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# Quilters blanket 3-year-old with gift of love

**STEDMAN** — Katelyn Crowder turns 3 next month. Last week, she got an early present.

Katelyn's eyes were wide as she looked at the quilt, decorated with squares depicting Winnie the Pooh, a Care Bear and other characters.

Finally, Katelyn announced her approval. "I'll put it in my room," she said.

The surprise isn't that Katelyn got an early present, but that she's around to celebrate her birthday at all. Doctors said she wouldn't live past age 2.

Katelyn has type-one spinal muscular



**RODGER MULLEN**

Katelyn looks like any other little girl. She smiles and laughs often, talking excitedly

atrophy, a genetic motor neuron disease that causes her muscles to waste away.

Katelyn uses a motorized wheelchair to get around. Her bones are brittle and prone to breaking. She's on a feeding tube up to 20 hours a day.

But sitting in her chair playing with her dolls,

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Staff photo by Marc Hall

**Katelyn Crowder**, 2, who suffers from spinal muscular atrophy, receives a quilt Wednesday from Nancy Moore at Katelyn's grandmother's house near Stedman.

# Mullen: Quilt squares sewn by helpers from all over the world

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of her July 27 birthday, for which she wants to have a princess theme.

Last year, the Observer published a story about Katelyn and her fight for life. The story mentioned Web sites on which parents of children with spinal muscular atrophy correspond. One of the sites brings together quilters who stitch together blankets for children with the disease.

The article caught the attention of Bob and Nancy Moore of Fayetteville. The Moores are members of the Tarheel Quilters Guild.

The Moores started quilting blankets for spinal muscular atrophy sufferers. The individual squares in the quilts are sewn by people from all over the world; the Moores'

job is to sew the quilted backing on the blankets.

In the past year, the Moores have worked on about 20 quilts, Nancy Moore said. "We're always looking for a way to use (our) talents for God's work," she said.

When the Moores began work on Katelyn's quilt, they didn't realize they knew the girl's family. Nancy Moore and Katelyn's grandmother, Annette Cordes, used to work together.

## **International effort**

A week ago, the Moores presented the quilt along with a Winnie the Pooh pillow to Katelyn and her mother, Victoria Keathley.

The quilt includes squares made by people from Australia and Canada, as well as states including New York,

California, Washington and Missouri.

Many of the squares include personal messages to Katelyn. "Katelyn you light up my life," read one. "The princess sleeps here," read another.

Katelyn examined the quilt and pillow as she sat on the floor of her grandmother's Stedman home, pronouncing them worthy of her room.

Keathley said her daughter has been doing remarkably well, despite suffering a broken leg in April.

The family went to the beach in Wilmington recently and Katelyn was able to get in the water. "It was cold," Katelyn said.

Katelyn is excited about starting primary school in the fall. She's been busy mastering her motorized

chair, which allows her a mobility she's never experienced before.

"We've had to rearrange some of the furniture at home," Keathley said.

Katelyn's family has set up the Katelyn Crowder Family Special Needs Trust fund at the Bank of America to raise money to care for the girl and the equipment she relies on. For more information, call 483-9685 or 850-0664.

For more information on the quilting project, visit the Web site at [www.our-sma-angels.com/b4sma/blankets.html](http://www.our-sma-angels.com/b4sma/blankets.html). Katelyn has a personal page and guest book at the site where people can leave messages.

*Rodger Mullen's column appears Sunday, Monday and Wednesday. He can be reached at [mullenr@fayettevillenc.com](mailto:mullenr@fayettevillenc.com) or 486-3561.*