

Patient's talent and generosity brings warmth to others

Posted on Aug 29, Posted by [Oak Street Medical](#) Category [Primary Care](#)



When Violet Ellis took up crocheting in the '70s, she was instantly and literally hooked. She found that sitting and knitting at the end of the day was a great way to relax, keep her hands busy and take her mind off any worries.

More than 30 years later — now a great grandmother — she's knitted enough blankets, hats and slippers to warm an army. Friends, family and those who visit the Eugene Mission are frequent recipients of her handiwork. She's even bequeathed her blankets to doctors and nurses at Oak Street Medical.

"When she brought in the first blanket, it was complete surprise," says Ginny, a registered nurse at Oak Street Medical. "It was bright yellow, very intricate and beautifully done."

Ginny, in turn, donated the blanket to the practice to warm patients receiving intravenous fluids.

"When people are having IV therapy they can get cold," Ginny says, "and the patients really appreciate it — it means a lot to them, knowing that it's handmade and that it came from her. We always wash it in between patients, and it has held up really well."

Violet has since donated another beautiful afghan to warm patients in the Oak Street Medical IV room.

She and her husband make trips to second-hand stores and gather up discounted yarn that her husband then spins into balls that she can use for knitting.

"I just take it from there," she says.

For her grandkids' blankets, she lets them pick the colors, and has taught all of them to crochet over the years.

"The blankets are reflective of the giver," Ginny says. "Violet is a very sweet person — everyone loves her."

Violet says she gets great joy out of giving her handcrafted quilts to others. "People have told me that I should sell them, but I would never do that — it would take the fun out of it," she says.

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