

WELCOME

Introduction

How To &
Materials

Photos &
Feedback

FAQs

Contact

A series of red and grey stars of varying sizes arranged in a curved path on the left side of the page.

OPERATION **KID*COMFORT**

Online Toolkit



www.OperationKidComfort.blogspot.com

www.ASYMCA.org

OPERATION KID COMFORT

Mending the Hearts of Military Children

More than 800,000 children of U.S. military families under the age of 5 — and more than 2 million American children altogether — have had a mother or father deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan in the course of the wars. This separation can be a confusing and trying time for children of military families, especially young ones.

Operation Kid Comfort provides personalized quilts to children ages 6 and under, and pillows to children ages 7 and older, who are having a hard time coping with deployment. ASYMCA volunteers collect photographs of the deployed parent and stitch a transfer of the images into custom-made quilts and pillows for the children to play with, sleep with or use to comfort them from the grief of missing their mom or dad.

Operation Kid Comfort has been featured on CNN's *American Morning* and in numerous trade magazines. Due to the publicity of the program, requests for quilts are coming in from all over the country. The program has made nearly 6,000 quilts for children of deployed parents since its start in 2003. Your participation in *Operation Kid Comfort* will help to guarantee the continued success of one of ASYMCA's most popular programs.



Sam and his quilt.

[Next page](#)



A COMFORT CARD WITH EVERY QUILT

Dear (Name of child),

Hello! My name is K.C. That stands for Kid Comfort. Actually, my full name is Operation Kid Comfort, but you can call me K.C.! So, I am a quilt and I know I am not supposed to talk but I just wanted to let you know how special you are. I can only imagine how hard it must be for you to not be able to see your Daddy every day. Hopefully I can help with that; just look at me! There are pictures all over me of you and the people that love you the most. Your name is on there and the Seal of your Daddy's military organization is there as well!

I want you to know that it is okay to hurt and it is okay to cry. You can drag me around as much as you like. Sleep on me, cover yourself up with me, and hug me! I promise that I'll stay with you and help you get through these tough times. You also do not have to worry about getting me dirty. I like being washed in cold water but be careful and use mild detergent with the gentle cycle and let me air dry. So, get ready to enjoy me!

I also wanted to let you know that lots of other people who helped make me are also thinking special thoughts about you and your Daddy. There is the person that cut the fabric, another that printed out all your pictures and some very special people who sewed me together and got me ready so that I could belong to you and you only!

Have fun with me and know that your Daddy is always thinking about you and wishes as much as you do that he could be with you.

Your buddy,
K.C.



Korbin and his quilt.

AS EASY AS ...

- 1** Parents or loved ones of children of deployed parents request quilts or pillows by filling out a form (found online [here](#)) and mailing it, along with the pictures to be included on the quilt, to the ASYMCA Operation Kid Comfort director.
- 2** The director then contacts the appropriate Operation Kid Comfort quilting group or volunteer with the request. The director will send the printed picture squares to the group or volunteer, along with a self addressed stamped mailer for sending on to the family requesting the quilt or pillow.
- 3** Most of the volunteers furnish the materials needed to make the quilt. For those who cannot afford to furnish the material but still want to make a quilt, ASYMCA will provide the materials.

To become a volunteer or start an Operation Kid Comfort quilting group, fill out the [volunteer form](#) or contact **Susan Simms**, ssimms@asymca.org.

“Operation Kid Comfort is a great way of supporting the children of our military personnel. Families waiting at home also serve and many of the younger children are really hurting. We have discovered that these quilts help the children through some of the lonely times. Moreover, our volunteers feel they have had an integral part in helping these children through some really tough times. The thank you notes and pictures we receive from the military families make every stitch sewn a true labor of love.”

- Susan Simms

[Next page](#)



WHAT YOU NEED

- VOLUNTEERS
- Quilting pins
- Sewing scissors
- Rotary cutter
- Cutting mat
- Quilting ruler
- Iron
- Ironing board
- Sewing machine (straight line stitch, walking foot pedal)
- Batting
- Thread (cotton quilting thread – gray color)
- Starch
- Quilting fabric (dimensions??)
- Photo panels (provided by ASYMCA)



Lynn Pride, U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern's Kleber Library manager, proves that any space can be used to create an Operation Kid Comfort quilt. Photo by Christine June, USAGK Reporter

MENDING HEARTS



"Today a very special gift arrived for Brayden. ... I am truly thankful for the time and energy they put into making these blankets for kids like Brayden all over the country. It truly touches my heart. ... As you can see there are pictures of Brayden and his Daddy all over the quilt. He just kept pointing and saying 'DaDa.' Needless to say I cried for a half hour just watching him point to his daddy on the blanket."

- Lauren



"This quilt will be a treasured keepsake for my daughter now and always. Although it was made to bring her comfort during this difficult time, it comforts me as well, to see her snuggle it and talk of her Daddy. Thank you so much for making these quilts for children of deployed soldiers – they DO bring comfort when we need it the most."

- Julia Noland

[Next page](#)

Home

Introduction

How To &
Materials

PHOTOS &
FEEDBACK

FAQs

Contact



Fort Hood AUSA



Fort Drum U.S. Army Base



Christian and his brother, Josh, with their quilts.

[Next page](#)



Home

Introduction

How To &
Materials

PHOTOS &
FEEDBACK

FAQs

Contact



Armed Services YMCA Executive Director Frank Gallo with an Operation Kid Comfort quilt. The program was created at Ft. Bragg/Pope Air Force Base in Fayetteville, N.C.



Lynne Grates, executive director of the Fort Bragg/Pope Air Force Base, N.C., Armed Services YMCA, and volunteer Ann Flaherty, who initiated the Operation Kid Comfort program in 2003, pose with a sample of an OKC quilt. Photo by Rudi Williams

Shannon Tiedemann talks to Lynn Pride about the nine photos on her Operation Kid Comfort quilt at the Garrison's Library on Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. Pride worked on the quilt for more than 12 hours, and Shannon is the first child in Europe to receive an Operation Kid Comfort quilt.





Q: How many total quilts has Operation Kid Comfort made for children of deployed parents?

A: About 6,000 since the start of the program in 2003.

Q: How long does it take to make a quilt?

A: About 10 hours, including washing and ironing the fabric.

Q: How long before the quilt arrives at the child's home once it's been requested?

A: About 10–12 weeks.

Q: Where should I look to recruit members for my new group?

A: Quilters will usually tell other quilters, so word of mouth will help. Sometimes a fabric store is willing to “showcase” the project, and that may attract volunteers. Also, several quilt shops have included the Operation Kid Comfort project on their Web sites.

Q: What are the costs associated with starting a group?

A: The cost of materials plus any other quilting supplies. However, if you are unable to afford materials but would still like to make a quilt, Operation Kid Comfort will provide the materials.

Q: Are there any other Operation Kid Comfort groups other than the ones listed on the Web site and in this toolkit?

A: These sites are currently the only ASYMCA branches and/or affiliates running the program, and handling requests from their immediate area is about all they can handle. Requests from other parts of the country go directly to Operation Kid Comfort Director Susan Simms (ssimms@asymca.org), who will then find volunteers to make the quilts.

Home

Introduction

How To &
Materials

Photos &
Feedback

FAQs

CONTACT

Susan Simms

Armed Services YMCA
6359 Walker Lane, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22310
1-800-597-1260
ssimms@asymca.org

*The Armed Services YMCA currently operates an **Operation Kid Comfort** program at the following locations:*

Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Tawnya Benn
910-436-0500
tbennasymca@earthlink.net

Fort Drum, New York

Carmen Blackmore
okcfordrum@yahoo.com

ASYMCA of Alaska

Christina Terry
907-552-9377
christina.terry@akasymca.org

Fort Riley, Kansas

Nancy Smith
785-238-2972
asymca@nqks.com

San Diego, California

858-751-5755, ext 113
quilts@asymcasd.org

