

Montgomery Employees **PRAY AS THEY SEW**

We've all heard the expression "pay as you go", but there's a group of Montgomery employees who've decided instead to "pray as they sew"! Montgomery HR / Training Specialist, Nikki Butler became involved with the National Ministry of "Prayers & Squares" several months ago after attending a ladies retreat in Norcross, GA with former Rheem Montgomery employee Abbe Hockaday (Abbe is now located at our Corporate HQ in Atlanta). Nikki recalled that the facilitators who introduced the concept were using an old black Singer portable sewing machine similar to one she had, "only mine was older, a 1935 model I inherited in 1976 from my paternal grandmother. It had been in my possession for 32 years, but I hadn't used it because I thought it would break". Nikki went on to tell us that these machines are valued @ \$500 by antique dealers and that she had kept hers in her garage for the past 3 years! Nikki told us that she was originally intimidated by the quilting process, but stayed with it because she connected to the concept.

Nikki shared with us that both her sons have recently been in and out of the hospital in Birmingham quite a bit and this ministry tugged at her heart because of their medical situation. She added that "as I thought about all the other families we meet while we are there so long, going through so much more than what our family has to deal with – cancer, leukemia, etc. and so I started a chapter here in Montgomery (chapter 828)". Nikki mentioned that there is one other chapter in the Montgomery area.

Nikki went on to tell us that as other Rheem employees asked about her boys and their recent 3 week hospital stay, she would share the prayer-quilt ministry with them because it's what she and her 5 year old, Quinn did a lot while they were in the hospital for 21 days. She would cut material and Quinn stuck pins in all the pieces! As Nikki's story spread, several Rheem folks found out about

Prayers & Squares. According to Nikki, some were very talented and were what she referred to as "true" quilters, while others had never really done anything like this before. Nikki confessed to us that she personally was just a "pray-er", not a quilter, pointing out that the *Prayers & Squares* motto is, "It's not about the quilts, it's about the prayers."

Nikki was happy to let us know that the Rheem chapter is growing and members are using *Prayers & Squares* as one more way to show that Rheem Cares, and that the "h" in Rheem truly stands for "heart!"



About Prayers & Squares, The Prayer Quilt Ministry

The idea is simple, yet powerful. A heavy thread is used to take stitches through the quilt layers, and the ends are left free to be tied with a square knot. As each knot is tied, a silent prayer is offered for someone in need – someone who has asked us to pray for them. The quilt is then given to that person. What makes each quilt so special is not the pattern, color or workmanship, but the fact that prayer is symbolically tied into each one. These comforters are a statement of faith, and a testimony to our belief in God and the power of prayer.

Prayers & Squares is an interfaith outreach ministry that combines the gift of prayer with the gift of a hand-tied quilt. Unlike many other organizations that make quilts for charitable causes, the purpose of *Prayers & Squares* is not to make and distribute quilts, but to promote prayer through the use of quilts. Our motto is: ***"It's not about the quilt; it's all about the prayers."***

Each Knot Represents a Prayer

This prayer ministry began in 1992 in San Diego, CA. Since then the ministry has expanded to include chapters in churches of many different denominations across the world. Through *Prayers & Squares*, thousands of quilts have been distributed, each a special gift of love. They have been made for sick babies, for cancer and AIDS patients, for adults and children facing surgery or difficult family situations – for many reasons, but each for someone in special need of the healing of prayer. Prayers & Squares "Three Commandments"

Member Chapters agree to follow these "Three Commandments" of Prayers & Squares:

1. Remember the *Prayers & Squares* motto: "It's not about the quilt; it's all about the prayers." The purpose of your ministry must be to promote an active prayer life among the participants, not just to make and give away quilts. Strive to involve as many people as possible in your prayer efforts.
2. You must ASK before you give the gift of a prayer quilt; surprises are not appropriate. Ask if the person to receive the quilt will accept your gift of prayer. Ask what they would like you to pray for. Ask what information about their situation may be shared with others.
3. Do not accept any form of payment for a prayer quilt; it is a gift of love and prayer which cannot be bought or sold. Those who request or receive prayer quilts must not be made to feel obligated to *Prayers & Squares* in any way.

Would you like to learn more about how you can help with or support this prayer ministry? Sewing talent is not required, only a prayerful heart. Here's what you can do:

Contact the *Prayers & Squares* representatives Nikki LeMaster Butler or Alice Kennedy to learn what you can do.

You can get more information on *Prayers & Squares* at their website: www.prayerquilt.org



Rheem Montgomery Chapter Prayers & Squares members, Nikki Butler, Vanessa Rhodes and Kennetha Wilson, tie several quilts they recently completed



Nikki's Singer "Featherweight" model was originally introduced by the company at the Chicago World Fair in 1933.



Quilt made for Prayers & Squares by member Vanessa Rhodes (R&D)