

## QUILTS FOR KIDS

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Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics gave more than 100 quilts from the Coastal Quilters Guild yesterday to celebrate the holiday season. About a dozen children who use the clinic's services crowded an upstairs room of the Eastside. Smiles lit their faces as they were encouraged to rummage through piles of kid-sized handmade quilts. The guild donated them in June, but clinic Chief Operating Officer Bonnie Campbell said the group decided to reserve the special donation for the holidays.



*Photo courtesy SurfMedia*

The remaining of the 125 quilts will be split between the organization's four clinics: Eastside, Westside, Isla Vista and Dental. Clinicians will give them out based on need, and Campbell said she expects they will all be gone by the end of the week. The guild donated child-sized, infant, and adult quilts as well as some pillowcases.

"The families that we serve typically work multiple jobs," Campbell said. "They just don't have money left over to buy wonderful handmade objects." She said the gift of quilts is especially appropriate because of the high volume of women and children they service. Two out of three patients seen at the clinics are women and children, and children make up 80 percent of dental patients. She said the clinic, which offers a wide range of health services to about 17,000 low-income individuals, has received handmade donations in the past but the guild's is the largest she has seen. "This is just over the top," she said.

Quynh Nguyen, director of the dental clinic, said she is going to keep a few in her clinic to comfort children during dreaded visits. Some get so nervous that they start shivering, she said.

“What a great thing,” Nguyen said. “Nothing like a handmade quilt.”

The guild donates hundreds of quilts biannually. They collect quilts year round from their 266 members, some of which donate once a month, said President Irelle Beatie. This Christmas they also donated 37 stockings and quilts for every woman and child served by St. Vincent’s, a catholic charity.

Yolanda Garcia, co-chair of the guild’s community quilts committee, which selects who they will donate to, said the clinics were chosen because of the high number of children they see. “We wanted to give to children one year,” Garcia said. “Its about bringing happiness and joy so this is particularly special and important.” Garcia said seeing the children eagerly rifle through and find their favorite confirmed for her that they made the right decision. “It was so cool!” Garcia said. Watching one boy choose a quilt decorated with trains that she had sewed was definitely the highlight and encapsulated the intention of the charitable quilters. “To be able to design something and put it together and give it to someone who enjoys it, will love it – there’s purpose in putting it together,” she said. “To see the kids select their quilt was really special.”



