

## Knitzvah and Wildfires

*Before the wildfires in Northern California were contained, a friend of Knitzvah, Elizabeth Lichy, asked if Knitzvah had anything that she could take to Santa Rosa for the fire victims. She is a physician who was volunteering at the Red Cross shelters. Elizabeth contacted Barbara Berlant with some suggestions. Barbara quickly pulled together shawls, lap and baby blankets and hats - 61 pieces total. Elizabeth picked them up on her way back to Santa Rosa for another shift.*

### **Read Elizabeth's note on her experience in bringing the Knitzvah donations to victims of the wildfires in Santa Rosa:**

Barbara and Knitzvah -

I wish I could express the impact of your generous Knitzvah donations to the people affected by the wildfires in Santa Rosa. I will share a few moments with you.

I moved about the **Red Cross shelter at Veterans Hall at the Fairgrounds**. The people who remained had been out of their homes for 9 days and many had lost their homes to the fire. I approached a woman finishing her breakfast and offered her a hand knit shawl. Her eyes lit up and she said, "I love earth tones. She wrapped it around her and commented, "I'll have something beautiful to remember from this place." You could tell that she felt better about herself, more human, more beautiful.

I approached 2 older Filipino couples. The women were amazed at the offerings and chose lovely hats and lap blankets. They put the hats on right away to counter the chill that had settled in that morning.

An older man, weathered complexion and sporting a cowboy hat, commented that, "Those are just like my grandma used to make." He was so pleased to choose a dark green hat and put it on right away and then put his cowboy hat back on over it. I spotted him later outside looking quite comfortable with the two hats.

Some people declined to take anything saying, "We are just evacuated. Our home is ok. Give it to the people who need it more."

I shared your hats and blankets with several individuals gathered around a television in the back of another shelter building. And I gave your baby blankets and hats to a couple of families with small children. One young boy loved orange and chose the bright orange blanket. One of their grandmothers asked if I had yarn, if she could help. She said she knew how to knit but couldn't afford to buy yarn.

I headed over to **Congregation Shomrei Torah**. It sits on hillside with a now smoky view of the fairgrounds where many, many fire engines were visible. Inside the synagogue, it was bustling as their volunteers ran an impromptu day camp for kids who could not go to school. One of the volunteers gushed over your beautiful items as she is a knitter herself. When I explained about your group, she said, "We should start a Knitzvah group here too." And there was another young volunteer from Los Altos who chimed in that their synagogue also had a group. They could not stop admiring your lovely blankets, hats and shawls. They already had families in mind - 7 congregant families had lost their homes.

I then went to **Congregation Beth Ami** which also had families who had lost their homes. A staff member chose items to take over right away to a family with a 3-year-old daughter who was staying in a hotel because their home had burned down. Their 3-year-old had lost all of her toys and special things and she just knew that she would be excited to have a new fleece blanket.

Having something made with love and care made an impact for a community facing incredible challenges. They really appreciated that people care. There are thank you notes on the highway overpasses, the street corners, the fences, the store fronts, and the LED billboards. What you do is so appreciated.

Kol ha kavod and todah rabah. Keep up your amazing work. You are so inspiring...

*Elizabeth*