

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

From: Kasey McCulloch, Media Officer, Mercy Health

Date: Tuesday 23 February 2016

Grandmother's crafty passion benefits preemie babies

Mercy Hospital for Women has celebrated the generosity of a grandmother, who has created hundreds of vibrant patchwork quilts for premature babies, with an afternoon tea on Monday 22 February.

Ellen Mason has donated up to 20 quilts a month to Mercy Hospital for Women for more than 10 years. Some of the quilts have been sold to help raise money to improve hospital equipment and services and others have been gifted to babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Special Care Nursery (SCN).

Ellen is a member of the Australian Quilter's Association and decided to use her skills to help others when she heard about a fire at the former East Melbourne Mercy Hospital for Women site in December 2004.

"I didn't know much about the hospital but I felt like I needed to do something, so I contacted them and asked if I could send in some quilts," Ellen said.

"I did it for the parents and it also made me feel good as well. It's a form of therapy!"

Mercy Hospital for Women NICU Nurse Unit Manager Theresa Arnold said everyone at the hospital was extremely grateful for Ellen's hard work over many years.

"Every Christmas Ellen would make enough quilts, sometimes up to 60, for babies who had to spend the festive season in the nursery," Ms Arnold said.

"Quilt designs also included special versions celebrating the "100 days" milestone in premature babies' development and the one kilo club."

Ellen is stepping down from her duties as chief quilt maker for Mercy Hospital for Women to spend more time with her family.

Bay Quilters will take over from Ellen and make as many of quilts as possible for the NICU and SCN going forward.

- Ends -

For interviews and photo opportunities, please contact:

Kasey McCulloch

Media Officer

Mercy Health

Ph: 8416 7521

Mobile: 0477 720 337

Email: KMcCulloch@mercy.com.au