



UPDATE: STITCHES DOLL PROJECT

WORLD AIDS DAY - 2006 – December 1st

We are pleased to announce that our World AIDS Day events for this year were a great success! With the help of two of STITCHES die-hard volunteers, Julia and Melissa LaPonse, we were able to do an entire day long of display tables and exhibits.

First, we went to downtown Detroit at the City/County Building and took part in a community-wide awareness celebration with other local agencies. Along with many display tables and informational handouts there was a three hour program. Kathleen Gerus-Darbison was one of the featured speakers along with Rev. James Curry, Council-woman JoAnn Watson, and Detroit Public Schools' Dr. Arlene Richardson, to name a few. Showcased were the South Western High School Choir and African drummers and dancers added a beautiful element for a Pre-Kwanzaa celebration. They also displayed a quilt made by local students and community members to remind people to "Keep the Promise."

In the afternoon the STITCHES volunteers drove to the University of Windsor where our first International Exhibit took place. The location was Chrysler Hall South in the Sociology & Anthropology Dept. Museum. The display cases were filled with STITCHES dolls and pieces of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. They also had the film, *NO DAY PROMISED*, by Diane Cheklich, playing for the duration of the event. It was a wonderful display that was designed and executed by students in a museum studies class. Their professor Dr. Leslie Robertson and STITCHES archivist, Dr. Jackie Lewis worked together to make this exhibit a huge success. Look at our website in the next week to see some of the photos. Along with the museum display was a delightful array of food and refreshments accompanied by two volunteer violinists. It gave the event such a wonderful feeling. The students sold Stitches red ribbons and lapel pins to raise money for the project. They also worked with a local printing company, Serious Concepts to design handout cards, posters and a large banner to advertise the event. All of the printing was donated to the event by Serious Concepts. A big thank you from all of us to all of them!!

Because the University students worked so hard on this exhibit we decided to leave it up for an additional month. So if you have a chance to get to the U of Windsor before the end of January, just ask at the Sociology/Anthropology Dept. They will be happy to direct you to the museum exhibit.

Saturday morning we were invited to a Seventh Day Adventist Church in Hamtramck. We did a display table there and were invited to speak about the STITCHES Doll Project during their sanctuary time. It was a wonderful day full of AIDS information, outreach strategies, and further commitment on the part of this congregation. They continue to raise money to fund Adventist programs in Uganda and other parts of the world. After a light lunch they continued with an afternoon program that included AIDS Partnership Michigan. Lots of great educational literature was shared with members of the Conant Gardens congregation. Bill and Kathy felt so welcome there and we want to thank them for their gracious hospitality.

OTHER NEWS:

We need to write some more grants to help fund STITCHES. The Steppin' Out Royal Oak grant that we applied for got partial funding of \$1000. The National AIDS Fund grant unfortunately did not get funded. There were 84 applicants from across the country and they could only fund 12 programs. So we need to regroup and do another round of applications. I have applications for two potential funding agencies, ZLB Behring and Gilead Science, who have both showed an interest in the project. If we want to continue to do our outreach we need to secure some funding to keep us going. If anyone has other potential options for funding ideas, please let Kathy know.

We are always looking for new collaborative partners to do our outreach. In November, Kathy met with Debra Ehrmann from Pontiac's El Centro "la familia". She was very interested in working with STITCHES and we will attend their January staff meeting to give an overview of our project. This will allow all their staff people to be aware of STITCHES and think of ways that we can work together. Then we hope to apply for some funding through Easter Seals Foundation.

On December 8th, we are meeting with the Executive Director of a fledgling organization in Honduras called Walking With Children. It is an orphanage for children who have lost their parents to AIDS, some of which are also infected themselves. This would be a new endeavor for STITCHES and we hope to seek funding from some entities that do international outreach programs.

DOLLMAKING WORKSHOPS

Next week on December 12th we will make a journey to Cleveland, Ohio for a dollmaking workshop. This is very exciting for many reasons. First of all, it will give Kathy the opportunity to reconnect with some wonderful women she met at a Healing Weekend in Ohio. Also, this will add new dolls and new stories to our STITCHES collection. Currently we have 75 dolls from all over the country. And we will add new friends to our STITCHES network of special women. This is a great way to reach out to others!

We will be getting one doll back from our South Africa outreach effort. This doll was made by a little girl in an orphanage there. We will get a photo up on the website as soon as we are presented with the doll. Stay tuned!

DONATIONS:

A giant thank you to Gloria Irla-Marlow for her donations of scrap materials, yarn, and other items for dollmaking workshops. Two other "friends of STITCHES" sent us boxes of buttons, embroidery thread, yarn, material, etc. So another thank you goes to Kris Richardson and Patti Steele. We now have a special DONATION PAGE on the website to list items that we need to have continually replenished. Check it out if you haven't had the opportunity lately. The new website is up and running!

NEW REVAMPED WEBSITE:

Rick Otterbein has been the man behind our wonderful new STITCHES website. Please go and take a look at: www.stitchesdollproject.org

On the main page you can view a trailer of the *NO DAY PROMISED* film. On our PHOTO GALLERY page there is a big map that you can click on a single state to see dolls made by women who live there. All the current dolls in our collection are on the web to be viewed. New dolls are being added as we speak.

THE CLOTNOT CLUB PAGE

Our new outreach to women who bleed has its own page as well. You can view it by going to www.stitchesdollproject.org/clotnot

This webpage is still under construction and will have additional information added to it.

But take a look and let us know what you think!! We would love to hear from you.

The ClotNot Club will be doing its first dollmaking workshop in Albuquerque, New Mexico in March at the Hemophilia Federation of America Symposium. We will report back to let you know how it goes.

Thank you to all of you for supporting us in our mission!

Kathy