

WHEN:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sew Days are the third Thursday of each month • Bring a lunch or grab fast food nearby • Bring your machine to sew or Basic Sewing supplies to help with hand sewing, cutting and ironing
WHERE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Lawrence Catholic church - Cogswell Hall • 319 Grayson Highway, Lawrenceville, GA 30046
CONTACTS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Leaders ~ Ginny Manning 770-564-8822 and Betsy Podriznik 770-841-3572

OUR STORY - Quilts of Valor® and its inclusion by the Gwinnett Quilters' Guild

The Quilts of Valor Foundation®, founded in 2003 by Catherine Roberts when her son was deployed in Iraq, is a national no-profit organization whose mission is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor (QOV). The message of the quilt is to offer comfort and show the recipient that someone cares. Quilts are awarded to the recipients. The number of quilters and quilts continues to grow, as does the demand.

At the beginning of 2024, close to 400,000 quilts have been awarded worldwide. Check their website for updates and further information about the foundation. QOVF.org

Our local Gwinnett QOV Quilters group got started in 2009 when Kathi Massey heard about a challenge that Moda Fabrics was having in support of Quilts of Valor. Their pattern was coined the "Moda One Star" block and makers could sign the block with their first name and state if they wanted to.

Kathi invited a few guild friends to make the blocks in support of this national service organization; our blocks were made and sent in. Moda's goal was to create 100 quilts in 100 days. They asked the quilting world to help. Each quilt would require around 60 blocks; that means they were hoping for 6,000 blocks. They actually received over 12,000 blocks!

Moda offered the extra blocks to QOV sew groups and we were thrilled to get some. **THUS WE BEGAN.....**

Each member contributed fabric from their stash and supplies. We used easy patterns and constructed our quilt tops. At some point in 2010, we were exhausting our stashes and basic supplies. We approached the Guild to help support us as part of their Community Service endeavors'. Check out the Community Service tab for details about other projects. The guild approved Quilts of Valor as their National level of outreach. www.gwinnettquiltersguild.org

FAST FORWARD - today our QOV Sew Group has 75+ members and meets once a month to sew together, share laughter, tears, stories and fabric. We are blessed with longarmers to quilt our tops. We have processes in place to track each quilt through construction to completion and awarding.

Awarding Quilts - In the beginning, most of our quilts were sent overseas to Triage Units in Afghanistan and Iraq or to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, the last stopping point for injured military before return to the states. Today with many of the Triage Units closed and many of our service members returning home, we award the majority of quilts locally. Our "territory" started out being only Gwinnett County, but somehow it grew. In addition to all of Gwinnett County, we now support Stone Mountain, Decatur and Loganville.

Quilts are awarded individually or in groups; in homes, churches, schools and even restaurants! Our group holds an Award Ceremony twice a year where we invite multiple individuals to come together and receive quilts. Quilts have been awarded to all service branches and all theaters of conflict - WWII through today.

In 2013, we learned of a privately funded wing at Shepherd Center in Atlanta - the SHARE Military Initiative - *Shaping Hope And Recovery Excellence*. The program focuses on assessment and treatment for service members who have sustained traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) in post-9/11 conflicts. TBI and PTSD affect 1 in every 5 service members that return home. These injuries are often unseen to the naked eye, but devastating to the service member and their loved ones. Too often, TBI and PTSD lead to broken homes and even suicide. The SHARE Military Initiative has been saving lives, by providing innovative research and treatment to our injured veterans. After meeting with the Director of Volunteer Services at Shepherd and telling our QOV story, they were thrilled to allow us to become a part of a client's graduation day by awarding a Quilt of Valor; we awarding 60 quilts per year.

Quilts of Valor is a richly rewarding effort and touches the lives of many deserving individuals. Please consider joining our group and supporting the call to patriotism.

Updated 8/11/2023