. have donated over two million lovingly sewn, quilted, knitted, and crocheted blankets since the inception of the project in 1995. To make a donation of blankets or a monetary contribution, or to locate a local chapter near you, visit the website www.projectlinus.org. 



Quilts provide warmth and comfort: 90-Minute Quilt by Meryl Ann Butler.

Photo credit: Donna Arabie Photography.

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