

As cousins, aunts and uncles come in through the front door, the now nine-year-old clutched his infant receiving blankie with both hands. The wad of two thousand washes still smells of comfort in times like this, stressful, changing times, a family gathering for his birthday party.

“Take your blankie into your bedroom,” says daddy. “You don’t need it now. Not until bedtime.”

His ten-year-old cousin said, “Let’s go.” They went, first to the bedroom to toss the security bundle and then on to the rec-room downstairs to begin sessions of a digital game. A new comfort begins.

When quilters make receiving blankets we may not realize the power we sew into them. Motifs can be anything (trains, duckies, birds, fire engines, or geometrical shapes). The blankies can be two sided or they can be a single fabric measuring 3 1/4 yard with hemmed sides for a mock binding. Comfort and warmth is the initial gift. A soft canvas to be smothered in angst, laughter, tears fill the blankies with every squeeze is the real gift given. Quilts are like an open book ready to give happiness while taking in turbulence.

“Cover me first with my birds,” says the seven-year-old who now thinks she is ready to take on the problems as a second grader, a true problem solver. The sheet is next and then the big time pink quilt covers her petite body. Don’t all second graders cling to what has been a routine since day one? Night time shadows diminish ever so quickly with each coverlet.

Quilters have more power in making of a quilt and then presenting that quilt than we can imagine. Not only do our newborn infants feel the strength in a quilt, our veterans seem to chase away more nightmares when wrapped in a homemade quilt. Our strengths travel through every thread. The power reaches to the four corners holding the quilt together.

“Look at my cottonwood leaf,” encourages the 9-year-old. “It’s smooth and shiny on one side.” And look at the veins in the leaf,” encourages grandma. The red veins are strong leading their bright eyes along all dimensions of the leaf.

“Veins are like strings in quilts,” says the wise 7-year-old. “They hold the leaves together. “

And the quilts we give are like leaves, they hold the recipient together not only as they sleep but during the daylight hours as well.

“Hummm, your blankies smell like you,” grandma tells them as they snuggle deeper into night time safety. “You each have your own smell. You can’t smell you, however grandma can smell you. Your blankies smell like you, no matter how many times each of you is washed.

“You each have a summer morning smell of flowers and freshly mowed grass and a wisp of the ‘Secret Tree’ in the backyard. The same smell but a little bit different. Lovely”.

Lana Russ