

# Bedding Buddies: Local group collecting children's bedtime essentials for donation

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
October 19 2017 4:02 PM



ALTON - Lisa Griggs, known as "Mommy-Mommy" to the children who know her in her neighborhood at Oakwood Estates, has a goal of helping her little neighbors get through the winter a bit warmer this year.

Griggs partnered with Monica Semnacher of the Greater Alton Community Development Corporation (GACDC) to have a bedding drive for these children. Currently, boxes beautifully decorated by Griggs are placed in local businesses,

including Germania, The Max Sports and Nautilus Fitness Center. Both women said more boxes would be placed throughout the area in coming days. They are asking people to fill these boxes with new bedtime essentials for children such as sheets, comforters, pillows and pillow cases and even clothing like pajamas and house slippers.

"We want people to get new ones for them, because several kids are so used to having hand-me-downs," Semnacher said. "We want the kids to be able to wrap themselves up and feel warm and loved by the whole community when they receive them."

What alerted Griggs to the need for this drive was witnessing children who would come to her apartment for sleepovers with her granddaughter. When it came to bedtime, Griggs said some of the children had poor hygiene and went home to sleep on bare mattresses, often on the floor.

"When my granddaughter asked to go over to their houses for sleepovers, I would see the bare mattresses on dirty floors covered in food, and tell her no," she said. "I don't want to judge them for the way they are living, but that isn't for us."

Collected bedding will be distributed through the school district, where Semnacher said counselors are aware of which students are most in need.

This year, the Bedding Buddies drive is a compliment to the second annual Halloween Dance Party and Haunted Museum event Griggs hosts for children in her neighborhood. The event, which takes place on Saturday Oct. 28 at the Alton YWCA, located at 304 E Third St., is a Halloween celebration for area children between kindergarten and fifth grade.

"Last year, it went pretty good," Griggs said. "I want to one day open a party store for children with costumes. I have lots of costumes for them. It's nice to let them be whatever they want and have fun for a few hours."

The party this year, which is hosted by Griggs's iBelieve initiative and the GACDC, will feature "minute to win it" games, crafts, snacks and even a lypsync battle. Amy Smith from Intentional Fitness will be on hand to offer a spooky fitness lesson, and a firefighter from the Alton Fire Department will instruct kids on some winter time fire safety lessons.

Semnacher and Griggs partnered for this drive after meeting at the cleanup of the Hampton Community Gardens in Alton. After discussing ways to help the community, Semnacher joined Griggs for the Halloween party and worked with her to create the bedding drive.

"Alton is such a charitable town," Semnacher said. "When we were putting boxes places, people had already had boxes down for shoes and socks as well. People here are so giving."

Most of the drive for Griggs to help her neighborhood comes from the children calling her Mommy-Mommy. They come to her house just to chat. She listens, talks, offers advice and even feeds them when she can. She moved to Oakwood four years ago and has tried to help the community since.

Anyone interested in donating to the bedding drive, the party or looking for ways to assist Griggs and Semnacher in their mission to help the community is invited to contact Griggs at [griggslisar@gmail.com](mailto:griggslisar@gmail.com) or via cellphone at (618) 567-2616. Semnacher can be reached at [greateraltoncdc@gmail.com](mailto:greateraltoncdc@gmail.com).