

For Immediate Release

AIDS Memorial Quilt to Be Part of Asheville World AIDS Day Observance

Asheville, NC (November 12, 2008) – For the first time ever, part of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, now made up of more than 44,000 panels, will be on display in Asheville as part of a week of activities leading up to the observance of World AIDS Day Monday, December 1.

From Monday, November 24 through Monday, December 1, 160 panels of the Quilt will be on display in the Promenade of Pack Place in downtown Asheville. The exhibit will be open to the public daily, except for Thanksgiving, with no admission charged. Special events open to the public are planned daily from Tuesday, November 25 through the closing on December 1.

The exhibit, *A Tapestry of Lives*, will end that night with a candlelight vigil from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Pack Place. Pastyme, the acclaimed eight-voice a cappella ensemble, and Robert Thomas, jazz pianist and vocalist, will perform as part of the closing event.

“The purpose of the exhibit is to honor those who have been affected by HIV/AIDS, including the victims who have died, the doctors, nurses and other caregivers, the thousands of AIDS orphans, and families and friends,” according to Pam Siekman of Asheville, World AIDS Day chairperson.

Twenty blocks of the Quilt, each containing eight panels, will be on display in Pack Place. Twenty of the 160 panels on display were requested by local Western North Carolina citizens, such as parents, siblings, partners and friends of those memorialized by the Quilt.

Siekman said, “It is our desire to create an exhibit that will foster healing for the families and friends who have lost loved ones to AIDS and at the same time unify the community

with compassion and support to continue the fight against AIDS right here in Western North Carolina and around the globe. World AIDS Day is all about solidarity.”

“The AIDS Memorial Quilt, in its beautifully woven splendor, carries messages of love, acceptance and validation for thousands of families as well as the hundreds of thousands of people who view it each year,” Siekman said.

“We hope the people of Western North Carolina will come and stand before the Quilt, remember those we have lost, and recognize the fact that although there has been progress in the last 20 years, there is still no solution. We must remind the world, including Asheville, that AIDS is still among us today, taking lives, changing lives, and creating orphans,” Siekman said.

Hours of the exhibit are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, November 24, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday (except for Thanksgiving Day), 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday, and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday, December 1, when the exhibit will close, followed by the candlelight vigil

Special events during the week include music by James Barr, classical guitarist; Regina Loveday, jazz vocalist; A Touch of Rose Music, classical ensemble; Brad Earnhardt, classical guitarist; and Robert Thomas, jazz pianist and vocalist.

Also, the film, *Just as I Am* by artist Carolyn DeMerrit, about women with AIDS, will be shown on November 29 and 30 in the Library of the Asheville Art Museum. The 50-minute film will be shown continuously during regular museum hours.

Funding for the exhibit came from private sources, including a benefit dinner held October 7 at S&W Restaurant. A portion of the proceeds from that dinner was donated to the project by Steve Moberg, owner of S&W. Andie MacDowell, the actress and longtime supporter of the Western North Carolina AIDS Project (WNCAP), was guest of

honor at the dinner. Other sponsors include WNCAP, the Asheville Art Museum, Pack Place, Ashford Mortgage Advisors, and Out in Asheville.

Additional information about the AIDS Memorial Quilt, World AIDS Day, and WNCAP is available at www.wncap.org or the WNCAP office at 828.252.7489.

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Media inquires to:

Pam Siekman at pamsiekman@earthlink.net or 828.335.6680
(Pam also can assist in obtaining photographs from the Quilt)