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## Scouts make blankets for hospitalized children

By JEREMY BEALE NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

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Cub Scouts assemble a blanket Wednesday at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. From left are twins Ryan and Tyler McLain, 9; Rockwell Gunson, 10, and Rockwell's mother, Janet.  
NIK BLASKOVICH/NEWS-PRESS

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Local Cub Scouts gathered Wednesday to help make blankets for the national nonprofit Project Linus.

About 55 cubs from seven dens in the Boys Scouts of America Los Padres Council participated in the event at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Santa Barbara, cutting the material and tying square knots to create a quilted style blanket.

According to Project Linus representatives, nearly 5 million blankets have been given to hospitalized children around the nation since 1998.

Each year thousands of volunteers across the United States provide security to ailing and traumatized children in need through the warming love and comfort of brand-new handmade

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blankets.

"Making blankets is a great experience for the cubs to take with them throughout their lives and scouting careers," said Eve Giroux, co-director of the Scout Day Camp. "This experience will not only help them learn how to tie a square knot, but teach them the value of community service and giving back as well."

Den Chief and Life Scout Ty Still couldn't agree more with Ms. Giroux as he watched his Webelos whistle while they worked.

He believes cubs did a great service and may not even realize it.

"It is all about giving back," Mr. Still said. "I have learned as much from them as they have learned from me and I hope what they have learned from me is how to make the world a better place through service."

As each scout diligently took turns cutting and tying off sections of the blanket, the scout leaders would fold and shelve the blankets.

Webelos Scout Owen Rocque, 10, paced the room helping his fellow scouts tie square knots and handle the scissors.

"It's pretty easy to tie a square knot," Owen said. "I learned it back when I was a Wolf Scout."

Unable to put into words his favorite part of camp, he said he just enjoyed doing what he was doing, making blankets for sick children.

Den leader Ace Jepsen said he believes the scouts should be doing more than simply serving.

"I want these kids to be passionate and proud of the service that they are doing," Mr. Jepsen said. "Otherwise, what's the point?"

Few of the cubs were more passionate about their work than 10-year-old Webelos Scout Rockwell Gunson, who claimed he had a motto for every occasion.

"These blankets are important," he said. "These blankets are love and love is being able to serve and share with one another."

By late Friday, the Cub Scouts hope to have eight blankets filled with fanciful designs of medieval dragons, monsters fighting aliens, and patriotic camouflage ready for pickup by a Project Linus representative and given to children in need.

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