

OUR STORIES, OUR OWN OUR PAGE

- HELEN DIGUARDIA

Reflecting on my life in one of those "Ah ha" moments, I got to thinking about what I really love, family and country first, followed by my love of stitching and quilting. Having lived in other parts of the country where quilting was a "fun hobby", here in Florida it's big business! I have enlarged my circle of friends greatly by the wonderful women stitchers I have met along the way. We gather as groups and travel on quilting retreats. But those quilts, what do you do with them all?? Our family members have their share of treasured quilts and table runners, like the overflow of produce in the summertime, when your neighbors close their door because they just can't eat any more zucchini, those quilts begin to have the same result.



Along the way I met Janet Wells of **Fostering Hope**, a ministry of Fruit Cove Baptist Church. I came to know Janet as someone who spends her days doing for others. She is not only a quilter, but has a heart that lies with

those foster children who did not ask to be in the situations they are in. So how to make their lives better you ask?? We decided to quilt. Things come in 3's as they say, and we are now a core group, myself, Janet and Robyn who has added her long arm quilting machine expertise to our "production line". But there are countless women, many who we do not know. They drop their donation bags of fabric and thread and are gone. Yet their efforts live on for these children.

The ages we stitch for ranges from newborn to about 15 years old. Fabric accepted is 100% cotton fabric, all colors, solids and patterns are just fine. We come up with the patterns as per fabric we have. These quilts have created a sense of security for these foster children, something that belongs to them. Janet Wells says, "When the kids come to foster care, they usually come with nothing. When offered a chance to choose something to take with them to their new foster home, a quilt or snuggly blanket is high on the list. These "lovies" remind the kids that someone, somewhere does care and that reminder goes with them to their foster home, maybe back to their bio home or maybe on to an adoptive home."

This quilt in the photo above is one of many heading to **Fostering Hope**, is made of floral fabric donated as scraps from our friend April, the white background in an anonymous bag, the purple binding traveled in a box moved from New Jersey to Florida two years ago, all with a destiny to give a child some comfort and *HOPE*. So many hands have touched this quilt from its conception to birth, the end result speaks for itself: *HOPE!*



I will continue to take donations of thread and fabric and create an ongoing supply of quilts. It's the part I can do. I am a drop off for donations for this cause. We need to keep those needles moving for these children. There is a place for everyone and plenty to go around! 908-528-3292 or happytailstwo@icloud.com

"I made this quilt for a local quilt shop that after marketing it, it was given back to me. I sent it along to Fostering Hope and it was pulled from our quilt donations, and was instead hung up in the hallway of the Hope Resource Center for inspiration. It means 'Fostering Hope' to me!"

