

Patching up Louisiana

Every Tuesday and Thursday a group of women meet at The Children's Center in Minden to stitch together quilts for Louisiana's recovery. Volunteers that worked at the NWLA Hurricane Relief Center in Minden decided to take the left over clothes and recycle them into handmade quilts. "Our communities were so generous in their donations," states Mary Howell, volunteer and now part time quilter. "When we closed the hurricane center in December, we gave boxes of clothes to UCAP, to area churches, and to the poor and needy. And we shipped clothes down south. We still had boxes left over. Boxes and boxes of clothes were also stored at the Minden Masonic Lodge #51. Lori White was gracious in accepting the clothes for storage until they could be sorted and redistributed to other shelters. Chris Broussard was not going to let us throw anything away. That's when we came up with the idea of recycling the material into quilts," Howell continues.

More than twenty quilts are in the making with a May deadline. The quilters include Mary Howell, Chris Broussard, Virginia Watson, Ethel Parker, Treabie McDonald, Levada Mitchell, Lucy Youngblood, Mary Fuller, Dorothy Myers, Gloria Thompson, Maxine Berdine, Nancy Berry, Idelle Simms, Emily Schober, Diane Jenkins, Virgie Sullivan, and Charlotte Martin. Experience quilters from across the state have agreed to take the pieced quilts and quilt the tops for the May exhibition.

Many of the volunteers involved in the making of quilts have never quilted before. "We had a special bond when we were all called to work at the relief center," comments Chris Broussard. "We missed each other once the relief center closed. This quilt project allowed us to get together again and it also served as therapy. We love our Tuesdays and Thursdays together."

The finished quilts will be displayed at the upcoming Spring Arts Festival, May 5 & 6, at the Moess Center for the Arts and City Farm in Minden. Some quilts will be auctioned off nationally, while chances can be purchased to win other quilts. The money raised from the sale of the quilts will be donated to a Louisiana arts relief effort to be determined later. Anyone interested in donating a quilt to the relief effort may do so by calling The Children's Center any Tuesday or Thursday from 10am until 2pm or stop by. If anyone is interested in joining the quilting group, just stop in. Everyone is welcomed.

For more information about the quilts or the upcoming festival, contact Chris Broussard at 318-377-0319 or email cbroussard@earthlink.net.