



TOUCHING LITTLE LIVES NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2020

Editor: Linda Marshall Co-Editor: Sally Bricker

BOARD NEWS

Despite the Covid twist in our lives this year, TLL has continued to carry on its mission to “serve the babies of Ohio” even after having to cancel almost 2 months of deliveries. As of the end of September, we have made 247 deliveries and delivered over 39,000 items. This included over 7,000 pieces of used clothing.

Just as we have had to make adjustments in our personal lives due to Covid, TLL is finding the need to adapt to the “new normal” as well. To decrease the potential of exposing our finished items to the risk of Covid, we are trying to limit the number of people helping to pack deliveries at Sally’s home. Sally has had to take up the slack, which means a lot more work for her. Also, Sally and her husband are going through a particularly hard time right now. Their son has been going through a serious mental health crisis for several months. This is consuming a lot of time and energy and Sally has had to drop everything many times in the past few months to deal with this situation. Most of September deliveries were cancelled due to this. We need your help to not overtax Sally in her already stressful situation. After consulting with Sally, the TLL Board is announcing some significant changes in the way will continue to do business.

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER This is TLL’s new motto! We need to find ways to continue to carry out our mission, but use our resources (people and supplies) in new and/or better ways. Change can sometimes be hard, but we believe that these well thought-out changes will help TLL run smoother, supply our facilities consistently with the supplies they want/need and help Sally continue to be able to run TLL from her home. We know we are throwing a lot of changes at our volunteers all at once. This year has been a tough one for all of us and we are so grateful for our volunteers who have continued to work to serve “our” babies. It is a privilege to work with each and every one of you! What a wonderful thing all of you are doing to provide real and practical help to people in need. We thank you for your efforts and hope to continue “touching little lives” for many years to come.

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

CHANGES TO ITEMS WE PROVIDE

After a careful review of all items provided to our facilities, we have determined that we will no longer provide the following items: preemie afghans; preemie hats, booties, sleepers, and onesies; preemie fleece sleepsacks; fleece blankets; nursing covers; IV shirts; rice bags and papooses. Here is the rationale behind the elimination of these items.

Preemie afghans: Newborn size afghans are appropriate for preemie babies and they will be able to use them for a longer time.

Preemie hats and booties: We are getting fewer and fewer requests for these. Most preemie babies in the NICU are in isolettes and are not actually dressed in clothing, let alone hats and booties. By the time they are out of the isolettes the hats and booties we provide are generally too small. Also we receive many hats from volunteers that are too small and don't have enough stretch to fit a preemie baby. We have to "repurpose" many of these which takes up valuable volunteer time. We will continue to provide newborn hats and booties.

Preemie sleepers and onesies; sleepsacks made of fleece: For a similar reason, we feel that our preemie sleepers, onesies and fleece sleep sacs are not serving our preemie population well. Since preemies can vary in size all the way up to about five pounds, much of what we make may not fit properly. Again, many babies in isolettes do not wear clothing. We have decided to replace these items with a one size fits all preemie sleep sac made of knit fabric. In consultation with our infant loss coordinator, Katrina, we have come up with appropriate dimensions for a sleep sac that will fit a large preemie, but still be an appropriate piece of clothing for a smaller preemie. We will begin making these soon and asking for feedback from our facilities.

Fleece blankets: These are only delivered approximately 3-4 months of the year. We already make receiving blankets and sleepsacks. Fleece is one of the more expensive fabrics we purchase and is better used for newborn sleep sacks which are in very high demand.

Nursing covers: These require a lot of prep and the purchase of boning to complete them. They are only provided to a few hospitals but we have a hard time keeping up with even that limited demand. We feel our supplies and volunteer time can be better used for making quilts. This will also save the expense of buying boning with our limited funds.

IV shirts & rice bags: There are only 1 or 2 facilities requesting these items.

Papoose: Only a few facilities want these and we feel afghans would be a more practical and economical use of our supplies.

If you are in the process of making any of these items, you may finish them and turn them in. We will continue to donate them and will slowly phase these items out by the start of 2021.

CHANGES TO SUPPLY REQUEST PROCEDURES

Our "drive in" meetings are working well but we will have to adapt a bit as the colder weather comes. An issue that needs resolved is the management of supply requests. Sally is receiving requests in a multitude of ways i.e.: email, Facebook, messenger, texts, and phone calls which makes them easy to be overlooked. Although she might read your text right away, by the end of the day, it may be buried below a dozen other texts. So to make things easier for Sally to manage, we are asking that **ALL** requests for supplies be sent via email. **Grove City** volunteers should contact Carol or Vickie as usual, and they will send your requests to Sally. **Westerville** volunteers can send requests to Sally by replying to her meeting notification email. **Delaware** volunteers should contact Robin with their requests and Robin will email those requests to Sally. **Moose** volunteers (including **COOL & Chillicothe**) should email/call Jill Hawse and indicate if they are picking up at Moose or if we need to send supplies to you through another person. If you do not have email, please contact your work group coordinator and they can email your request to Sally. If you are not part of one of our work groups, please contact the workgroup coordinator where you will be picking up the supplies.

If you can't pick up at one of our meetings:

Option 1: Someone else can pick up for you and you can make arrangements to get things from them on another date.

Option 2: You can pick up at Sally's house on one of her packing days, usually on the Monday or Tuesday after the 3rd Saturday of the month. **NOTE:** You must request supplies in advance by email and confirm with Sally the pickup date

and time. You will not be allowed to “shop”. Tentative dates for picking up at Sally’s house: Oct 19th or 20th; Nov. 23rd or 24th; Dec. TBD

NOTE: Please be very specific with your supply request so that Sally knows exactly what you want. If you simply say “I need batting”, Sally doesn’t know whether you need 5 yards or 20. If you say “I want yarn”, Sally doesn’t know if you want baby yarn or worsted weight or if you want a couple of skeins or a bagful. With all the requests that she receives each month, she does not have time to email everyone back and ask for clarification. So, if you aren’t specific in your request, you may not get what you want.

CHANGES TO VOLUNTEER SIGN IN SHEET

For many years we have asked each volunteer to fill out a volunteer sheet and include it when they turn in their items. We are eliminating this form completely and asking you to use our new “Volunteer slip” and put it in **EVERY** bag you turn in. This new form only requires you to add your name and workgroup (if applicable) on the form. We no longer need a list of what you made or how many items you are turning in.

One purpose of this slip is to let us know who made the items in the bag so that we can contact you if there are any issues with any items. Another purpose of this slip is to let us know if something needs to be washed, needs labels, needs snaps or needs to be tied, etc. Finally, you can indicate on the slip if you need a tax receipt for your donation, need feedback on the item you made, or need to let us know your contact info has changed. In these three cases, there is a space to provide your contact information so we can take the appropriate action.

There is a copy of this new slip at the end of this newsletter and your work group coordinator will have copies of these forms for you at the workgroup meetings. Please start using these new slips right away.

CHANGES TO DELIVERY SCHEDULE

We are changing our delivery schedule to streamline things a bit. Only a handful of our major hospitals will get monthly deliveries. Areas further away from Columbus (Dayton, Cincinnati, Portsmouth and Gallipolis) will continue to receive deliveries every three months. All other facilities will receive deliveries every other month. We have coordinated the schedule so that our delivery people will have all of their deliveries in the same month. This will make it easier to coordinate getting deliveries made as well as to and limit everyone’s contact/exposure. Also, we will no longer require a facility to sign for the delivery. Deliveries can be dropped off at the facility with little to no contact.

We will be packing fewer deliveries each month, but adjusting the amount of items we send based on the frequency of the delivery. This will allow us to plan distribution based on what we have on hand and make it simpler for Sally and her delivery helpers to pack.

HELP NEEDED

Since we are not able to meet in person for now, some of the tasks that were completed during our workgroup meetings are not getting done. This is hampering our ability to provide certain items on a regular basis to our facilities. **We need volunteers to do the following tasks:**

PREP TASKS

- cut sleep sacs
- sandwich quilts (minimal pins and no trimming required)
- cut flannel blankets to get them ready to be serged

FINISHING TASKS

- tie quilts (or machine quilt)
- snap sleepers, onesies and sleep sacks
(we have several spare snap presses)

These are perfect tasks for our non-sewers, knitters/crocheters. They can easily be done by one person at home. Our goal is to secure a volunteer to complete these tasks from each of the current workgroups. Please contact your workgroup coordinator if you can help with any of these tasks.

WORK GROUP MEETINGS

Our group meetings will continue to be “parking lot” meetings until further notice. Here is our schedule for the rest of the year:

Westerville: (Delaware) @ Heritage Christian Church on Maxtown Road

**** NEW TIME: 10:30-11:30am **** October 10th, November 7th, Dec 5th

NOTE: We plan to use the building lobby for pickups beginning in October. Starting in February 2021, the Westerville meeting will permanently change to the 1st Saturday of the month from 10:30 – 11:30am. (Jan, April & July will be the 2nd Saturday due to holidays) Currently, the building is only open from 9am – noon, so we will meet at the earlier time until further notice

Work Group coordinator: Sally Bricker info@touchinglittlives.org

Moose: (COOL, Chillicothe) @ the Moose Lodge in Groveport

2ND Thursday of month: 10-11am October 8th, November 12th, December 10th

Work Group coordinator: Jill Hawse jhawse@att.net (614-531-5237 cell)

Grove City: @ United Methodist Church on N. Columbus St.

**** NEW TIME: 2-3pm **** October 16th, November 20th, December 18th Third Friday of the month

Work Group coordinators: Vickie Dab jdabrava@columbur.rr.com or Carol Tolliver ca.tolliver@att.net

NOTE: The Grove City group will not hold meetings in January or February. If you need supplies during that time, contact Carol or Vickie.

BUCKEYE BABIES



Our Buckeye Baby campaign is in full swing. Since the OSU/Michigan game is now scheduled for Dec 12th we will distribute most of our OSU items in December which gives us some extra time to continue to collect Buckeye items. So keep on sewing, knitting and crocheting! Let’s show our Buckeye spirit to “our” babies. **OH-IO**

JUST THE BASICS



We are continuing our “Just the Basics” campaign by collecting hygiene products and other needed baby supplies: We are specifically asking for: baby wipes, body wash/shampoo, diaper ointment, pacifiers, teething rings, baby bottles, brush or comb, outlet covers, baby powder (cornstarch only) all of which can be bought at most Dollar Tree stores for \$1 each. In the last three months we have collected 580 items. Let’s see if we can make it 1000 items by the end of the year! These items have been greatly appreciated by the facilities that have received them. If you purchase other new baby products and/or clothing, these are always needed as well.

CONNECTING THREADS

We received two donations recently and are stocked up on cotton fabric for quilts.



In addition, we received some panels from them that were used for making pillows. The fabric is not useable as is, but with some imagination, the background fabric would make some nice quilt tops. If you'd like a bag or two of fabric to make quilt tops or some of the panels, request them by contacting your workgroup coordinator.

SHORTAGES AND LEFTOVERS

Due to Covid, we are currently experiencing difficulty buying some of our usual supplies. The quilt backing we usually order has been hard to get, so in the meantime, feel free to use some of our solid fabric or Connecting Threads fabric for backings if needed. Also, since fleece is hard to find at a decent price, we will no longer be handing out fleece for blankets, but using it solely for sleep sacs. The baby yarn we order is now being rationed by Bernat limiting the colors that we want. We are currently out of white baby yarn and don't know if we will be able to obtain any in the near future. Miss Lynne has supplied us with a large quantity of Dazzlezaire yarn which may be used for hats and booties right now. If you'd like some of it, please request it through your work group coordinator.



If you have leftover pieces of fleece, that aren't big enough for a sleep sac or jacket, they can be cut into 8" squares and then serged to make scent squares. If you have smaller pieces, they can be serged together to make a multicolor square as well. Leftover pieces of flannel after making receiving blankets, can be used for bibs/burps. Smaller pieces can be used for scent squares as well. A partial skein or ball of yarn that isn't enough to use for an afghan, can be knit or crochet into 6" squares. We have a volunteer that will put them together into afghans. If you're not interested in making any of these yourself, turn in the extra pieces of fabric or yarn and we'll get them to someone that can use them. However, please make sure your "leftovers" are big enough to serve a practical use. If you're unsure, just ask for feedback on the slip you put in your bag.

CONDOLENCES

Our condolences to the family of Nancy Townley who passed away in August. Nancy was a volunteer at the Delaware workgroup. Our sincere sympathy to Vickie Dabranalskas whose mother passed away in August.

THIS AND THAT

REMINDERS:

- Bag all non-clothing items such as hygiene products, pop tabs, ink cartridges, pins separately from blanket or clothing items.
- We are continuing to collect "bling" for The Turban Project.
- We are not collecting or using wedding dresses for burial/memorial items.
- If you request a tax receipt and don't get it within a month, please email Sally at info@touchinglittlives.org
- Please bag quilts separately from other items.
- We have cross stitch kits that can be completed and made into quilts. If you are interested, email Sally along with the workgroup you can pick up from.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS



Thank you so very much for your generosity for our little addition. We received the gifts just in time to welcome Audrey into this world (within the week of her arrival). It's been a roller coaster with a newborn at home, but we've managed to get a few photos to share. Thank you again and may God bless you all! Very respectfully,
Cheyenne, Donald, and Audrey



My name is Merci I wanted to say thank you for the gift I received from you. God bless you richly. My baby's name is Sharon Eliane.



Hello everyone! Thank you so much for making these adorable clothes. I think it's very generous for you to take your time to make and give these baby clothes. My baby Bella is now one month and she fits the clothes perfectly and I didn't expect to love them as much as I do, they're super soft and comfortable and I know she loves them too ♥☐

Thank you for the bibs, cloths, blankets, booties and mittens you donated to the Life Pregnancy Center. We appreciate your support and heart for this ministry. Greatly appreciated! Many blessings, *The LPC staff*

To all who make bereavement items from Touching Little Lives, Our bereaved families appreciate so much the beautiful items you make. During their darkest moments you bring some light & joy! The buntings are so amazing! Nobody else makes these. Those extremely small babies that fit into no clothes look amazing in the buntings and in the pictures we take. It makes presenting the baby so much better! The new heart ornaments are gorgeous! Sometimes on the small babies, we can get footprints on them! Also, love the crosses! They are a popular item & we always use them for baptisms as a beautiful memento. The satin4 hearts are very popular for footprints!! We all love these!! Know that you truly make a difference & we really appreciate all of you. Love Monica Coventry. *Aultman Hospital*

Thank you so much for your recent delivery to the Grant Outpatient Clinic. We appreciate everything greatly. The bibs are cute & colorful as always. The patients love the sleep sacks. I'm reading the greetings letter. I was impressed you all made 15,000 masks. What a worthy accomplishment! You should, each and every one, be proud of yourselves. Thanks again for all you do and everything you provide. It is greatly appreciated. *Grant Outpatient Clinic*

Thank you guys so much for your beautiful baby items. They get prettier every time we get a shipment! Thank you for being angels to us and our Angel Hands clients. Love, *The Angel House Board*

Hello! I've been getting your newsletter for years, after my 6 premies received blankets through your organization! My 32 weeker quadruplets just turned 18 and my surviving twin 30 weeker will be 20 in September. We still have their NICU quilts and a few crocheted blankets ;-)
Donna P.

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