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## Burton Glen Academy to wrap shelter residents with warmth

by Elizabeth Lowe | The Burton News  
Friday November 21, 2008, 5:38 PM



Tim Jagielo | The Burton News

Heather Baldwin, a fifth-grade teacher at Burton Glen Academy, stacks blankets her class has collected -- and made -- for residents at area shelters.

**BURTON, Michigan** — A story about the sweltering rain forest inspired a Burton Glen Academy teacher to help rescue others from the cold.

Fifth-grade teacher Heather Baldwin and her students have so far rounded up nearly 100 blankets to be given out in area shelters during the effort, dubbed "Project Compassion."

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Baldwin said the idea for the project grew this fall after the class read "Founders of the Children's Rain Forest."

"They wanted to buy this land to save it from being chopped down," said Baldwin of the curriculum story.

"The message ... was about children who made a difference in the world. We decided that we'd like to be a part of doing something positive to help make a difference, as well."



Tim Jagielo | The Burton News

From left, Nadia Tiggs, Hecter Zavula and Amie Barker knot strips of fleece to make blankets. "I like being able to give the blankets to the homeless," said Nadia.

"I think the other blankets were in the attic," said Madison, who has donated three blankets.

Along with collecting blankets, students made them, too.

Board treasurer Connie Roberts donated yards of fleece. On Wednesday, students doubled and secured the layers of fleece with knotted strips that fringe the coverings.

"I really liked making the blankets," said Rayvon McQueen, 10, discussing the knots he tied on a starry white blanket with a green underside. Rayvon said he brought in five or six blankets for the effort.

Jacqueline Blackwell, 11, said she was "really excited" about creating the bedding, even though she's made fleece blankets before.

"Instead of getting gifts we should give kids gifts this Christmas," Jacqueline said.

"It's better to give than receive," chimed in Rayvon.

"It felt really good because instead of them giving to us we're able to give something to them," Madison said.

Baldwin has hit the streets, asking businesses to help but found many are tapped out this year.

ELGA Credit Union's marketing director, Nancy Schoenfelt, has promised to help the school with a dozen more blankets

Students began collecting blankets from family, friends, neighbors, even door-to-door.

Tucked into warm beds, it's not easy for students to understand facing the cold without a blanket.

Madison Medina, 10, a student in Baldwin's class, said she once woke up shivering beneath a too-thin blanket when her family's blankets were packed away.

**Burton News extras**

**Spread the warmth**

- Burton Glen teacher Heather Baldwin will be collecting community blanket donations noon-2 p.m. Saturday and on Nov. 29 at the school, 4171 E. Atherton Road, Burton.
- Blankets will be donated to shelters such as the YWCA Domestic Violence Safehouse and the Shelter of Flint.
- Details: (810) 744-2300.

For Baldwin, it's more than a weekday project. She plans to give up some free time on Saturday — for the third week — to accept blanket donations from community members who want to give.

"I think of all the things kids can learn in life, helping other people can help them more than multiplication," said Baldwin, smiling.

"It's part of being a good person."

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