

■ MP PART OF HEART-WARMING CAUSE

Blankets provide hope and comfort

BY JESSICA HASSARD
The Daily Graphic

Twenty-five women and their families will receive a warm blanket during a time of crisis after Candice Hoepfner's appearance Thursday at the Portage Family Abuse Prevention Centre.

The purple fleece blankets were presented to the Portage-Lisgar MP by the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada, and Hoepfner had the choice to donate them to whichever charity she wished.

What caused her to choose the Portage la Prairie organization was the relevance of a blanket.

"(These blankets are for a circumstance) when a woman, a family, is in a crisis situation, where a nice cozy warm blanket would be appreciated," she said.

"This is something different; this isn't a big, very expensive project. This is 25 blankets, which, in and of itself, is a humble gift, but yet, it is such a valuable gift. To have the ability to give it to organizations that I believe in (is great)," Hoepfner said.

The IBAC Blankets of Warmth campaign is in its second year. The idea was chosen due to its connection in the IBAC logo of a person being wrapped in a blanket, symbolizing the warmth and comfort insurance can bring. Joyce Schrader, the executive director of the Portage Family Abuse Prevention Centre, said the blankets were a welcome gift.

"Material items, such as blankets, are always welcome here," she said. "We're not funded to provide the extras for women, so now we have the opportunity to give them a blanket that represents warmth and security," Schrader added.

"Women in general, all of us, as we all know, need pampering. So you can image what a woman of abuse needs For the abused woman, its ten-fold," Schrader stated.

She said Portage is a community that has no reservations about helping out, and the shelter keeps a list of the items that could be useful for those who call and ask if they can donate.

"I find that this community is fantastic. Whether they are individuals, church groups or corporations, they are unbelievable," Schrader said.

"Sometimes when a woman is setting up house, we're able to provide her the basics. Maybe some clothing, some pots and pans, some furniture," she said about helping women getting out on their own, away from an abusive relationship.

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Staff photo by Jessica Hassard

Tara Chammartin a board member from the Manitoba Insurance Brokers Association, Portage-Lisgar MP Candice Hoepfner, and Joyce Schrader of the Portage Family Abuse Prevention Centre hold up a blanket donated by the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada. Twenty-five blankets were donated to the Shelter in Portage.

■ PHILANTHROPY

Support for women who need it helps families, says MP

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Hoepfner said it's important that in supporting rights for women, society looks at the family as a whole.

"My thought is that if we can help families so that abuse doesn't happen to children, at that level, then it will go a long way in helping see adults grow up into being healthy, productive persons, partners and wives to each other," Hoepfner said. "I think these organizations need recognition. This shouldn't be treated like society's dirty little secret. We need to talk about this and bring it out into the open, I think, and take away some of the shame associated with (being a victim of) it."

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