



Quilt of Belonging Fibres du monde

Summer 2016

Congratulations!

Dear Ms. Bryan:

On behalf of His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, I am pleased to inform you that you have been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

And so began the letter informing Esther that she will be presented with Canada's Meritorious Service Medal. These medals "enable the governor general, on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen and all Canadians, to recognize outstanding accomplishment that set an example for others to follow and bring benefit to our country."



Esther earned this recognition after many years of dreaming huge and working hard with Quilt of Belonging. Her belief that we are all of one family fueled this remarkable piece of textile art. Her message of inclusion has inspired everyone who sees the Quilt to reach for a bigger dream. Her faith that God would provide the hands needed to sew the dream into reality has led to this and she would be the first to say

that this is not just her award. It belongs to all of us... the sponsors, members, volunteers, friends, families and admirers who have made the Quilt the symbol that it has become.

On Thursday, June 23rd Esther stood before the Governor General of Canada in the ballroom of Rideau Hall to receive her Meritorious Service Medal. Please join all of us as we offer our sincere congratulations to Esther for her wonderful achievement, our thanks to her family for sharing her time and energy with us, and our thanks for allowing us to contribute to a bigger dream.



Marjorie Thorpe
Member of the Board of Directors

KINGSTON GUILDS HOST QUILT June 9-12, 2016



OH YEA!, OH YEA-A-A-A!



GRAND OPENING FOR A GREAT SHOW AT THE ROYAL KINGSTON CURLING CLUB!

Limestone Quilters' Guild, Cataraqui Guild of Needle Arts and Kingston Heirloom Quilters hosted this exhibit. The opening ceremonies began with song and drumming by Sisters of the Drum. Then the town crier loudly proclaimed the mission and history of the Quilt. Dignitaries spoke, a ribbon was cut and a huge "Quilt "cake" was served to all. In a fitting finale, the Sisters of the Drum sang *"We are all one under the Creator"*.

80 + volunteers

1106 adult visitors

232 school children



A fun treasure hunt

sent the children searching for whales, clocks, drums, coffee pots, and many other items on the Quilt. Watching them, so eager, made everyone smile.

"Such an important work -a statement of our lives for all times...it was a pleasure to look at this work of beauty and harmony."
J. Copeland

"Deeply moving—who we are and how we are connected in Canada."
E. MacDonald

"TVO has an ad that emphasizes "O" that comes with awe—This is an "O"! Their motto is never stop learning—this enhances all learning!"
B. Aylesworth



Proud stitchers from Heirloom Quilters Guild share their work

The 200 Kilometre dash

Kingston's **Heirloom Quilters' Guild** played a big role in the race to finish the Quilt in time for its launch at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 2005. In the final months, George and Marilyn Vance rigged their van to ferry quilt panels between Williamstown and their Kingston home where a workshop had been set up. There the intrepid volunteers stitched the individual blocks on to the Quilt panels, every day from morning till supper.

Kingston stitchers

Joan Bales
Diane Berry
Sylvia Currie
Lorna Grice
Donna Hamilton
Ros Hanes
Margaret Henshaw
Gail Jennings
Mary Ann McAndrews
Margaret Rhodes
Marilyn Vance
Bea Walroth



THE JOURNEY HOME

We all come from somewhere. It's the place where we first find a sense of belonging... get to know the people we will call family... let them get to know us. We call it home and, no matter how far we travel, it journeys with us until we return. The same is true for Quilt of Belonging.

The project was conceived in a charming old house by a river in the tiny village of Williamstown, Ontario. For a while, it slumbered there..... the plans growing, developing, changing. When work started on the Quilt, the project moved to the spacious former township hall on the riverbank in the centre of town. There we set up rooms for each of the tasks. As the project grew, people got to know it and learned to love it. Visitors arrived in cars and buses, eager to get a glimpse of this massive undertaking. For six years, dedicated volunteers came together, giving their all to make it the best it could be. Then they sent it out into the world to journey well and it has.

We enjoyed that home for almost 15 years. Then for the last while, home has been the 'Quilt of Belonging' office in Lancaster, Ontario. Charming and cozy, the office and the people in it made those who visited there feel welcome. It was the public persona of the Quilt and its administrative hub. Then in February word came that the office would have to move.



After searching for a new home, an idea presented itself. What if the Quilt went back to its birthplace... the charming century house by the river. There was space. People gathered together to help and the Quilt office made its way back to where it began - Williamstown. The office once again shares space with Esther Bryan's music and art studio overlooking fields and gardens. Old friends and new will find a sense of belonging in this large welcoming space. Just head west a little through Williamstown along the north side of the Raisin River. You'll know you're home when you see the sign - Quilt of Belonging.

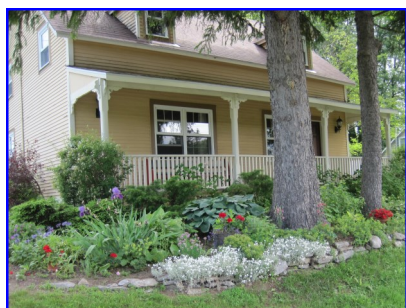


A TALE OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE!

Almost 20 years ago, sitting at my desk in my Williamstown studio overlooking the garden, I sketched, planned and dreamt of making the Quilt. A large easel held drawings of ideas. The floor was blanketed with fabrics, both old and new, and rolls of sketch paper. This was the beginning of the Quilt project— here I first shared my dream with friends and family. Now, this spring, the Quilt office has returned home to the same room, the same desk, the same garden view, though with a few additions such as computers, glossy Quilt of Belonging books and photos of the Quilt on its travels.



Looking back on the intervening years, I am overcome with awe and gratitude. Often I am asked “How did you ever do this?” The first response is, I didn’t do this alone. It has been a faith journey for me and I am thankful for God’s provision. But I am also deeply moved by another type of faith, that of the many people who have helped along the way. The Township of South Glengarry provided a building before there was any part of the Quilt to see. Donors gave funds and resources when the project had little to go on. Volunteers near and far worked for years though they didn’t know what the Quilt would look like when finished or if it would succeed. They kept working, giving, never sharing their doubts with me until after the project was launched. Their faith is amazing to me. Certainly my recent Governor General’s medal belongs to each one of them as well.



This month reminded me of other reasons to be thankful. At the Kingston Quilt exhibit, I was introduced to some recent Syrian refugees. Hearing their terrible stories renewed my gratitude for our country. We take for granted our peace, freedom, food, shelter, education, medical help, and the protection of the law. Canada, like this studio and office, is still a great place to live, to work, to dream, to share time with friends and family.

Quilt of Belonging was made as an expression of love and hope for humanity. Most of all, my heart is warmed by the compassion, acceptance and love that you have shown me and so many others. Thank you for, your faith, your support— for living hope and love during this Quilt journey together!



Esther Bryan
Executive Director