

## All About Community Quilts

“Community Quilts” is the name of a standing committee of the Southern Comforters of Bowie Quilt Guild as set forth in the by-laws. As a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, the guild charges its members annual dues and raises money by holding an annual quilt show and an annual Quilt Bingo event.

The guild and Community Quilts accept donated fabric which is used to make quilts. Completed quilts are made by guild members for the larger community and donated to other organizations such as hospitals, nursing homes, shelters, and schools.

Some of the quilts may be used in the guild’s fund-raising events. Money raised at these events is spent on guild functions including an annual budgeted amount for Community Quilts. Additionally, some money is given to the Bowie Food Pantry and other charities chosen by guild members.

Flo Marion and Diane Keull have been co-chairs of Community Quilts for almost 20 years. There is a workshop almost every Tuesday at Diane’s home where quilts are pieced, pinned, and quilted. Labels are attached and binding is applied.

Some members take home donated fabric or use their own stash to make a community quilt in a pattern of their own choosing. While most of the work on Community Quilts is done individually or on Tuesdays at Diane’s, the guild does host a few group work sessions each year. These occur either during the regular guild meeting time on Wednesday evenings or at Katz’s Bee which is held at the Crofton library on scheduled Saturdays as the library’s schedule permits. The work sessions are announced during regular guild meetings and in the newsletter.

Members are welcome to bring their own sewing tools and do whatever needs doing for that session.

Attending the workshops is a great way for new quilters to learn the tricks of the trade and to get to know other guild members.

Diane manages the flow of fabric from donation through to finished quilt. The donated fabric is sorted, cut, and made into piecing kits. Flo makes these kits available at the guild meetings for any member to take home and sew together. The patterns use simple, straight-line seams (no complicated

angles or curves). Sometimes a border fabric is included in the kit. When the quilt top is ready, the member gives it to Flo.

There are some simple patterns available on the Southern Comforters Yahoo group.

Diane pairs the top with backing fabric and batting to make a quilting package. Sometimes Flo will bring these packages to guild meetings for guild members to take home and quilt.

When the quilt kit or package is completed, the member gives it to Flo. The completed quilt gets a Southern Comforters Quilt Guild label and is measured, photographed, and recorded. The photographs can be viewed on the Yahoo group site.

Several times a year, the collected, finished quilts are sorted by size and theme and then distributed to the appropriate charity liaison. Within the guild, quilts that are meant for children are often referred to as 'dinosaur' quilts due to a large donation of dinosaur-themed fabric that was (and still is) used for smaller quilts. Large pieces of donated fabric that are not suitable for quilts are given to the Orphan Grain Train charity which sends sewing supplies (among other things) to those in need.

The Community Quilts committee appreciates all the help that members give.

Some of the donated quilts have gone to:

- O Veterans – Andrews AFB and Home of the Brave
- O Georgetown University Hospital Pediatric Oncology Unit
- O Baltimore Sinai Hospital Oncology Unit
- O Chapel Forge Early Childhood Center – Prince George's County
- O Sarah's House – Fort Meade
- O Project Linus
- O Assisted Living Facilities
- O Bowie Fire Department
- O Laurel Advocacy and Referral Services
- O Holy Family homeless shelter
- O Ethiopia & Puerto Rico Oncology Units via Terri Tomoff