



Inmates' work helps anxious children

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GRANTS - No, this is not a new club, grass roots organization or theme for a community Halloween party.

Dolls Against Domestic Abuse is a program that assists police officers when they are responding to a domestic abuse call. The program, which is the brainchild of a New Mexico Women's Correctional Facility inmate, according to Terry Lewis, recreation coordinator, donated ten dolls to the Grants Police Department in recognition of Domestic Violence Week.

"If there is a child present, we can give them one of these dolls to let them know that we are trying to help and we are not there just to arrest mommy or daddy," said Grants Police Department Chief Steve Sena.

The inmates have been hand crafting the dolls for state and local entities for the past four years, according to Lisa Riley, Corrections Corporation of America public relations officer.

Police departments in Milan, Laguna Pueblo, Los Lunas, Thoreau, Silver City and the Cibola County Sheriff's Department are among the recipients of the handmade dolls. Roberta's Place Domestic Violence Shelter and the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence have also received donations of the dolls.

Making the dolls is a year-around activity for the inmates, who have completed 325 dolls to date.

"This program provides a much needed tool to law enforcement officials as they encounter children at the scene of domestic violence incidents," said NMWCF Warden Arlene Hickson.

"At the same time, it provides an important opportunity for our inmates to give back to the community in a meaningful way," Hickson said.

By Kathryn Marmon

Beacon staff writer