



## Kids receive gift of warmth from quilters

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Almost two dozen kids got comfortable cozy quilts Tuesday morning thanks to the Coastal Quilters Guild.

The children, patients of Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics' Eastside branch, picked from a pile of the colorful, one-of-a-kind creations at the clinic's Milpas Street location.

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THOMAS KELSEY/NEWS-PRESS

Qu Ynh Nguyen, a dentist with Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics, wraps Merlin Garcia, 3, Tuesday with a quilt donated by Coastal Quilters.

# About 125 quilts donated

## ■ QUILTS

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A line of families formed at the upstairs offices of the clinic, with children filing in to pick the quilt of their choice. Some went for the bright florals, others went for bold geometric patterns.

Not too far away, Yolanda Garcia sat watching the little ones, eyes following one boy in particular, clutching a red-and-black quilt.

"I made that one," she said.

She and scores of her fellow quilters at the Coastal Quilters Guild spent months measuring, cutting, piecing and sewing the quilts. The creation and donation is part of the guild's Community Quilts program.

While the local quilters are veterans at distributing their crafts to the community, this was the first time Ms. Garcia has seen the recipients.

"We usually give them to the exec-

utive directors," she said. "It's really nice to watch someone receive the quilt you made."

The process started about a year ago when Ms. Garcia approached Bonnie Campbell, chief operations officer for the Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics, for a potential collaboration.

"She didn't finish her sentence before I said 'Yes,'" Ms. Campbell said.

The intervening months were spent in putting the quilts together and trying to decide when the best time was to distribute them. With colder temperatures arriving and the holidays approaching, now seemed the right time. About 125 quilts were donated to the Eastside clinic's kids, and the clinic will continue to distribute them in the coming days.

While no one is turned away for inability to pay at the clinic, the families the clinic calls "the work-

ing poor" are bound to appreciate the quilts the most.

"The low-income families that we serve are often so poor that it's all that they can do to keep a roof over everybody's heads," said Ms. Campbell.

Over the years, Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics has become not just a provider of free medicine for those who can't pay, but a referral service to other essentials, like the Unity Shoppe and the Assistance League of Santa Barbara, which supply clothes.

Meanwhile, 8-year-old Danni Diaz holds up his new red-and-black quilt, a blanket made with striking patterns.

"I like it 'cause there's trucks," he said, pointing out truck shapes in the squares. "Maybe tomorrow night I'll use it."

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Children and staff of the Eastside clinic show some of the quilts donated Tuesday by Coastal Quilters.