

Abused children can't wait

The children Dallas CASA serves are living in foster care, waiting for judges to decide where they can safely and permanently live. The quilters hope the fruits of their labor bring comfort to these children who are going through difficult and frightening times.

“Because every one of us makes quilts or blankets for our own children and grandchildren, we know the comfort they can bring,” Betty Dunn said. “We hope our quilts are an affirmation to CASA children that somebody really does love them and that somebody made something just for them.”

No two quilts are alike, and much thought and planning goes into each unique creation. The group has made themed quilts, rainbow quilts, crocheted quilts, fleece quilts and quilts with ragged edges. They've gone to children from newborns to teenagers. They're made in homes and in biweekly quilters' gatherings at the church. For Joyce Gregory, the thought that they'll go to a child in need stays with her through every stitch.

“When I'm working on a quilt, I have in mind it is comfort for a child,” she said. “My own grandchildren will say ‘That quilt looks so good I just want to snuggle up in it.’ And that's what I hope it does for Dallas CASA children, too.”

Dallas CASA's volunteer supervisors have witnessed how each quilt makes a difference. One supervisor remembers a teenager who moved through three different foster placements in one year. During each move, some or all of her belongings were left behind or lost ... except the quilt Dallas CASA had given her. At each new home, the quilt was spread out on her bed, giving her a small measure of peace and stability in an ever-changing life.

Another supervisor tells of a volunteer taking three quilts to a group of three siblings. The volunteer advocate sat talking with the grandmother while the kids played with their quilts, draping them over their shoulders like capes and escaping into a fantasy play world of their own invention.

For Frank Alegria, senior pastor of the church, the contributions from members of his church make him proud. Each set of finished quilts is brought into the church's worship service and prayed over.

“Sometimes we all need something to hold on to,” he said. “When a child receives one of these quilts, it has a spark of hope already in it. In times of uncertainty, we must claim what is certain, and these kids are certainly not alone.

“And now that our group has done a thousand, we're going to get started on our second thousand.”

