

Boy Scout knows the importance of 'hugs'

FOR THE FROSTBURG EXPRESS

FROSTBURG —Corriganville Scout Hunter Bridges knows the value of "hugs" and caring for kids in need. He single handedly collected more than 250 stuffed animals for the Frostburg Lions Club "Hugs" Program.

The program provided stuffed animals for children in stressful situations through police departments, ambulance service and other groups and organizations that deal with child on a regular basis.

"Last summer I saw the picture in the paper about the stuffed animals," said Hunter, "and I knew I could do that."

Hunter, a member of Scout Troop 60, Hyndman, Pa., asked friends and relatives to help him out with stuffed animals. "My grandmother didn't have any," said Hunter. "She went out and bought some for me."

Hunter's hug collecting, which will not earn him any merit badges, or other Scouting recognition, mushroomed into bags and boxes of animals. "This is so cool," he said.

Frostburg Lions President Bill Munck said, "Hunter has learned through his family and scouting that caring and giving to others is an important. This is a value that he will carry throughout life."

The Frostburg Lions Hugs Program, chaired by Lion Tina Gormley, has collected more than 3,000 stuffed animals, and distributed nearly 2,500 of them



From the left: Sheila Bridges, Boy Scout Hunter Bridges, Dave Bridges, Lion Tina Gormley and Lion Bill Munck are pictured with some of the stuffed animals Bridges gathered for distribution to children in stressful situations.

back to community-based service providers for free distribution to children in distressful situations.

From domestic violence, to Ronald McDonald houses, to Toys For Tots, and from Morgantown to Ballimore, Frostburg Lions Hugs are giving children a smile during the worst of times.

When Hunter was a baby medical issues caused him to be hospitalized in Baltimore for a time. His parents, Dave and Sheila Bridges, stayed at the Ronald

McDonald House. The "Hugs" that Hunter collected will be taken to the very same house by Frostburg Lions to help complete the circle for Hunter.

"Hunter's Scouting goal is to become an Eagle Scout," said mom Sheila. "Collecting these stuffed animals will help to lay a firm foundation for that."

For information on how you can help with the Frostburg Lions Hugs Program, contact Gormley at Frostburg Lions Club, P.O.Box 371, Frostburg, MD 21532, or call: (301) 689-0000.