

GOOD CITIZENSHIP

'Kwiltz for Kids': A Gift of Love

(NAPSA)—What began as a way to fulfill a school community service project ended in an act of love and devotion that brought new hope and happiness to many hospitalized children.

As a seventh grader at Holy Cross School in Champaign, Ill., Elena Ramirez was required to complete 20 hours of community service. Because of her active schedule not only in the classroom, but also in band and swimming, Ramirez began searching for a project that would allow her some flexibility. Sewing seemed like a perfect way to help others.

Ramirez knew about her grandfather Charley Taylor's involvement with Shriners Hospitals for Children in Lexington, Ky. "Mom and I thought of the idea of making quilts for kids at Shriners," said Ramirez. "It just seemed like a good idea because the quilts are warm and snuggly with bright colors."

Thus, "Kwiltz for Kids" was born. Initially, Ramirez intended to make 30 quilts in various sizes for children from infancy to 10 years old. The quilts were made of various colorful fabric designs and pictures, each named for how it inspired Ramirez once she examined the finished project, including "Noah's Friends" and "Alphabet Bunnies." As the project progressed, Ramirez, a fourth generation quilter, found she was having so much fun, she could not stop at 30 quilts and wanted one for children of any age. "Mom and I had an assembly line," said Ramirez. "Once the tops were done, mom did all the machine quilting and put the binding on the edges. I'm glad I was able to do something that would make the children and their families feel better."

In the end, Ramirez had lovingly made 50 quilts and dedicated the project to her grandfather. On the day she presented the



Elena Ramirez displays one of the many quilts she made for the children at the Erie Shriners Hospital.

quilts to the hospital, Ramirez thanked her mom and grandmother for giving her the gift of sewing and expressed her gratitude to the Stonebelt Shrine Club Hillbillies for their financial support. She also thanked her school for teaching her the value of community service. "Each of us has a talent we can use to help make things better for the world and other people," Ramirez said.

For more information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607, or visit the Web site at www.shrinershq.org. Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States, or call 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.