

# BLANKETS FOR CANADA SOCIETY INC.

The JOINER



## OUR NEWSLETTER!

Newsletters can serve many purposes within an organization:

- To provide consistent information to members, volunteers and agencies with whom we work
- To 'market' the organization to interested members of the public and to the wider 'community' in general
- To build on the organization's 'identity'
- To announce and to celebrate our successes

It is our hope that this newsletter will accomplish all of these things, and more!

Launched as part of our TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY initiatives, we hope to publish this newsletter every other month from now on ... and so, of course, we need YOUR help!

Tell us what's going on in your community or chapter; tell us about your successes and lessons learned from the 'not-so' successes.

Send pictures, send wish lists ... anything that you think other Blankets volunteers might like to hear or read about.

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Our newsletter!
- Volunteers—our lifeblood
- Your Board of Directors
- Thank You's
- Chapter News
- Looking Back

### TO CONTACT THE EDITOR:

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## VOLUNTEERS – OUR LIFELOOD

### Knitting - Not just for Girls!

Trevor L. keeps the needles clicking as he comes to the "Stitch 'n Chats" in Lethbridge, AB, every Thursday.

Trevor is part of the group that comes from the Rehabilitation Society of South-western Alberta. He also participates in the weekly Rehab Society "Stitch 'n Chats."

Trevor was born and raised in Lethbridge, and graduated from high school (Lethbridge Collegiate Institute) in 1991. He is a long time knitter and makes it fun for everyone around him, with his great sense of humour and vast knowledge of movie trivia. He uses the computer lab frequently while at work, checking his email and the family blog, as well as doing research online and playing skill-building games.

Trevor is quick to offer to help, or to take on a task by himself. He is a hard worker, and accomplishes a lot in one day. He always compliments his friends on what they're wearing, and can sometimes offer a little fashion guidance.

Recently he has learned to purl. This is a new adventure for him. He loves putting more pattern in his strips. He chooses very colourful yarn for the strips he knits, and when knitting with needles, his hands fly so fast you can hardly see them!

Trevor doesn't just knit, he also enjoys watching game shows on TV, camping, and snooping through thrift stores. He is a great cook and loves cooking pasta dishes. He says he loves going to weddings, so long as they are not his own!

Trevor's excellent knitting skills are one of the many reasons why the Lethbridge Rehab Society group contributes so generously to Blankets for Canada.



**If your chapter has a volunteer you'd like to see featured — or if you'd like to volunteer — please contact the editor, or email [gn.simpson@shaw.ca](mailto:gn.simpson@shaw.ca)**

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Your board of directors has never been able to meet this formally — we ‘meet’ online, and our regular business meetings are held via email. One of our dreams is to meet — face-to-face — during our 10th anniversary year!

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FOUNDER/PAST PRESIDENT:

## THANK YOU’S!

As we all know this winter has been a very cold and bitter one for Toronto so the need for warmth has been great. On Tuesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, I phoned an organization called the Neighborhood Link to see if they needed any help from Blankets for Canada, and this is what I heard at the other end of the phone... " Oh, my goodness, there must be a God up there -- I was just talking not 5 minutes ago to a volunteer for Streetwise, an organization that drives around looking to help street people - the ones that won't come in for help. We need to help these people the most. YES we need blankets!!" End quote.

I was so happy to hear this that I put together a box of 24 blankets. My friend came to help me, and we got them all packed into the car and off we went. It was so cold yesterday, that I couldn't stand outside for 5 minutes without hurting.

We took the blankets in and I could not believe what I saw ... a line up of people who were in need of shelter. Now, we are talking about a small community centre, with little resources, but there they were, all lined up, waiting for a hot meal and a roof over their heads. The counselors had their hands full, but one lady stood out from all of them. She was a

young girl, possibly late teens or early twenties, but nonetheless, she was standing there pleading with one of the counselors. I overheard her saying she was out on the streets the night before and she just needs something – anything! - to keep her warm . The counselor just looked at me and mouthed "Thank You," as I was standing with the blankets at my feet.

I found it very sad, but at the same time was very happy that I could help these people.

**Submitted by: Debbie Williams**  
**Chapter Leader, Toronto-Riverdale area**



Last year I had the privilege of delivering my first batch of blankets to Calgary's Mustard Seed, a homeless shelter. These blankets are so colourful and beautiful that my car was filled with the beauty of a summer's day. As I was driving back to Calgary from Lethbridge and reflecting on the thousands of hours that were donated as a "gift of ministry" to many unknowns, I was overwhelmed by the gentle spirit of love. A love that came from hundreds of anonymous donors to anonymous recipients, simply 'because'. This sensation actually brought gentle tears of appreciation for these donors — what better gift could one give than the warmth of love wrapped in such colourful blankets? This sense of appreciation

was only surpassed when I drove up to the Calgary shelter and had some of the recipients help me unload these blankets.

Many young women were "ooohing" and "aaahing" as each one lifted another load of blankets into the shelter. One young woman asked me if she could take one for herself as it was her favourite colour combination. When I said 'most certainly' she beamed the biggest smile I have ever seen. I wish I could package this sense of appreciation up and give it to each of the donors personally, because they are the unknown heroes of these gifts. This lady wrapped the blanket lovingly around herself after helping and I am sure she walked down the street enveloped in the type of love that only God can give, a love of unconditionality.

As I write this little note, the same sense of emotional appreciation for many unknown caregivers overflows my being with appreciation for you, the giver of this gift. I am very honoured to be a periodic driver for Blankets for Canada. May each of you be filled with God's love for your gift of generosity, love, and warmth for these unknown recipients. Thank you, thank, thank you!

**Darrell Belrose, "Delivery Boy"**

**If any of you have any ideas for ways we can celebrate our 10th anniversary in 2008, or places to get funding to celebrate it, please contact V-Pres. Marilyn G, editor@coveservices.net, or call her at (250)388-6466.**

## CHAPTER NEWS

**KEITH, Viscount, SK** sent us this photo of a 'log cabin' squares blanket.



Keith has also done a 'fish' blanket ....



... and, in his ongoing quest to come up with unique blanket designs, a 'baby blocks' blanket...



*Now we know  
we can never get  
bored knitting  
for Blankets for  
Canada!*

### EDMONTON CHAPTER.

The Edmonton and Area Chapter is large, and far reaching ... which makes for very large numbers on the Statistics lists. The volunteers in Edmonton thank the outlying areas for their support of Blankets for Canada through our chapter.

Some outlying Groups that feed into our chapter are the Wainwright Ladies (2 hour drive East), Summerside Ladies of Westlock (two hour drive North-West), Gladys and Jim Goodey of Sylvan Lake who produce so many on their knitting machines that they support both the Sylvan Lake Chapter and the Edmonton Chapter (1.5 Hour South), Stony Plain (half hour drive West), and Fort Saskatchewan (45 minute drive North-East). We also have one volunteer in the NWT who knits about 3 a year for the Bailey House (Men's Facility) in Yellowknife and feeds her statistics through the Edmonton Chapter (she used to mail her blankets to Mustard See Churches in Calgary and Edmonton prior to the Bailey House opening up).

Some of our in-town Groups are in many Seniors Centres including Tegler Terrace, McQueen Place, Meadowlark Senior Citizens, and Meadowcroft Seniors, as well as groups from various churches such as Avonmore United Church, Grace United Church, and St. Luke's Anglican Church. A couple of these locations place their own label on the blanket corner and we add our label right beside theirs.

Donations have been dropped off at locations throughout Edmonton from

places such as Camrose (1 hour South), Edson (2 hours West), Mannville (2 hours East), Tofield (1 hour east) and Drayton Valley (2 hours west).

Some of our volunteers who attend our twice monthly work bees come from Leduc (half hour south), Sherwood Park (half hour east), St. Albert (half hour north), Legal (one hour north), and Redwater (one hour NW) as well as, of course, the four corners of Edmonton itself.



We miss her and her wicked sense of humor. She is helping to start a Chapter in Milton, Ontario.

Many thanks to all our generous volunteers who have donated time, yarn, fabric or plain old cash to help support the Edmonton and Area Chapter of Blankets for Canada Society, Inc. Our volunteer support just seems to grow a little each year and we know that, because each year we are able to distribute more blankets than the year before.

In 2007 we delivered 1970 blankets to agencies in the Edmonton area. In a year when Edmonton had record numbers of unemployed and also high numbers of the working poor who found it difficult to find housing, we felt blessed to be able to contribute blankets and hope to some of those individuals and families. The agencies who helped us find homes for our

blankets were often stretched to their limits and always welcomed any deliveries we could offer. Our record cold this winter didn't help those in need; it only added to their burdens. It feels good to lead a group of such dedicated men and women all working to provide blankets for those people in need of warmth and shelter.

As usual, each year brings changes and 2007 was no exception. One of our more active volunteers from Camrose, Shelley Schuett, had the audacity to fall in love and move to Ontario!

The girl guides of Alberta made us their "project" and donated over 700 squares for Blankets. We had to rent a van to bring them all home!

As 2008 is Blankets' 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we have challenged ourselves to place 2008 blankets in our community this year. Let's see if we can do it!

**Submitted by Eileen Liddle, Chapter Leader**

*Please tell us what YOUR chapter is up to for others to read about in this newsletter.*

*Email submissions to editor@coveservices.net — next deadline will be April 15th, 2008 for May 1st publication.*

*Thanks!*

## Looking Back .... Submitted by Nancy Panting, B4C Co-founder

I have to smile today as I look at my living room today. They are fixing the water pipes in the apartment above me and they are in and out of here all day. Everything from the kitchen and bathroom, that is moveable, now sits in my little living room. Makes me think of the early days with Blankets.

Many of you wonder why I discourage you on growing too fast. December of 1998 as we sat in the loft where we met for a "stitch 'n chat" the ladies were saying that they were going home and putting up their Christmas trees to get ready for Christmas. When Stu and I came home, I cried -- my living room had a *path*. The Chesterfield was piled up higher than I am tall, blankets and squares .... there were bags and boxes of donated yarn in the living room. We had two recliners and there was a path to get to them and then a narrow path so we could watch TV. There was no way to put up a Christmas tree -- or even vacuum. I wasn't sure if we even had carpet any more, it had been so long since I'd seen it! I didn't want to see another skein of yarn, and wondered what had happened to our lives. I don't want any of you to go through that. I was lucky as my husband knitted and was part of Blankets.

I had been talking to Murray at the Lethbridge Centre Mall about a space there. It was a small but good-sized older mall with two floors. The centre was open so that you could be on the second floor and look down to the first floor. Underground parking too! He was so afraid that we would have things look like a sweat shop. (Oh, if he could have only

seen my home!) I promised that we wouldn't do that and we would bring people into a dying mall.

Well he weakened and took me to see this beautiful corner shop. He didn't want us to be on tile floor so he choose one with carpeting. Mirrors down one wall, glass down the other wall and a back room with shelves for inventory. There was a small office that looked onto the main room. We looked right on to the second floor of the mall, right close to the escalator and the elevator. The food court was up from us, so people had to go by us to get there. We could be seen by all who came in 2<sup>nd</sup> floor the door from outside, they had to walk right by us. **There was so much space.** I could hardly wait for everyone to see it in January when we got together again!

Stu and I spent the holiday clearing out our living room. And Stu thought he best get me a tree to put up and we thought it might make the kids feel better that they were really going to get to come over again. Others came to help us after Christmas so that things would be ready for January. We were all so proud of our room and had fun getting it ready. We were so excited, and we all hated to leave when we were done working for the day. We needed a sign, and we had no money. A signmaker said it would cost a lot, so he suggested we buy some pink foam and he made us a template. The local Senior Centre cut the foam for us, then Susan, our daughter, and Stu painted the foam white for a base coat, and the top of the letters red. The mall maintenance men glued the letters up for us on their own time.

We had a donated recliner and a church loaned us some chairs; a piece of 4 X 8 plywood was placed over an old loaner kitchen table. We all had so much fun finding what we had to make this place look nice. Baskets were donated and we placed yarn in them for people to help themselves; we displayed blankets on chairs. The stores in the mall soon became very glad we were there; they now had customers as our people came in. We were in the Lethbridge Centre Mall from 1999 until 2005; we supported the mall and they were good to us.



For the 'rest of the story,' tune in next newsletter! ❖



B4C's founder, Nancy J' Panting

BLANKETS FOR CANADA  
SOCIETY INC.

Warming Canadians  
... one square at a time.



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