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## CAUSE & EFFECT

*From the December 2008 issue*

### Lincoln Binky Patrol Local Kids Comforted by Security Blankets

by Jenn Thornton

The sheer number of people struggling financially these days overshadows the very pressing fact that countless more fight to survive every day – in good times and bad. Many of them are among our community's youngest citizens, some of who go to sleep cold and alone.

Comforting area kids is the goal of the Lincoln Binky Patrol. The nonprofit, whose mission is to reach out to needy children, including those who are HIV-positive, drug-addicted, neglected, abused or traumatized, delivers volunteer-crafted blankets (or "binkies") to area recipients, providing them with warmth and security. Finished blankets are distributed via area hospitals, shelters and social service agencies, and are given as gifts, not recycled by the agencies that receive them.



Photo by Dante Fontana.

Binky Patrol's Sacramento Area Coordinator, Terrie Madruga, became involved with the organization after a quilting class piqued her interest in crafting. After successfully quilting a blanket for her son, she searched for a charity that accepted homemade blankets and soon discovered Binky Patrol, which was started in southern California by Susan Roush with only five volunteers. Today, the nonprofit claims 3,000 volunteers nationwide.

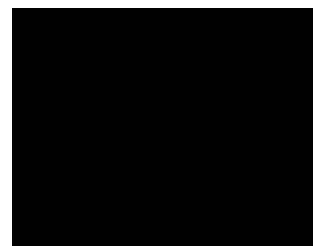
Madruga and a few friends started the local chapter of the Lincoln Binky Patrol in September 2004, to fulfill Roush's promise to assist others without an overabundance of rules and regulations, so that each Binky Patrol chapter is able to learn from the success of its sister affiliates, thereby growing the organization and generating positive local reception about its efforts. Mission accomplished! Despite its recent beginnings, Lincoln Binky Patrol "blanketeers" have donated more than 600 finished blankets to area recipients.

Although that number clearly reflects success, the organization is not immune to persistent funding challenges that nonprofits face. Madruga admits that "sometimes just getting it all done" is the accomplishment. Still, Lincoln Binky Patrol is undeterred in its commitment to assist the underserved. To help fund operation and material costs, the organization accepts monetary donations (preferably gift cards) and also hosts fund-raising events and area supply drives at outlets such as Jo-Ann's Fabrics.

Though challenges exist, so do rewards. Madruga says, "These children go through a difficult time and someone who does not even know them makes a blanket to comfort them" she says. "When they are airlifted from the hospital the blanket eases their fears. When they receive chemotherapy, the blanket keeps them warm and is bright in a normally sterile area. I am proud of those whom give so that others can feel comfort."

Madruga's current goal is to expand the Lincoln chapter. And because "blanketeers" are of all ages, there is plenty of opportunity to get involved. "We are a nonprofit that runs basically on quilting, crocheting and fleece, 'blanketeers' often use their own materials," Madruga says. "It is a simple thing to do that gives so much joy to the recipients. No matter how big or how small your blanket is, there is a need."

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