

Group spends time quilting for a cause

Children's Advocacy Center receives special quilts from local group

By **PATRICIA STEELE**
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WILDWOOD

Handmade quilts can brighten a bed or a wall, or help to ease the fear of a child in a difficult and frightening situation.

Since Jan. 1, members of the Continental Country Club's Sunshine Quilters have donated more than 50 quilts, with a majority going to the Lake Sumter Children's Advocacy Center.

The group meets weekly to make quilts of different sizes and colors, which they give to Lake Sumter Children's Advocacy, Haven and Lake County Emergency Medical Services.

Lake Sumter Children's Advocacy Center Executive Director Diane Piszczek visited the club Wednesday to explain how the quilts were used and what they mean to her and her clients.

"We work with children that have been physically and sexually abused," Piszczek said. "When a child is removed from a home, they come to us to be interviewed in a positive, secure surrounding. The children are interviewed once on tape and all the other agencies involved have access to the information, without children having to explain over and over. We have a medical facility in Bushnell and Leesburg where children go for medical examination with qualified staff in a non-threatening environment. This is less frightening than a child having to go to the hospital for a physical."

When the children come

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Lake Sumter Children's Advocacy Center executive director

for an examination, they are given a quilt created by the Sunshine Quilters, which is theirs to keep.

"Many times this is all they have," Piszczek explained. "They may not have anything familiar from home and usually they are not going back home for some time. They are going into foster care or sometimes to other family members, but the quilts are something that is theirs to take with them and comfort them."

Piszczek told club members they make a difference in a child's life.

There are approximately 15 women in the group making quilts. They work at home as well as at the craft center.

President Gerri Anderson explained the group makes quilts, but they also have made more than 50 turbans for the American Cancer Society since Jan. 1.

To raise money for supplies, the group creates quilts to be auctioned at Continental Country Club's annual craft sale. They also take donations of fabric and other sewing materials.

For more information call Frances Eddy at (352) 748-5432 or Gerri Anderson at 330-0004.

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