



Western Facilities Team Up to Answer “Teddy Bear 911” Call to Help a Local Hospital

April 22, 2015

Collins, Gowanda and Lakeview correctional facilities rallied together recently for a project they called, “Teddy Bear 911.” The three facilities each held teddy bear drives to collect small to medium-sized new stuffed animals to be given away to children, or special needs adolescents and adults visiting the emergency room at nearby Lakeshore Hospital in Irving, NY. Monetary donations were also sought to help fund this initiative by the TLC Health Network, the parent organization of the hospital.

Together, the three facilities collected 182 stuffed animals and one book. Gowanda’s Inmate Liaison Committee (ILC) donated \$500 toward the cause, and the two ILC’s representing Collins Side I and Collins Side II contributed a combined total of \$300. An additional \$25 was collected at Lakeview from individual employees. Monetary donations are still forthcoming from the employee unions and employee committees. TLC will be using these monies to purchase additional stuffed animals and small blankets, and to establish a special fund for this purpose.

In order to maximize efforts, the idea was originally pitched as a “friendly competition” among the facilities to see who could collect the most bears. It was an *extremely* close race, but in the end, Gowanda came out on top, by just one. Gowanda collected 65 stuffed animals, followed by Collins with 64 and Lakeview with 53. The facilities hope to make this an annual charitable project.

During the donation presentation at Lakeshore Hospital, the TLC staff were beyond grateful, especially the nurses. They spoke about how they often have to improvise to keep an ER child entertained or distracted from what is happening. Sometimes they have to be pretty creative, even blowing up a latex glove and drawing a funny face on it to bring a smile to the child’s face. One of the nurses actually had tears in her eyes as she expressed her gratitude to the group. “Though a seemingly simple gesture, giving a child a teddy bear can be an amazing source of comfort and make them feel more at ease in such a scary situation,” she said.



From L. to R.: CEO-TLC Health Network Galati, Emergency Room RN Mahoney, Gowanda CO Gunther, Gowanda Superintendent Sticht, Lakeview Inmate Grievance Program Supervisor Northrup, Supervisor of Volunteer Services Kennedy, Gowanda CO Bobseine, Human Resource Manager-TLC Health Network Bobseine, Lakeview Sergeant Hall, VP of Patient Care Services-TLC Health Network Dole, Collins CO Dole, Collins Deputy Superintendent for Administration Zaccagnino, Director of Nursing-TLC Health Network Gawronski and Collins CO Flynn.