

Project Linus

Community Interest Company No. 08422226

www.projectlinusuk.org.uk

“A quilt is a hug you can keep”

Information about Project Linus UK

Project Linus in America

On Christmas Eve 1995 in the USA, an article appeared in Parade Magazine entitled ‘Joy to the World’, by Pulitzer Prize winning photojournalist, Eddie Adams. Part of the article featured a petite, downy haired child. She had been going through intensive chemotherapy and the story stated that her security blanket had helped her get through the treatments. Karen Loucks, who had just learnt to crochet, decided to provide home-made security blankets to Denver’s Rocky Mountain Children’s Cancer Centre. Lots of such quilts and blankets have been made before, but these efforts appeared in her emails to friends, which then appeared on a website which was seen by lots of other knitters and quilters who wanted to join in. They decided to form an organisation to deliver the items.

They named the organisation ‘Project Linus’ after the security blanket toting character ‘Linus’ from the Peanuts comic strip. The late Charles Schultz, its creator, gave permission for the name ‘Linus’ to be used for the quilts and blankets and was pleased to have these quilt makers help sick and traumatised children.

Project Linus UK

Project Linus UK is a national network of volunteers who make beautiful ‘Linus’ quilts and knitted blankets which are given as gifts to sick, disabled, distressed or traumatized children living in the volunteers local areas.

Project Linus was started in the UK in March 2000 by Ann Salisbury-Jones following her visit to the USA where she heard about Project Linus. Her sewing group began making quilts for their local child cancer ward. The idea quickly spread through groups associated with the Quilters Guild of the British Isles, local patchwork groups and through national magazines – Popular Patchwork and Women’s Own. In 2003, Project Linus UK was given a large stand at the

Festival of Quilts, Birmingham where visitors made patchwork blocks to make quilts.

We are registered as a Community Interest Company (CIC) to provide accountability for our fund raising activities and the way the money is spent on fabrics for our volunteer makers to use. The Directors and Officers of the CIC are also volunteers.

What is a 'Linus' Quilt / Blanket?

A cheerful, handmade quilt or blanket, designed for a baby, child or teenager to provide warmth, comfort and security. They are given as gifts to individual children who are 'in need of a hug' and have come to the attention of our Co-ordinators, or to institutions where there are sick, disabled, disadvantaged or distressed children.

All skill levels can make Linus quilts. They do not have to be 'works of art' but can be very simple designs in bright cheerful fabrics suitable for children.

Where are the Quilts and Blankets distributed?

Linus quilts and blankets go to a wide range of places. The destinations are determined by local need but may include children's hospital wards, children's hospices, bereavement services, children's social services, foster services, women's refuges or to individual children.

What are the requirements for making a 'Linus' Quilt?

We provide 'Linus' quilts and blankets for all ages from premature babies to teenagers, up to 19 years old, starting out on their own and needing bed quilts.

We like to receive a wide range of colour schemes. Teenagers or visually impaired children often appreciate quilts that are very bright. Football teams, racing cars and wild animals or dinosaurs are popular with boys, whilst girls often like pink. Teenage colour schemes are useful not only for full bed size quilts but also for lap quilts for teenagers in wheel chairs. Some use very simple techniques whilst others are made from very complex designs. This enables the items to be made by beginners and more advanced crafters.

Most sizes of quilts and knitted blankets can be used, but some places have specific requirements e.g. premature baby units and children's hospitals. Sizes around 36" – 48" (square or rectangular) are very popular and some Co-ordinators accept small quilts and incubator covers for premature babies.

They must be machine washable with no embellishments which could be pulled off and harm the children.

The Area Co-ordinator will know of any specific local requirements. In some areas, Co-ordinators are only able to accept quilts as there is no demand for knitted blankets.

What does a Project Linus Area Co-ordinator do?

We have Co-ordinators for most areas of the UK from Shetland to the Channel Islands. Each Co-ordinator has a team of volunteer supporters making quilts for us in their spare time.

The Area Co-ordinators collect in the quilts and blankets made by their volunteers and distribute them to 'children in need of a hug' in their local area. They are often involved with local sewing groups who enjoy getting together stitching, chatting and enjoying cups of tea and cake!

Everyone working on Project Linus UK is a volunteer and most pay their own expenses, or cover them by giving talks to local sewing groups, applying for donations from local businesses such as supermarkets, fund raising organisations, such as Rotary, or from local councils. Some hold fund raising activities like coffee mornings and sales of scrap fabric. This funding pays for fabric and wadding to make the quilts. Area Co-ordinators may also run beginners workshops, or Linus workshop days.

Project Linus UK Website

The Project Linus UK website www.projectlinusuk.org.uk has lots of useful information, newsletters and patterns as well as a contact section giving details of the UK Co-ordinators.