Our “Project Linus 2022” experience began quite differently this year than ever before. Lion Claire, a Board member of our Cupertino De Anza Lions Club (DAL), contacted Lion Leslye, Lions member and long-time volunteer for Project Linus (PL) to tell Les that she had been talking with parents and administrators at both of the schools her children attend and that both schools were interested in holding a community service event for their students involving Project Linus. She asked to help her work with PL to do the event at the schools. After a short time, Leslye came up with a way to help out the two schools and to hold a PL Blanketeering event for the DAL, as well.

     Leslye approached the fellow lions, told them about the schools’ interest and asked if we could do a PL Blanketeering event on Zoom, much like the one we did in September 2020. To suit the schools’ timelines, it was going to be held on February 26th. The proposal was approved, and Lions Claire & Leslye began planning the event. Claire let the schools know and Leslye let the Club know that fleece would be available to those participating in making blankets and asked those interested to tell either Les or Claire how many pieces of fleece they would like to transform into blankets. When the names and numbers had all been turned in and figured out, it was time to go shopping! Lion Leslye, along with Lions Dagi & Joan, went to Joann’s Fabric in Cupertino, shopped for 2.5 hours and bought 144 pieces of fleece: 72 for the Lions and 72 for the two schools (Alta Vista Elementary and Union Middle)! Lion Les and other dedicated helper then built ‘Linus Kits’, bags that contained the fleece, along with all of the required materials needed to make a blanket. On the scheduled date, Claire & Leslye put the kits outside their homes, along with sign-out sheets, for easy pickup. De Anza Lions have been participating in PL for about 10 years, so most members have made a blanket or two, but the school families were mostly new to PL and needed some coaching, so a Zoom broadcast was perfect for those experiencing PL for the first time.

     Saturday, February 26th finally rolled up on the calendar and it was showtime. We signed onto Zoom a little before 10:00am and waited until 5 after 10 to begin. Lion Leslye led the viewers through the directions step-by-step, answered questions and chatted about our club and some of the other projects we are involved in. Sharon Lee, San Jose’s PL Chapter chairperson, signed in to join us about 11:00. She told everyone about PL’s history, the Chapter’s successes (partly due to the 100’s of blankets DAL has contributed these past 10 years!), explained where the blankets were sent and answered questions. There was a wide variety of participants on the Zoom broadcast—families from Union Middle School, families from Alta Vista Elementary School, members of the local Cupertino community, Girl Scout troops, and, yes, some De Anza Lions, as well. Everyone was genuinely engaged in their project and all seemed to be having a fun time. Kids and parents alerted Lion Les when their blankets were completed. In good DAL tradition, Leslye rang a cowbell with each announcement, earning smiles and giggles across the Zoom network. The last blanketeers signed-off at about 12:00 and the event was a wrap.

    Lions returned ***73*** *fleece blankets* to Leslye within just a few days. (One blanketeer enjoyed it so much, she went out and bought another fleece herself and donated her blanket to PL!) School families got their blankets to Lion Claire who got them to Lion Les. Lion **Leslye turned in 110 beautiful blankets to Project Linus on March 5th!** Several fleece/blankets were out there with the school families for a bit longer.  Claire's Girl Scout troop were set to be blanketeering during one of their upcoming meetings. Eventually we will have completed a total of 145 blankets for the children in crisis through Project Linus because of the sweet collaboration between Alta Vista Elementary School, Union Middle School and our Cupertino De Anza Lions Club. We are proud to be involved in this worthwhile project and this should help make you *feel all warm and fuzzy inside.*

Contributed by Lion Leslye