

Fall 2007 Edition

The Bundles of Love story continues – thanks to many generous people.... By Mary Jo Prinsen

Bundles of Love Charity continues to thrive – thanks to the help of many volunteers, donors and supporters. In January 1999, I felt compelled to begin this effort to use sewing and needlework skills to help local families. However, the astounding growth of this mission to help Minnesota newborns and their families was not something I could have envisioned – even in my wildest imagination. The last 8 years have been full of both blessings and challenges.

It all began in May 1999, when I and 4 other recruited volunteers, formed a chapter of a national organization dedicated to helping newborns. Our first goal was to make five infant layettes that we had agreed to provide to Life Care Center, a Dakota County crisis pregnancy center. The social worker there agreed to distribute our layettes to the five most financially needy families. We worked for a couple of months to sew baby quilts, blankets, and clothing, found a few more willing volunteers, and made our first donation in June 1999, along with a commitment to continue to provide 5 bags of infant bedding and clothing for needy clients served by the Life Care Center each month. Another agency provided the same families with a crib.

We continued to meet this goal; then started exceeding it as word of mouth brought in more donated supplies and volunteers – along with more requests for our help from area clinics and hospitals.

Work groups formed in the North Metro, South Metro, and Rochester. After much discussion, in 2001, our local board of directors, having researched requirements for setting up a state-based non-profit organization, made the decision to move forward and Bundles of Love was “born” in the state of Minnesota. Our name later officially became “Bundles of Love Charity”, and we are a registered 501(c)3 all-volunteer non-profit organization based in Minnesota to help Minnesota families.

Today, Bundles of Love volunteers are supporting approximately 40 hospitals and other organizations which serve infants and their families in Minnesota. In 2006, over 55,000 items were delivered to help over 3,300 families. Approximately 200 volunteer events were held during the year 2006 and many volunteers also worked at home. The effort continues to grow. In 2007, we are on track to help over 3,500 families and deliver more than 60,000 items of essential infant clothing and bedding.

With the continued support of generous volunteers and donors, our efforts can be sustained and our growth can continue until we reach our ultimate goal – that no family in Minnesota that needs clothing and bedding for their newborn, correctly sized clothing for a premature infant, comfort items for their hospitalized infant, or bereavement clothing and keepsakes for a lost infant – will be without these items. And stitched in to every item, will be a generous amount of caring and love which will tell these families that they are not alone. We are all intertwined as one caring community of neighbors – whether we have met face to face, or not.

We invite you to become part of the “Bundles of Love Story.” With our tremendous growth in volunteers, we also need additional financial support from the community. We welcome your participation in our Adopt a Bundle fundraiser in early November. Please encourage your family and friends to support us. Not everyone may have time to volunteer, but thanks to the talent and time of those who do volunteer, a monetary gift of \$25 will help us provide a complete "Bundle of Love" containing 25 or more clothing, bedding, and bath/body care items for a newborn baby born to a family in need. Every dollar will make a difference to families in our community. Read on to find out more about how you can help.

Fall Fundraiser on November 3rd!!!!

Mark your calendar for the Bundles of Love's fourth annual fall fundraiser. This year the event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Brookdale Center. This day is being designed for family members of any age. Start your holiday shopping early with our silent auction, a wide variety of items for children or adults will be available. So come and enjoy the entertainment and the good company!

Activities for the day will include:

- ❖ Continental Breakfast
- ❖ Entertainment provided by the Clipp Tones
- ❖ Raffle for a Sleep Number Bed
- ❖ "Sponsor a Bundle"
- ❖ Silent Auction
- ❖ Buy It Now sale – We will have some items that can be purchased at anytime by paying the requested price. So if you can not stay for the whole event this is the place for you to shop.

In order to make this a success we need your help. There are several opportunities available we need help contacting businesses for auction items, setting up the event, helping with the silent auction, answering questions about Bundles of Love, if you are able to help contact Deb Persing.

Bundles of Love works with more than 40 community "partner" agencies, including hospitals, clinics, crisis centers and shelters to provide our services, thus avoiding duplication of efforts and utilizing each other's services for the benefit of babies and their families.

We need your help to succeed in reaching our goals! While we receive thousands of pounds of supplies every year, we must purchase supplies such as quilt batting, snaps and fabric, including soft flannel, which is not donated in sufficient supplies to meet our needs and pay for other expenses, including storage.

Please invite your friends and family and plan to attend this event and "Sponsor a Bundle" to help families in your community!

For complete list of donors and auction items available and more information on the fundraiser check periodically at our website <http://www.bundlesoflove.org>.

Here are a few comments from the people whose lives we effect with our Bundles....

I am a Douala with Everyday Miracles and I have had the privilege of giving out these wonderful bundles of love. They are wonderful gifts of love that comes from women caring about other women. When life changes unexpectedly and you feel a little overwhelmed it really lifts your spirit to know that there are women out there that truly care about you and your child. Thank you so much for all your hard work and love.

Minnesota Visiting Nurses Association take bundles out all the time to new moms. They use them as teaching tools – to show a mom what she will need to care for her baby and then leave the bundle with her so she has something to get started with. MVNA receives about 500 referrals a month and 97% of them live at or below the poverty level. Many of our moms are struggling to pay the rent and put food on the table – and so buying baby supplies is a real stretch. A nurse recently stated that "homemade things are in – moms really appreciate knowing that someone made this wonderful bundle for them." Another comment – "I can tell the mom was happy to have some nice things for her baby – it made her proud!"

Sponsor a Baby Bundle

In 2006, an average of 200 Bundles of Love volunteers each month collectively gave 55,500 hours of their time at more than 200 volunteer meetings and at home to support the efforts of more than 40 hospitals, clinics and social service agencies in Minnesota in helping families with newborns. More than 55,000 clothing and bedding items were donated to an estimated 3,400 families.

We need your help. Monetary donations are needed to continue to fund our efforts, and purchase supplies needed to help even more families in 2007 and beyond. Your contribution can make a difference!

- \$10 Buys flannel for 5 receiving blankets, burp cloths and newborn bibs.
- \$25 Funds a complete "Bundle of Love" containing 25 or more clothing, bedding, and bath/body care items for a newborn baby born to a family in need.
- \$35 Provides a beginning supply of newborn diapers, baby soap and baby wipes for 10 newborn or preemie infant bundles.
- \$50 "Adopts" preemie twins - provide correctly sized clothing items, preemie diapers, baby wash, baby wipes, quilts, afghans and other items for tiny newborns.
- \$75 Buys a roll of quilt batting to provide a soft extra layer of warmth in up to 60 infant sized quilts.
- \$100 Provides an industrial strength snap press to help volunteers easily attach snaps to sewn garments with the pull of a lever.
- \$200 Purchases 100-6000 yard cones of serger thread - enough to keep 25 volunteers with serger sewing machines productive making clothing, diaper bags or bedding.
- \$365 For just \$1 per day for a year, buy a bulk order box of 4000 pronged snaps - enough for about 270 bundles (2 sleepers, 2 bibs and 1 jacket or bunting per bundle)

All donations are tax deductible.

Minnetonka Work Group Celebrates Five Years!!!!

In June this group started their fifth year together. Six of the original group of ten members remains active participants. Although some have moved and left the volunteer group, we now have over twenty volunteers that contribute each month. Tying quilts (while visiting) is still the number one activity at the meetings. Members continue to knit, crochet and sew baby items at home and bring finished items to the meetings. These items are included in the bundles that the South Metro group distributes. Over a year ago, Tina Ludlow and daughter, Maggie (almost 3 years old) joined the group. Maggie is usually quick to point out when one of the ladies finish tying a quilt, "time to start another one". So we can say, "We have volunteers ranging in the age of almost 3 to 87 years old". Thank You to everyone that contributes.

Thank You to Joan and Phil Fisher, they held a backyard fundraiser for Bundles of Love. Because of this, we received a donations totally \$2,600!!! What an amazing accomplishment.

Thank You, Again!!!!

Items we always need....

Fabrics - sheet fabric (at least 70" by 45" wide), knits, sweatshirt fleece, ribbing, polar fleece, flannel, quilt backing (at least 1 yard by 44-45" wide). All donations are welcomed, as we will be able to use the money for baby care items.

Baby Care Items: We include in each bundle wipes, diapers, shampoo, and baby soap. Nice to have are bottles, pacifiers, teething rings, diaper rash ointment, etc.

Preemie items: The hospitals have requested fabric hats as the yarn can bother their sensitive skin.

Size Guidelines:

Booties: Please keep in mind these guidelines; Foot lengths for booties are as follows: small preemie (1-3 pounds) 1-2 inches; large preemie (3-5 pounds) 2.5 - 3 inches; newborn (6-10 pounds) 3-4 inches. Most needed are newborn sizes, unless you are making booties to be used for burial layettes (white or pastel colors are requested.)

Quilts: 36x45 is commonly the size we make quilts, as this requires only 1 yard of backing and batting. If you use a warm backing fabric such as sweatshirt fleece or polar fleece, batting is not needed.

Afghans: 30" to 36" is a common size for crocheted or knitted afghans.

Receiving blankets: 30" square single layer flannel

Fundraising Updates....

Scripts –

In case you missed it, if you buy gift cards from Bundles of Love for major retail outlets, like Cub, Gas Stations, Best Buy, etc., they will donate a percentage of the card to Bundles of Love. For example if you buy a \$100 Cub card, you have \$100 to spend at Cub and Bundles of Love gets \$2.00 from Cub! In 2006 we earned \$1,000 from this program!! The list of cards will be posted on our website and is available from your local contact. Contacts are North Metro – Lisa Caballero, South Metro – Darla Williams and Rochester – Joanne Larsen. We are now accepting orders without prepayment required. Order Dates are listed below, if you have any questions please talk to your work group contact. Order dates are listed below:

9/24/07	10/29/07
11/12/07	11/26/07
12/10/07	12/31/07

Internet Opportunities:

Goodsearch.com is a search engine (like Google) with a neat twist. You designate Bundles of Love as your favorite charity and every time you do a search, Bundles of Love gets a penny. We have nearly 500 volunteers; if everyone used it that would really add up!

iGive.com If you already shop on-line, you could be making money for Bundles of Love, just by visiting <http://www.iGive.com> first! Right now they are offering an extra \$5 to your charity when you first sign up. After that, a percentage of your shopping will be donated to Bundles of Love. So sign up and start shopping and help the babies at the same time!

Charter House, A Mayo Medical Center senior residence in Rochester, held their annual sidewalk sale (garage sale) in July. The Residence Council considered twelve charities when making their decision on who to donate the proceeds to. A resident Billie Needham used the Rochester scrapbook when she presented Bundles of Love to the committee. According to the committee there was no a dry eye in the room after the presentation. We received a check for \$4,300 from their sidewalk sale!!!!!! The Rochester group would like to Thank Brenda Volkmann, Billie Needham Elaine Oldenburg and the Residence Council committee, the Charter House residence, friends and staff for their generous gift.

Bundles of Love Organization Information

Nothing we do would happen without our volunteers. With our growing organization we have a need for more Leadership Support. Opportunities are listed below. If you are would like more information, please contact Mary Jo Prinsen, email: president@bundlesoflove.org, Phone: (952) 431-2867

Marketing/Publicity

Fundraising/Development Leadership

Fundraising Event Planner/Co-Leadership

Strategic Planning

Advisory Board Recruitment

Lead special work groups



Work Group Updates

Andover/Ham Lake Work Group

Coordinator: Ruth Nelson e-mail: nelsonruth@comcast.net phone: 763-434-7765

This group meets at Family of Christ Lutheran Church, Ham Lake, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of Hwy 65 on Constance aka 161st.

Meeting Dates:

First Saturday of every month - 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

Minnetonka Work Group

Coordinator: Jan Winstead e-mail: Jan2win@aol.com phone: 952-935-3451

We currently meet at the Old Glen Lake School. For information about meeting times and locations, contact Jan.

Rochester Work Group:

Coordinators: Joanne Larsen and Mary Rossman e-mail: sewlikeme@msn.com
phone: 507-288-3047 (Joanne) 507-282-1051 (Mary)

The Rochester group meets once a month in the evening to drop off finished items and pick up cutout baby clothing and quilt kits to sew. It is like "show and tell" for seniors with sharing of ideas. One Saturday a month a workday is held and some of this time is spent teaching volunteers.

North Metro Work Group:

Coordinator: Teresa Wilts e-mail: twilts@bundlesoflove.org phone: 763-783-7876

Meeting Dates:

Second Tuesday of every month - 9:30 - 11:30 am

Second Saturday of every month - 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Third Thursday of every month - 6:30 - 9:00 pm

South Metro Work Group:

Coordinator: Ruth Volk e-mail: ruth.volk@comcast.net Home: 651-452-5827 , Cell: 651- 263-1251

This group meets at Shepherd of the Valley Church, on the corner of McAndrews and Johnny Cake Road in Apple Valley.

Meeting Dates:

Third Saturday of every month - 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Other Work Groups:

These groups meet on a regular schedule to help supply items for the bundles.

Skyway Seniors

Oak Meadows

Bethel SOS

Life Works

Opportunity Partners

New York Life

Messiah United Methodist

New Brighton/Arden Hills/Mounds View Mom's Club

Volunteer Spotlight – Ruth Nelson

By Teresa Wilts

Ruth has been volunteering with Bundles of Love since June of 2001. Earlier in June she had purchased a used serger but had not used it yet. In May she delivered a serger that a friend has sold to long time volunteer Cynthia Stover. Cynthia asked her in to show Ruth what she was working on for Bundles of Love and Ruth was hooked, saying that she had been looking for something like this for years.

When Ruth confessed that she was afraid to try her serger, Cynthia told her to bring it to the June meeting and someone from Bundles of Love would teach her, and that is what happened.

In February 2004, Ruth and Sharon started the Andover/Ham Lake work group with 3 volunteers. After a few moves, the group now has 38 volunteers!!! And now Ruth is the one teaching other people how to use their sergers and sewing machines. In fact, people always warn volunteers not to let Ruth teach how to use a serger or they will decide they need to run out and buy one for themselves!

Ruth also runs the work group that meets on the 3rd Thursday evening in the New Brighton work space.

If you have ever been to a North Metro meeting and you are wondering if you have ever met Ruth, she is the one with the laugh! And if she is not laughing out loud, she is smiling and/or teaching someone how to sew something.

When I asked Ruth what her other passions are, she responded with Kirk, her husband, and Buddy, the dog. Then she said every day when she gets up she thinks, “What am I going to do for the babies today?”

Thank You Ruth for everything you do for the babies!!!!

Did you know?

There are companies that donated money for volunteer involvement in a non-profit organization like Bundles of Love. Some of the companies we are aware of are listed below.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of MN - “Dollars for Doers” donation for employees who volunteer more than 40 hours per calendar year Bundles of Love will receive a \$250 donation per volunteer.

Ceridian - encourages employee volunteerism through annual Volunteer Recognition activities; the United Way campaign events; and the Community Action Field Program, which enables employees to direct grants of up to \$500 to nonprofit organizations in which they are actively involved.

Ecolab - makes a donation based on the amount of hours their employee volunteers.

Kohls - A-Teams participation is matched with a corporate grant of \$500.

Land O’ Lakes - Foundation Dollars for Doers Program rewards and recognizes local community volunteerism. Volunteer hours add up to dollars for the organization to which time is donated. The volunteer may apply for grant funds for the nonprofit organization after completing a number of volunteer hours at one organization:

\$50 for 25 hours of service

\$100 for 50 hours of service

\$250 for 100 hours of service

If you know of any other companies that donate money for their employee’s volunteer time, contact Deb Persing through grants@bundlesoflove.org or 763-434-4110.

Thank You to groups who have volunteered their time recently. A full listing will appear in the final edition of 2007.

Bundles of Love Donation Form

I would like to help the Bundles of Love effort with a monetary gift.

Donor's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Interested in sponsoring a Bundle?

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Amount of donation any and all donations are appreciated: \$ _____

This donation is made in memory/honor/celebration of: _____

We would be happy to send a gift card if you are making this donation in recognition of a birthday, anniversary, birth of a baby or other special event. Please provide the name and address of the recipient below and don't forget to tell us what special event is being celebrated.

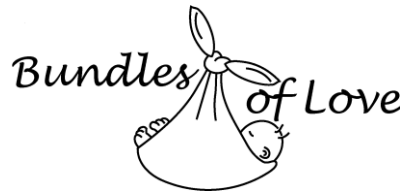
Name _____

Event _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please check here if you would prefer that we NOT acknowledge your donation in our newsletter. _____



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ARE YOU ON-LINE?

If you have Internet access, please send us your e-mail address at:
info@bundlesoflove.org and ask to be added to our e-mail list.

We will notify you when future newsletters are available online, saving us postal costs so we can spend more of our funds directly helping infants.

If you would like to be removed from our newsletter mailing list to save us postage, please e-mail: info@bundlesoflove.org or send us a postcard.