



NEWSLETTER

President's Message

Gold
Transparency
2024

Candid.

Dear Gently Hugged Community,

Happy New Year! 2025 is going to be an exciting year for us.

As we look to the future, we have very exciting news about changes to the Gently Hugged Board of Directors. I have completed my two years as President and Kara Tidemann was elected as our new President/CEO. Kara has an educational administration background and brings great ideas and expertise to this role. In addition, Lauren Fair, a local attorney and faithful volunteer, has been elected as the Vice-President of Gently Hugged. I know you will embrace and support both Kara and Lauren as you have me over the past two years. I would also like to share that Benita Page has made the decision to resign her position as Director at Large. We thank her for her many years of leadership and are fortunate that she has agreed to continue to be a resource to our Board.

As I end my final President message, I want to remind you that each of you make a difference. Recently a woman at an event was very interested in learning more about Gently Hugged. When we shared what we do, the woman said that 18 years ago she was a mother who had nothing for her newborn. She could relate to the difference our bag would have made for her. An important sign that someone cared and that there would be support as she navigated life with her infant alone. I am humbled by your commitment to Gently Hugged and the families that we serve.

With immense gratitude to you our volunteers, donors and supporters,

Debbie Alston,
Immediate Past President
Gently Hugged



Volunteer Spotlight

Lisa Lovern

This quarter Gently Hugged would like to recognize Lisa Lovern in our Volunteer Spotlight. Lisa regularly drives from Chula Vista - both bringing in donations and taking out bags for distribution. As a North County based organization, it is a true gift to have volunteers like Lisa who are committed and willing to make the extra effort. She helps Gently Hugged fulfill our mission of serving newborns in need throughout the entire county and for that, we are so grateful!



Crafter Spotlight

Judy Armbruster



This incredible Gently Hugged crafter is currently homebound in Fallbrook, but spends her time making a quilt a day! Judy Armbruster has very generously donated 173 quilts for San Diego babies in need in 2024. We are so grateful to our entire crafting team, who add a special and personal touch to each bag we send out into the community. Thank you, Judy, for your beautiful quilt donations!



An easy way for supporters to donate to Gently Hugged is by shopping our Amazon Wishlist. Thank you to those who have participated!

[CLICK HERE](#)

2024 - A Year In Review

We are so proud and humbled to lead our community to another record-setting year of impact with your support of San Diego newborns in need. These are just some of the highlights from 2024 that we wanted to be sure to share with our incredible community of donors, volunteers, and partners. Thank you isn't enough, but we will continue to say it loudly and proudly. THANK YOU!

- 905 bags delivered to support newborns in their first year of life
- 9,293.3 pounds of gently used or new clothing donated
- 13,762 non-clothing items collected (books, blankets, toys)
- 10,311 of those items were handmade by our volunteer crafters
- Total value of \$276,930 of items delivered to SD babies in need



Final Inspection and Volunteer Training

Final inspectors from the Rancho Bernardo office came over to do final inspection and help teach new volunteers at our North Coastal office on November 2. Judi Lawson was in charge that day, leading volunteer orientation training, while Sharon Dutton used a Thrivent Action Team gift card to provide lunch.

In December, we hosted two Final Inspection parties at the North Coastal location and got the shelves ready for packing bags! Thank you to Thrivent Financial for providing new lights for the North Coastal office so that many final inspectors could work together to get clothing on the packing shelves. For two Saturdays, volunteers from North Coastal and Rancho Bernardo came together to inspect clothing for two hours and then enjoy a nice lunch together. Sharon Dutton led eight volunteers on Dec 7 and twelve volunteers on Dec 14. Thank you to all who helped!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President & CEO: Kara Tidemann
- Vice President: Lauren Fair
- Assistant Secretary: Vicki Geehan
- Dir. of Community Relations: Judy Blackford
- Dir. of Operations – RB: Sharon Dutton
- Co-Dir. of Ops – Coastal: Janet Lombardi
- Co-Dir. of Ops – Coastal: Kara Tidemann
- Treasurer: Vicki Geehan
- Secretary: Camille Currier
- Dir. of Finance: Roger Schlarb
- Dir. of Volunteers: Vicki Geehan
- Dir. at Large: Judi Lawson
- Dir. at Large: Jan Rightmer

Interested in learning more about our volunteer Board positions? Email us at gentlyhugged@gmail.com. We are recruiting for a new Dir. of Volunteers!

Corporate Support



Berg Electric Charitable Foundation

The Berg Electric Charitable Foundation has once again presented Gently Hugged with a generous cash donation. Several representatives from Berg hand delivered a check for \$4000 to board members at the Rancho Bernardo Office and received a tour of the operations there. The funds will be designated to the startup of our new office in Carlsbad, which happens to be a neighbor of the Berg corporate office. This foundation also supported our Rancho Bernardo office in the very early stages and we are so grateful for their continued support. Thank you again, Berg Electric for eight years of support in helping us grow!



We are always grateful to Pay It Forward Processing for contributing much-needed monthly funds donated by the Every Swipe Benefits Charity (ESBC) Program. With Pay It Forward, your business can donate to Gently Hugged at NO COST to you. You will be giving back while using a service that you need. To find out more, [CLICK HERE](#)

2024 Q4 DONATION AMOUNT: \$1,582.87

Community Support

Kishie Bushnell

Thank you to long-time Gently Hugged volunteer Kishie Bushnell for dropping off a donation of soft toys in October to include in our bags for local babies in need. We are grateful to everyone who meets our monthly Wish List needs!



The North Coast Social Club

Sending a warm THANK YOU to the women of the North Coast Social Club. In December, their members hosted a pajama party in honor of Gently Hugged. They wore pajamas, ate popcorn, and played trivia. As you can see, it was super cute!

This event was spearheaded by GH volunteer Kim Lubesnick and the club's generosity was overwhelming. We are so grateful that the social club chose to support San Diego babies in need as their beneficiaries!



North County Quilters Association

On December 16, Sharon Dutton was honored to attend the North County Quilters Association's annual Christmas potluck where she represented Gently Hugged and received a generous donation from the association. The Good Cheer group from this association often donates handmade items to us. And this year, the Sundance group gathered together and instead of giving each other gifts, brought gifts of baby clothing and handmade items for Gently Hugged.

We are so grateful to the North County Quilters Association for helping us in our mission to support San Diego infants in need.



Las Damas de Fairbanks Ranch

Thanks to Lynda Costa, who lives in the community, Gently Hugged was invited to present our mission to the Ladies of Las Damas De Fairbanks Ranch at their October meeting in the Clubhouse. Sharon Dutton and Lynda set up a display and Sharon presented GH information to this generous ladies philanthropic social group. Las Damas also sponsored a clothing drive for us that produced a wonderful donation!

Additionally, the club highlights women in small businesses in SD. During the meeting, they held a raffle for a basket full of Mostra Coffee items and a gift card for The Cakery San Diego - the two businesses that were highlighted that day. The proceeds from this raffle will go to Gently Hugged.

The American Sewing Guild

Beautiful handmade quilts, blankets, burp cloths, and toys created by groups of the American Sewing Guild Poway and San Diego chapters are shown here on display before they were divided between our two offices for distribution to babies in need.

Kathy Hodges (pictured here) from Poway delivered a bounty of items to the RB office. The rest of the pieces were brought to North Coastal by liaison and volunteer Lisa Moallemi, who is the President of the San Diego chapter. Thank you to everyone who handmade these beautiful items!



National Charity League - Poway

We are thrilled to share a new partnership with the Poway Chapter of the National Charity League. Their first donation of clothing, sock dolls, and burp cloths was a wonderful start. We look forward to future projects together helping SD babies. Thank you Poway NCL!

Rhea Lana's of North Coast

In December, we received another 12 bags of unsold items from the incredible Rhea Lana of North Coast SD's semi-annual consignment sales. We are so grateful for this continued partnership with owner Lauren Aloia, whose next sale is already coming up February 2-6 with her Rhea Lana of Northeast SD location, so be sure to check it out!



San Diego North Coast Knitters Guild

Colleen Lukoff from the San Diego North Coast Knitters Guild dropped off a large box of beautiful handmade items to our North Coastal office in December. We are so grateful for the many groups of crafters who lend their expertise to keep San Diego babies in need warm this winter!



Lovigne Products

A huge thank you to Lovelucky Ochieng of Lovigne Products for the donation of 150 wonderful blankets and many other items for our Gently Hugged Bags. The timing was perfect as our faithful volunteer from Chula Vista, Lisa Lovern, was able to pick up the donation and bring it to our Rancho Bernardo office. We are so grateful for Lovelucky's Thanksgiving gift to the newborns of San Diego.



The Salon at the Vineyard

Our neighbors "The Salon at the Vineyard", located at the Bernardo Winery, continue their support of Gently Hugged with this lovely holiday display encouraging donations. We are so grateful for the giving spirit of owner Elaine and stylist Lori who are always passionate in their efforts to help clothe babies in need.

Vista Valley Women's Golf Club

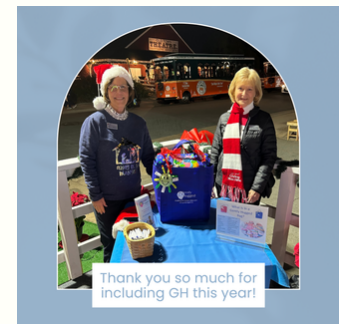
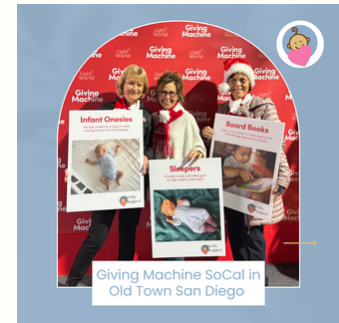


Once again, the Vista Valley Women's Golf Club at The Haven chose Gently Hugged for their holiday charity project. They collected many wonderful baby items, including clothing, blankets, and gift cards. We are thankful for their generous donations, as these items help to clothe and keep warm San Diego newborns. Shown is our Jan Rightmer with Karen Jackson, the golf club's charity project coordinator.

The Giving Machine - Old Town

Gently Hugged was quite honored to be featured throughout December as one of just seven local and international charities that were a part of the Giving Machine in Old Town. This opportunity to give at the holiday season was sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and 100% of every donation made in the machines went directly to the charity selected.

Gently Hugged had 5 options for giving in the machine: a Newborn Blanket (\$8), Infant Onesies (\$15), Board Books (\$20), Sleepers (\$25), and Newborn Layette (\$40). The "vending machine format" was such a fun way for families to give in a specific and meaningful way. We are waiting on final totals of donations made to Gently Hugged, but look forward to sharing those with you in our next newsletter!

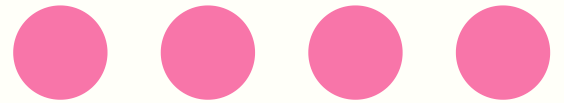


St. Therese of Carmel

At Christmas time, this parish makes a difference in the life of a child, or military family, through their Angel Tree program. Gently Hugged was thankful to be a charity partner again this year and we are grateful for the collected donations, a portion of which are shown here.

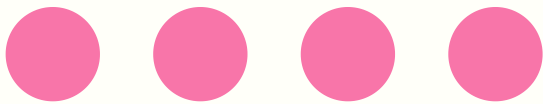
Rotary Club of Rancho Bernardo Foundation

We are grateful for every single monetary donation that comes in - whether it's an individual choosing to support San Diego babies or a large corporation. Board Director Benita Page is shown here presenting GH Founder Judy with a \$2,000 check from the Rotary Club of Rancho Bernardo Foundation. Cash donations to Gently Hugged from club members Benita and Shirley Napierala were matched by the Foundation - which is truly such a gift to our nonprofit organization!



Bernardo Gardeners Club

Sharon Dutton and Kim Linnell visited the Bernardo Gardeners Club meeting on November 21 at the Rancho Bernardo Swim and Tennis Club to present Gently Hugged to their membership in preparation for a onesie drive they will host at their December Event. Kim demonstrated how a bag is packed while Sharon described the packing process and explained Gently Hugged's mission and processes. We are thankful to this group for its support of Gently Hugged.



"In Stitches" Craft Group

The "In Stitches" crafting group from Madrid Manor Senior Community visited the Rancho Bernardo office on November 21. This talented group brought beautifully crafted baby blankets and burp cloths for our distribution bags. They toured the office and learned how Gently Hugged operates. It was a pleasure hosting them and we are thrilled that they want to continue to support our mission to help local babies in need.



Clothing Drives

Cardiff-By-The-Sea Library



Thank you to the Cardiff-By-The-Sea Library for hosting a collection bin from October through December. Many gently used clothing items were collected for San Diego babies in need. Special thanks to librarians Gabriel, Christin and Erik for hosting this collection site.

Julian Charter School Mountain Oaks Campus

The incredible families of the JCS Mountain Oaks campus donated over 30 pounds of gently used clothing during their October collection drive for Gently Hugged. Thank you to everyone who donated and to the staff for hosting!



Le Lycee Francais de San Diego

Sending a big thank you to Le Lycee Francais de San Diego (LFSD) for hosting a clothing drive for Gently Hugged this fall. Pictured here are the Head of School and PTR President with some of the donations collected during their first annual Giving Week. We are so grateful that this school and their families decided to partner with us to support San Diego babies in need! A special thanks to GH volunteer Lauren Fair, who made the connection.



San Elijo Hills Women's Club

The SEH Women's Club have stepped up again - this time by placing a collection bin at GC Dance Company in San Elijo Hills. Thank you to owner/director Gabriella Carter for hosting.



Carmel Mountain Ranch

Thank you to Kindercare and Compass Real Estate, both in CMR, for hosting clothing drives for Gently Hugged this fall. Both bins brought in much-needed donations of board books and infant clothing for San Diego babies in need. Special thanks to Compass Care Champion Laurie Perry, for coordinating the Compass Real Estate drive.



Cathedral Catholic High School

Thank you to Cathedral Catholic High School for hosting a clothing drive for Gently Hugged during their recent sporting events! Special thanks to football coach, Sean Doyle, for launching the project and then turning it over to the students. Athletes from many sports teams were involved - posting on social media, sending emails, passing out flyers during the school day, etc. Gently Hugged collection bins were placed by the entrance gates to sporting events and the donations came pouring in!



Lifebridge Preschool

Last month we reached out by email to many preschools in the area, one being Lifebridge Preschool in Rancho Bernardo. Julie Hendrickson was quick to respond and was quickly willing to host a clothing drive. She set it up for the very next week and collected a full bin of very nice donations for Gently Hugged. She even mentioned that they would like to help again - we love our generous community!



Southern Preserve Neighborhood

This Carlsbad neighborhood hosted a turkey trot in November and filled a Gently Hugged collection bin in the process! Neighbors also helped with sorting in December at North Coastal.



Olivenhain Farms

Thank you to Natalie Neal at Olivenhain Farms for hosting a collection bin all fall, which was overflowing with generous donations when we went to pick it up! Gently Hugged was also invited to share our mission at their Santa event in December. We are so grateful!



Discovery Isle Preschools and Discovery Preschools

We are BLOWN AWAY by the collective generosity and giving spirit of these two incredible preschool centers that both held clothing drives for Gently Hugged at multiple center locations throughout San Diego County this past holiday season.

Each location had donations that filled the bins and were often overflowing! We were so impressed with the staff at each facility that were all so willing to support our mission to provide San Diego babies with essential items for their first year of life. We appreciate and are so thankful for the ongoing partnerships with both Discovery Isle Preschools and Discovery Preschools!



Collection bin locations this past holiday season were located at:

- Discovery Preschool - Oceanside
- Discovery Preschool - Vista
- Discovery Isle - Ted Williams
- Discovery Isle - Creek Road (Poway)
- Discovery Isle - Rancho Penasquitos
- Discovery Isle - La Costa
- Discovery Isle - San Marcos

Collection Bins - List and Thank You!

We always include a special section in our newsletters to say thank you to ALL the local businesses, daycares, preschools, and individuals that host a Gently Hugged collection bin, making it as easy as possible for donors to drop off their gently used clothing and baby items. Check our current list of active bins at this link:

[CLICK HERE](#)



Office Volunteers

We are so grateful for our growing community of supporters who are filling both our original Rancho Bernardo office and our newly opened Carlsbad office with light and energy. We hosted a lot of groups this past quarter and want to be sure to say thank you!



The Newcomers Club of San Dieguito helped sort in October. Then four mother-daughter teams from the National Charity League - Moonlight Chapter went through a mountain of new donations in November and more members returned in December to help us with initial sorting. "The Bookies", a book club from Carlsbad and members of the San Marcos HS National Honor Society both came in to help sort our overflowing holiday donations as well. If you'd like to join our office volunteers, please email Vicki Geehan at vicki.gentlyhugged@gmail.com.

Crafters Corner

Thank you, Crafters!

Gently Hugged crafter Vincentia Schroeter makes hand painted onesies but she is closing her business and donated a BUNCH of white onesies and cute socks! She also donated a bin of darling hand painted onesies to us that were leftover in her inventory.



Ellen Fox is also shown here with her cute bunnies, which are included in our distributions bags for newborns to enjoy! If you would like to learn more or join our volunteer crafter team, please email Jennifer Bollish at crafter.gentlyhugged@gmail.com.