

*Minutes of March Madness Blank-a-thon
Sunday, March 23, 2025
Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, 4889 Bear Road, Liverpool, NY*

The Blank-a-thon was co-sponsored by Women Transcending Boundaries and the women of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, who hosted the event. About 40 women gathered to make tied fleece blankets for the McMahon Ryan Child Advocacy Center and sewn twin-size blankets for Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

The afternoon began with a lovely lunch provided by the ladies of LDS—a variety of soups and chillis, cornbread and breads, croissant egg salad sandwiches. Tables were decorated with spring yellow tablecloths and pussywillow and daisy centerpieces. Ladies from WTB brought desserts. After lunch was cleared away, the activity began.

Cindy Rahrle, who chaired this event for both groups, welcomed everyone on behalf of the women of the LDS Church. Cindy thanked those who prepared the delicious lunch, prepped blankets, and worked hard to put this event together. She spoke about the nonprofit groups who will receive these blankets. McMahon Ryan, serving children victimized by child abuse and child trafficking, gives each child a comforting blanket and stuffed animal. Many of us were shocked to learn the extent of child trafficking in Syracuse. Sleep in Heavenly Peace makes beds for children who sleep in the floor or on couches; they have delivered thousands of beds with bedding to children in our area.

Lorraine Markley, President of WTB, welcomed everyone and spoke a bit about WTB's mission and programs. She encouraged women to sign up for the WTB newsletter at the signup table and welcomed member Smita Rane back to Syracuse. Cindy and Lorraine encouraged everyone to work with women that they did not already know in order to make new connections.

Ladies began working on blankets at round tables—sharing conversations as they cut strips of fleece along the edges and either knotted or “bunny eared” the strips together. Two women worked on machines sewing the larger blankets. Two hours later an impressive number of blankets were piled on the stage in the front of the room. We all tried to “squeeze in” for a group photo with our handiwork.

Several women stayed to place the blankets in large plastic bags—these filled an SUV with overflow! Hopefully, the children receiving these cozy blankets will enjoy them as much as we enjoyed making them.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Bova, WTB Program Secretary