

# Project Linus

Providing Security Through Blankets

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**National Headquarters**

## Thank you for supporting Project Linus!

My name is Mary Balagna and I am the National Vice-president of Project Linus as well as the Central IL Chapter Coordinator. When I first became acquainted with Project Linus in 1999, I liked the concept and wanted to get involved. As the years passed, I grew to love the organization. Then on February 8 in 2006 I was personally and profoundly touched by the kindness and generosity of this wonderful charity and as a result, became passionate about its mission. I have tried my best to spread the Project Linus word ever since. I have a story to tell and hope you'll read on:

I currently have 15 grandchildren. In 2006 my oldest grandson, Luke, who was 2 1/2 at the time, suddenly passed away in our home from an undiagnosed heart condition called Long QT. Following Luke's passing, his twin brother Logan along with my son Alex were both diagnosed with Long QT and had surgery to implant defibrillators as a protection against the Sudden Death that can result from this deadly heart condition. It all happened in a whirlwind and within weeks, both boys were given Project Linus blankets following their surgeries. We were so touched by the kindness and most grateful for Project Linus and the comfort these blankets offered our children. As you can imagine, we were devastated. We were trying to understand, cope and still live life while grieving, and also trying to accept this major and life-changing path we were given.

It took time...a long time, but I believe that serving others can help us deal with our grief. Grief never ever goes away, but I believe service can help us become reacquainted with our life's purpose when we feel all has been lost. 9 years after Luke's passing, I decided to honor my sweet boy by designing a quilt in his name and offering it as a quilt challenge fundraiser to Project Linus. The first Project Linus Mystery Quilt challenge took place in 2015 and was called "Lukey the Lucky Penguin." - a tribute to Luke Shields. This fundraiser was only meant to last one year, but the community support was tremendous and it has continued each year since. Each challenge is named after one of my 15 grandchildren. This year's quilt challenge and contest (our 7th year - Oliver is in the Doghouse) is named after my 7 year old grandson, Oliver.

**VOTING opens Monday Feb 7th!**



To vote go to [www.projectlinus.org](http://www.projectlinus.org)  
**\$1.00 per vote (minimum \$10)**

**So, after all that, here's the scoop:**

For the next two weeks (Feb 7 - Feb 18 at 11:59pm), we have 39 ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL quilts on our website just waiting for your vote! These quilts were made by dedicated Project Linus Volunteers who have worked hard to create their personal masterpieces using our 2021 Mystery Quilt Challenge Pattern "Oliver is in the Doghouse".

Votes are \$1.00 each (minimum \$10) and you can vote as often and for as many quilts as you like. Our goal is \$24,000.00 (just above our last year's total of \$22,722) and I KNOW we can do it with your help.

Your donation (votes) will go to support our Project Linus chapters across the country. We could not do the work that we do without the generosity of our Project Linus friends. From personal experience I can tell you that the hug of a Project Linus blanket during a time of crisis works as a special medicine in the life of a child.

Please go to [www.projectlinus.org](http://www.projectlinus.org) and click on the "Vote Here" link at the top of the page. This will take you to the ballot where you can view and vote for any quilt(s) you like. The top winners will receive some great prizes so I know every person with an entry would be most grateful for your vote(s).

Thank you to each of you for supporting Project Linus whether it be through your donation of blankets, your monetary donations or your participation in each year's challenge. It is because of each of you that we have been able to "blanket" over 8,600,000 children during the past 26 years. THANK YOU!!!

Mary  
Project Linus National Vice-president  
Central IL Chapter Coordinator