



LISA RYMER/FOR LUMINARIES

Christine Hill is a member of Helping Hands sewing/crocheting group which donated dozens of lap afghans and 'pillow pals' to New Horizons mental health clients prior to Hurricane Irma.

## Helping Hands donates comforting gift to New Horizons

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LUMINARIES CONTRIBUTOR

The timing could not have been better for an unexpected gift.

Just prior to Hurricane Irma, a sewing/crocheting group from Lakewood Park United Methodist Church called Helping Hands donated dozens of lap afghans and "pillow pals" to the inpatients at New Horizons of the Treasure Coast and Okeechobee.

The items provided comfort to the mental health clients who weathered the storm at the 104-bed main campus on Midway Road in Fort Pierce.

Helping Hands has been comforting children and adults for more than two decades by donating their heartfelt, handmade afghans and pillows to Hibiscus, CASTLE and Hospice.

"But, over the years our membership has declined," said Helping Hands member Christine Hill. "So these creations are the group's last."

Hill, 94, remains involved in the com-

munity through various clubs and organizations, among them the AT&T Pioneers, which meets monthly at the Elks Club of Fort Pierce. Before his passing, Hill's husband retired from AT&T. New Horizons is grateful to the AT&T Pioneers for their past donations and for introducing the nonprofit to Hill.

"The pillows are appreciated by children and adults who need something soft to hug," said Hill, who sees many elderly people slump into depression after the death of a spouse or as they lose their sense of independence.

"I wish there was a way to let the people in our community know how important it is to support mental health," she said.

New Horizons is the most comprehensive mental health and substance abuse agency in the region, with eight facilities in four counties serving 11,000 children and adults annually, regardless of their ability to pay.

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