

Stitching Together – Autumn 2023

The newsletter for supporters of Project Linus UK



Community Interest Company No. 08422226

“A Quilt is a hug you can keep”

Total Donations received since 2020: **589,606**

Donations received so far this year: **28,756**

Focus on PLUK Director Sarah Smith



I rather fell into the role of a Co-ordinator after I met Mary, the Herefordshire PLUK Area Co-ordinator in a well-known quilt shop in 2015 and she was looking for someone to assist with talks. Before I knew it I was signed up as the Assistant Area Co-ordinator! This was a gentle and excellent introduction into the role. I volunteered at the PLUK stand at the Festival of Quilts a few times and through this, I got to know the Directors and fellow Co-ordinators.

In 2017 PLUK Head Office were asking for nominations for another Director and after a chat with the Directors followed by an interview I was appointed. Initially my role was to answer the website queries but my current responsibility is to receive the delivery numbers sent in monthly by over 130 Area Co-ordinators country wide and keep the spreadsheets up to date so we always have an accurate total of how many deliveries have been made throughout the country.

I thoroughly enjoy both aspects of my involvement with PLUK and would recommend anyone who has thought about becoming a Co-ordinator to ‘go for it’. There is always plenty of help from Head Office and from fellow Co-ordinators and no pressure from anyone to take on more than you feel you would like to do.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Caroline Fogell - PLUK Area Co-ordinator for Liverpool



Following a delivery to The Whitechapel Centre in Liverpool, Caroline received this letter letting her know how useful the blankets would be.

Many thanks to the Liverpool group of Project Linus UK for these lovely handmade blankets. Our family centres will be using these for picnics in our garden over the summer and they will also go down well with our toddlers at reading time as they are so snuggly.

Marion Henderson - PLUK UK Co-ordinator, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire & Glasgow South



Marion received this thank you from Kim, the Clinical Co-ordinator at the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow. Kim also included some lovely photographs of children with their quilts.



“I just wanted to say thank you once again for the lovely quilts donated by the ladies and gents of your Linus Project group.

I distributed them to the wards and thought it would be nice to attach a few wee photographs that the SCN had taken in one of the wards of the children enjoying the comfort of their quilts.” Many thanks, Regards, Kim



Helen Hayes – PLUK Area Co-ordinator for Stockport

We are a very new group and in March I was approached by Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital (RMCH), Paediatric Urology Unit asking if we could help them make mermaid tails for bladder exstrophy babies. Children born with this condition have their bladder (and/or bowel) on the outside of their body.

RMCH performs between 10 - 12 operations each year and takes patients from across the UK, as only London and Manchester specialise in this procedure.

At 12 months old the children have major reconstruction surgery which requires them to stay flat in a cot for four weeks with their legs bandaged together from waist to ankle, then a further two weeks when they can go home before the bandages are removed.

The group rose to the challenge and 14 mermaid tails were made and delivered to the unit, what a privilege to be able to help these young children at such a crucial time in their development. Prototypes were designed and sewn which met with nurses and parents approval, and when the children are allowed to go



home after four weeks, they can go out to see family and friends wearing their mermaid tails to cover their bandaged legs. This also allows siblings to understand the procedure that their young brother or sister has undergone. The mermaid tails would later be a keepsake with photos also taken from such a significant time in their young lives.



Kim Wood – PLUK Area Co-ordinator for East Staffordshire

The Pathway Project in Lichfield have asked us to share this article about their work and how they value the quilts they are donated by local volunteers. PLUK East Staffordshire have provided quilts to their families for over 15 years.

“Pathway Project, a registered charity in Staffordshire, was set up over 30 years ago by Kathy Coe MBE and supports victims of Domestic and Sexual Abuse. We have 2 refuges housing up to 21 families (women and children). We also support men and have a house where we can accommodate them if they need refuge. We have a great team of specialists, counsellors and outreach workers to support and help with all aspects of dealing with the trauma our families have been through as well as the practicalities of rebuilding their lives. We operate a 24-hour helpline, and most importantly we always believe what we are told with no judgement. We also work within the community on a one-to-one basis and

run groups addressing how to recognise the signs of Domestic Abuse, Moving on from Domestic Abuse, Anxiety and Menopause and Craft groups.



We were recently donated some beautiful handmade patchwork quilts by Kim. The women and children who come to us seeking refuge often have had to leave their homes in the middle of the night with absolutely nothing but the clothes they are wearing. We try to ensure that all their basic needs are met with essential like toiletries and clothes and a toy for children waiting for them in their room.

We recently had a mother and her 2 young children, a boy and a girl who came to us for refuge. The situation they found themselves in included both physical and coercive control of both the mother and her children. We

received a call through our helpline as the perpetrator had physically abused the children as well as mum after an argument.

This was the last straw. They came to us that night. Both mum and children were traumatised after the abuse they had suffered. The room we offered them had a single bed and bunk beds for the children. We put the lovely quilts on the beds. The children's quilts had lovely children's themes on them - perfect for a boy and a girl. This made the room feel so much more homely and we made sure



the children knew these were theirs to keep. Sometimes it is the smallest of things that can make a difference and this sort of kind gesture can really make the difference, particularly to a child -to know that people care.

Debbie, Community Outreach and Fundraising Officer, Pathway Project
Registered Charity Number 1005976

This lovely thank you message shows how much the work of our volunteer stitchers is of benefit not just to the babies and children but also to their parents.

“I am currently 8 weeks into my NICU journey with premature twins, born at 28 weeks gestation. In each hospital we have been in (from Southampton to Portsmouth to Chichester) we have been blessed with blankets and incubator quilts every day. These have not only provided warmth, protection and comfort to my babies, but also helped doctors and nurses identify each baby from one another. At times, my babies required different levels of care and ended up in different hospitals over 40 miles from one another. I was able to hold onto blankets that both of them had been wrapped in to keep their smell close to me when I couldn’t be there with them. I will be forever grateful for all your wonderful donators who lovingly create these blankets. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Love from Naomi.”

Elizabeth Gunn, our Area Co-ordinator for Torbay and South Hams has received this thank you from Sharon, a specialist nurse:

“My colleagues and I would just like to thank you and everyone involved with Project Linus UK for the beautiful quilts.

We have recently seen a young girl, aged 11, who was so delighted with the quilt that she was given. Her face truly lit up and she thought the colours were perfect for her room. She was immediately planning how she could take it on her school trip with her and had it wrapped around her shoulders when she left us. It was lovely for her, and lovely for us seeing her so thrilled by the gift and we just wanted to share this with you. Thank you all.”

Find us at: www.projectlinusuk.org.uk or Facebook: Project Linus UK

We love to hear from recipients of our quilts as well as from our Co-ordinators. If you would like to submit an article or have a thank you message included in the next issue of Stitching Together, please email information to: contactus@projectlinusuk.org.uk by 31st January 2024.

(If photos are included please confirm that permission has been received for us to use the photograph. This is essential if faces of people are visible.)