

## ELKS LODGE DONATION

### Agency given safe cribs

July 27, 2012 By Nancy Hastings

HILLSDALE — When members of Elks Lodge 1575 heard about a need for safe cribs, they made it their project to insure some families would rest a little easier.

Exalted Ruler Charlie Bryant said the club secretary, Sandy Parney was the driving force behind the project that resulted in 14 new cribs for the Hillsdale Community Action Agency (CAA).

Bryant said the club focuses on finding ways to serve children in the community and has done various projects in the past like building a wheelchair ramp for a handicapped child and providing a computer for another.

This was the first time cribs were the focus. Coupled with a grant and the amount members were able to fundraise, the club raised nearly \$2,500 for the project. "We wanted to find something in the community we could help with and I knew about the CAA needing cribs," Parney said.

Originally, they planned for around 10 cribs, but were elated to be able to buy 14 new cribs and mattresses. And since finding sheets that fit the quality they searched for didn't materialize, Parney's mother, Francis Pickford, came to the aid.

"We looked at buying sheets, but they seemed cheap (poorly made), so my mother volunteered to sew them," Parney said.

Pickford ended up making 34 sets so families would have extras to change beds between laundering. But, the sewing didn't stop there. Pickford also made crocheted blankets and various quilts, along with some stuffed animals.

Early Childhood Specialist Janice Seely said the amount of work Pickford did was extraordinary. "I can tell you that if you go to buy sheets there's no comparison in the quality when they're hand-made," Seely said. "Sandy's mom is an awesome seamstress."

Seely said the need for cribs came about when workers noticed unsafe sleeping habits upon doing in-home service assessments. "They do assessments for children age 0 to 3, so they were aware of what needs are," Seely said.

Though the cribs can be converted for toddlers, Seely said the cribs were only given to families with infants age 1 or below.

"We were so excited to receive the cribs because (crib) standards had changed and we knew babies were not safe," Seely said. "This reduced the amount of unsafe cribs to keep babies safe in the community."

Parney said a group of 11 from both the Elks Club and CAA workers spent more than two hours putting the cribs together. "The neatest thing was seeing this all come together," Parney said. "It's so satisfying to know we made a difference with a lot of families."



Francis Pickford fits mattresses with the sheets she volunteered to sew for the new cribs purchased by the Elks Lodge. COURTESY PHOTO



A group of workers from the Hillsdale Elks Lodge and the Hillsdale Community Action Agency assembled 14 cribs purchased for needy families. COURTESY PHOTO