



Total donations
since we started:

560,613

This year to date:

156

Community Interest Company No. 08422226

February 2023

STITCHING TOGETHER

A wonderful story **PROJECT LINUS TAKES OFF IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

TWO WOMEN

*And boundless commitment all over the Province—as told
by a local newspaper*

Betty, Markethill and Aubreen at the heart of something special

MARKETHILL can never be accused of shirking responsibility toward-people in need. Time and again it has come to the aid of the sick, the disabled, the disadvantaged or the distressed.

In the countdown to Christmas 2022 locals rose to the challenge yet again, offering support to babies, children and teenagers by providing hand-made hats, cardigans and blankets.

A key link in the start-to-finish chain is Aubreen Willis of Markethill & Willis Hardware shop fame. She has provided a drop-off point for those items, much to the delight of Project Linus Northern Ireland co-ordinator, Betty Fiddes.

And with Aubreen having confirmed her willingness to continue that all-important service, a delighted Betty told the Gazette, "I'd just like to take this opportunity to thank all those ladies who knit and sew blankets and quilts for us.

“I’d like to thank Aubreen in particular for providing the local drop-off point for all the items produced in this area. We’re so grateful to her for that – and the fact that she will be keeping this going.” Highlighting the importance of this role, Betty continued, “As well as providing a drop-off point, Aubreen has lined up groups of women from all over Northern Ireland who knit and sew, so she really plays a major part in all of this.” A number of women in Markethill and the surrounding area, who avail of the service she provides, produce items for Project Linus. Explaining how she first became involved in this UK-wide project Betty told the Gazette, “This all started as a result of me having been ill. As part of my recovery, I went to a quilt festival in Birmingham which is where I met ladies from Project Linus, which already was big in England and quite well known. Over here, though, it wasn’t.



She continued, “I was asked if I’d be interested in becoming a co-ordinator for Northern Ireland and when I asked what that would entail I was told what it would mean me contacting some sewing or knitting groups, organising delivery of what they’d made to me so that I could check there were no flaws or possibly dangerous embellishments, and then distribute them to whoever needed them.

“It all started off with just a couple of local craft groups who agreed to make things. And then I started to go round Women’s Institute meetings and giving out leaflets. A lot of ladies came on board and it has just grown from that. “There are now groups of women all over the country making quilts and knitting blankets, cardigans and hats for babies.” Explaining her working relationship with Aubreen, Betty said, “I met Aubreen through her church group. She invited me to address them to explain what I was trying to do. I did, I’m pleased to say that they were very positive. They began making things and they’ve been doing that ever since.

“Aubreen has women making things down by Warrenpoint, all over County Tyrone, Markethill, Armagh – the whole area, in fact. She rings me, I go and collect what has been delivered to her, sort those things out, check them and then pass them on to the hospices, some of the hospitals’ neo-natal units or anywhere else that we know needs them. I also give a lot to Baby Basics in Laurelvale to support the work they’re doing to help mothers and babies.

Quilts are the main thing we distribute and these go to the Royal Victoria Hospital for Sick Children, the Intensive Care Unit and some of the other specialised wards. “I forwarded 40 quilts before Christmas and I’ve just received a letter back from the TLC (Total Leucocyte Count) unit thanking us for these.

“There are others we were going to send to the Children’s Cancer Fund, but they told us that because the kids get so much at Christmas, it would be better if we waited until the end of January when they’d be better appreciated.”

Betty admits to being “amazed” by the extent to which the whole thing



initially took off and has since mushroomed. “When I started this, it was just a small, purely local thing,” she reflected. “But now we have people making quilts and blankets all over the country, which is wonderful.

“Throughout the Covid lockdown we were able to keep going, just getting on with quietly making blankets and quilts in the safety of our own homes and then delivering them to help other people.

“I think that was good for all of us because it kept us occupied and doing something worthwhile.”

Betty Fiddes

Northern Ireland Area Co-ordinator



..More pleases, more thanks....

Hello—I'm G....y I' work in a school in South Yorkshire. Children are just so distressed at the moment, after Covid, they're catching the Cost of Living worries from their parents—many of them can't sleep. I found out about Project Linus on line and I would like to buy some quilts and blankets which would help so many of our children. Can you help me please?

please

*Thank
you*

Hello—I'm coming over from Selby with a few blankets—when will you be at home.

She turned up with two huge cardboard boxes of crocheted blankets, from small size to single bed size.

"Can I come over and meet your group, and talk to them?"

"Oh, there isn't a group, there's just me"

- we have had such amazing feedback from our clients who are making good use of the lovely blankets you donated.

One client specifically messaged her worker to tell her how cosy her child was feeling wrapped up warm in her blanket after she'd picked it up from the office.

I can't tell you the difference these have made to clients who are struggling with energy costs, it's a very scary time for many this winter & you've definitely made a positive difference.

A big thank you Anna & wishing all of Project Linus a very Merry Christmas & all the very best for 2023.

We really appreciate your support,

Best wishes,

Melanie , IDAS (Independent Domestic Abuse Services, York)

Thank you

My daughter was admitted to the Children's Hospital in Edinburgh in September when she was four weeks old. What had started as a cold led to severe bronchiolitis and she was unable to breathe. We spent a week on the ward, where she had oxygen therapy and other treatments before she was well enough to go home and join her dad and brothers.

It was such a lonely and frightening time in the hospital, with few home comforts or moments of peace. So when the nurse came and gave me one of your beautiful quilts to take home it felt like a big hug from caring strangers.

To think that there are people who get together to make something so beautiful for children who are unwell, who they will likely never meet, is just wonderful!! I think what you do is lovely and when I am less 'hands on' with my own children, I will join a group like yours and help make another family feel looked after like we did.

Our daughter is now 14 weeks old and a happy healthy little girl. Please thank all the volunteers involved in making the quilts. Sending best wishes to you all at Christmas x

Thank you

I just wanted to drop you a note to say Thank You for the quilt donated to us when we were in Wishaw with Mia.

Mia had a bad case of jaundice just after birth so had to spend 48 hours in intensive care before we finally all got home several days later. The generosity and hard work of the staff was fantastic and the quilt donated by your project helped incredibly at quite a stressful time!

I've attached a picture of Mia in the quilt so you can let whoever made it know how grateful we are for it. Mia is now enjoying her new home with a little extra warmth!

Thanks again - Iain



Thank you !!

Linus Quilt Deliveries - Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian We thought you'd like to know that since 2014 we have delivered 5,550 quilts to children through recipient organisations in our area. We have around 120 individuals and groups making our quilts. It is a wonderful team effort. Thank you everyone. Barbara, Beth and Pip.,

Just a little note to say thank you so much for making such beautiful quilts for the kids at the hospital. Our daughter is currently there quite poorly and hugging the pink dinosaur quilt is making her tummy feel much better after lots of sore coughing. Thank you

Send your stories and thank-you's so we can all share them How did Project Linus start in your area? How did your local craft and women's groups get involved? Send your stories and-pictures.

How many children has Project Linus helped in your area? Send your stories and thank you's. and photos where you can—share them with all of us. anna briggs—editor.

Easy Fundraising

Don't forget if you shop online, please sign up to easyfundraising and help support Project Linus UK!

It's a really simple way to raise money for Project Linus UK through your every-day online shopping with retailers like Amazon, Argos, John Lewis, ASOS, Booking.com, eBay, Boden, and M&S and it's completely free!

Over £20 million has already been raised for good causes in the UK by easyfundraising shoppers so please help us get our share here: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/projectlinus

Money already raised from easyfundraising went towards helping our co-ordinators provide fabric and wadding for their volunteers. All proceeds are re-invested in Project Linus and the work that we do together.

www.projectlinusuk.org.uk

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