

# Kindergartners express support for Wounded Warriors

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- By [Robin Wulffson, M.D.](#), LA Veterans Affairs Examiner

Wounded Warriors have innumerable advocates throughout the nation; now little kindergartners have added their support. On March 21, UCLA Health System announced that 23 kindergartners from the Berkeley Hall School in Los Angeles will present a homemade "quilt of valor" to representatives of UCLA's Operation Mend. Each square in the quilt contains a tracing of a student's hand, surrounded by a heart. The 24th square, in the bottom right-hand corner reads, "We salute you with our hands and love you with our hearts." The squares were sewn into the quilt by one of the student's mothers.

"Quilts of valor" are homemade quilts are a military tradition. They are given to wounded warriors to provide warmth and comfort. The kindergartners' quilt will be presented to Patti Taylor, a retired U.S. Army nurse and volunteer nurse with Operation Mend who also sews quilts for patients, and Melanie Gideon, manager of Operation Mend.

The idea for the kindergarten quilt project came from the children's teacher, who was inspired by an article she read in the *Los Angeles Daily News* about Ms. Taylor's quilting group, which has created more than 50 quilts for Operation Mend patients.

The presentation ceremony will take place Friday, March 23 at 11:00 a.m. at Berkeley Hall School, 16000 Mulholland Dr., Los Angeles 90049. It will include the following participants: Kindergarten students from Berkeley Hall School; Barbara DeNisi, the teacher who supervised the quilt project; Patti Taylor, volunteer nurse with Operation Mend; and Melanie Gideon, manager of Operation Mend.

## About Operation Mend:

Established in 2007, Operation Mend is a pioneering program. It combines the best of the military's resources with the skills of UCLA Health System for a comprehensive and collaborative approach to healing United States military personnel wounded and disfigured in Iraq and Afghanistan. Envisioned by Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center Board and Executive Committee member Ronald A. Katz and his wife, Maddie, Operation Mend's original goal was to give returning service members with severe facial injuries access to the Army's best burn center and the nation's best plastic and reconstructive surgeons.

In a partnership with Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC), a leading burn and rehabilitation center in San Antonio, Texas, and UCLA Health System, Operation Mend started with facial reconstruction. The program has since expanded in order to optimize healing-body, mind, and spirit. In addition to plastic and reconstructive surgery, mental-health support (for warriors and their families), orthopaedic reconstruction for severely damaged limbs, urologic treatment, otolaryngological care, the examination and treatment of reproductive issues, repair of airways, and design of new prosthetic ears are provided. For more information, visit [www.operationmend.ucla.edu](http://www.operationmend.ucla.edu).