



Media release

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Keeping Rotorua's babies warm this winter

Close to 100 babies will sleep more warmly this winter thanks to the efforts of the Rotary Club of Rotorua and Whānau Āwhina Plunket.

The two organisations have a partnership, keeping in touch regularly about how they can team up to help the Rotorua community. When the Whānau Āwhina Plunket team alerted the club about families needing winter-weight cot blankets, Rotary members sprung into action, organising sewing bees to make new blankets and repurpose old ones.

Past President of the Rotary Club of Rotorua, Robyn Murphy, led the initiative, last month handing over 83 blankets for Whānau Āwhina Plunket staff to give to families.

"Last year the club provided some 60 blankets to Whānau Āwhina Plunket, so we were delighted to add another 83 this year," says Ms Murphy.

Ms Murphy says the project is a win-win.

"We have had fun doing this. So many people have cleared out their cupboards of old blankets, which we have repurposed. Others made new blankets from scratch. It is so rewarding to think these are going to meet an important need in the Rotorua community."

The last sewing bee was held on 21 May, which coincided with the Rotary District Extravaganza weekend where Rotarians across the district do something directly for their community.

"Even if you were not confident using a sewing machine then you could measure and cut so there was a job for everyone," says Ms Murphy.

Whānau Āwhina Plunket Community Services Coordinator Amiria (Min) Taylor says she is delighted by the partnership with Rotary.

"This gift is so much more than blankets. By donating these essential items, people have not only helped babies, but also their wider whānau who may have been feeling stressed about how they were going to provide warmth this winter," says Ms Taylor.

"By relieving some of the pressure, parents and caregivers can focus on other things – especially as the cold of winter starts to bite."

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