

More than we will ever know

A small group of *Quilt* volunteers gathered in May to renew friendships and exchange memories of working on the huge project over the past twenty years. All are amazed at the *Quilt's* achievements, at the quantifiable measures of its success—number of visitors at the shows, impressive exhibitions quantity of books sold and website traffic. We have witnessed many emotional visitor responses .

It is impossible though to measure the transformational impact that extends beyond our shows. We are often unaware of new projects that are inspired by the *Quilt*. These activities, whether in schools, in communities or done globally are being initiated to meet the needs of communities and to create a caring world where there is “a place for all.” This newsletter features stories that show how the *Quilt* lights a spark in others—a sample of the wealth of threads that continue to spin outward from the fabric of *Quilt of Belonging*.



Chloë Fox & Elena Mirga cut 20th Anniversary cake



WOODLAND CULTURAL CENTRE



Quilt of Belonging in Brantford February 29 to May 9, 2020

Woodland Cultural Centre serves to preserve and to promote Indigenous art, history, language and culture. The museum's collections, exhibits, and events present an opportunity to discover Native Ontario .



Cavuga block



Mohawk block

Tapestry of Spirit: the Torah Stitch by Stitch



Catalogue for Textile Museum exhibit

Six years ago, Temma Gentles, a Toronto-based fibre artist, called Quilt of Belonging asking for help with her new project she called The Torah Stitch by Stitch. Temma's dream was to cross-stitch the Torah (the first five books of the Bible). She wanted to make "a community project accessible to a broad range of people that would also create something meaningful and beautiful."

Lili Shain, President and Chair of the non-profit organization, said "Without a doubt, we were inspired by the truly exquisite Quilt of Belonging project, but also by Esther Bryan, who so generously stepped in with invaluable advice and counsel over these past six years. And we cannot thank her enough for connecting us with Martin Gaudet, whose creative display structures have enhanced both our projects immeasurably."

Genesis and Exodus and a third of Deuteronomy have been finished for a total of 170 linear feet.

This fall the first portion of the project was beautifully displayed in large sweeping, curved segments at the Textile Museum of Canada located in Toronto. The exhibit was fittingly called *Tapestry of Spirit*.



*Tapestry of Spirit
at Museum of Textiles*



"A remarkable range of women and men in 27 countries — of many faiths, some secular, some observant, from diverse cultural backgrounds— have embraced this opportunity.....

An integral part of this project has been its commitment to inclusivity and outreach."

When completed, the work of art will be about 300 feet long. It will include two works 5 feet by seven feet with selections from the New Testament in Greek and the Qur'an in Arabic. Their inclusion will honour the connections between the three Abrahamic faiths.



Classroom communities stitch their stories

Educators in Canada and abroad have found creative ways to use the *Quilt* in their classrooms, schools, English Second Language centres and youth groups. Many have made their own *Quilt of Belonging* and developed new projects. The *Quilt* has often been included in school textbooks but this has been just the beginning. All kinds of innovative teaching plans, workshops, conferences have developed from the *Quilt* as educators and students learn to make a difference in their classrooms, in their communities — learn they can even impact the world!



“When we all feel connected, it creates a sense of belonging and well-being, conditions for learning.”

“This *Quilt of Belonging* exercise was inspired by *Quilt of Belonging* that I (Cindy) was honoured to visit at the CNE. Numerous early learning educators were invited to create a patch that reflected who they are and what they believe about how learning happens in the early years.”

Cindy Green and Diane Kashin

What does it mean to belong?

“We have begun exploring this concept through building the classroom community.”

“A community is a place where social bonds are established and individuals can flourish: where each child is capable of success and of making important contributions to our collective knowledge.”

*Excerpt from Inquiry Classroom
(students create a school quilt of belonging)*



ESL students in Brazil
sew a “Quilt of Belonging”

One By One



"In June 2008 I learned about *Quilt of Belonging*. I was immediately keen to learn each block maker's story. I carried this back to my middle school students in Georgia (USA) to instill the art of giving and learn-

ing from others' life experiences. The Quilt has inspired me to assist, teach and give my time and my skills to others. I sew quilts for fundraisers and donate many to local women's shelters, hospitals and an animal clinic. I learned that giving comfort, warmth and a sense of caring is so rewarding."

Laurel Hinze

Heyam Qirbi, Yemen block maker

A passionate community builder, her many projects in the community focus on children and the diversity of Canadians, from First Nations to the newest arrival. Her volunteer work is organized around *Mothers for Peace*, but she is also engaged with *Mothers of Children Juggling Cultures*, *Every Child Is Sacred* (she is a founding member of this UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) *Reconciliation Day in Ottawa*, and *Black History Month* program (a founding member).

"Of course the *Quilt* project inspired lots of communities in Canada. I consider myself most fortunate when we met." says Heyam.



Sisters Quilt Show, Oregon. set to the music of "Quilt of Belonging" by Cathy Miller, Singer/Songwriter, The Singing Quilter. Produced at The Northwest School of Film, 2014

Alice Olsen Williams, Ktunaxa block maker

"I really appreciate that the Indigenous Peoples were given the foundation row of the Quilt."

Alice is a renowned quilter. One of her goals is to show how quilting can bring healing, comfort and companionship to people by sharing their experiences and their feelings. She has initiated many collaborative community projects including "Murdered and Missing Women" and four quilts on residential schools.

Two are shown below.



"Child Prisoners"



"Schools of Shame"

Your support continues the Quilt's vital outreach!

It's amazing how many community projects have sprung up about 'belonging' and "A place for all" since the *Quilt* was made. What a blessing that is! Our world needs all the opportunities to work together in harmony that we can create. Our children need all the teaching that we can provide about caring for one another and acceptance of others.

We need your support to continue our mission.

You can donate by mail, by phone or online at www.quiltofbelonging.ca. **THANK YOU!**