

Organization Stitches Together Fun, Community

Hummingbird Stitches Quilt Guild promotes quilting and the fiber arts; club teaches and design and technique.

by Nora Eaken
Community contributor

The Hummingbird Stitches Quilt Guild was organized in 1978 as a non-profit organization for the purpose of promoting an interest and appreciation of quilting and fiber arts. This is being accomplished by teaching high standards of design and techniques to our members through program meetings and workshops.

From a small group of women meeting in homes in the late 1970s, we have grown to more than 180 members in our guild. In 2010, one of these founding ladies, Betty Merkel, was inducted into the Arizona Quilters Hall of Fame.

We offer junior memberships for ages less than 18. We're not just for women, we have a few male members. Our program meetings are held the first Monday and Wednesday of each month at the Apache Middle School.

At our program meetings, local, state, and national quilters present their techniques, quilts, and experiences. Recent guest speakers have included Michelle Watts, Helen Frost, Jean Biddick and Susie Weaver. These program speakers often stay

overnight and give one-day workshops to our members. This provides members an opportunity to learn firsthand from some great quilters. Planning and coordinating these events is Clara Billock. The speakers planned for 2014 promise to be as exciting as previous years.

In addition, we have weekly sewing bees on the remaining Wednesdays. On these days we concentrate on making quilts to be donated to various organizations in the community. The rooms are a bee hive of activity with ladies sewing, ironing, cutting and sorting fabric.

Some members are also busy planning new quilt tops to be made or making up kits. Once quilt tops are completed, they are brought to a sewing bee to have the batting and backing selected. Next, members then volunteer to quilt and finish binding the quilt. Moving all the quilts through this process is Doreen Dolan, Gail Staples and Laura Keiller.

We believe in giving to our community. In 2013 we made and donated more than 225 quilts. During the last five years 1,086 quilts were made and donated to various local organizations; cancer treatment centers, respite and assisted living centers, fire departments, crises centers, infant programs, and veteran programs are among the list. In addition, donations have been made to Habitat for Humanity and to residents that lost their homes in the Monument fire. Overseeing the distribution of these quilts is Janet Wilcox.

We don't just make quilts, in the past 18 months we have made more 1,140 "Beads of Courage" bags for children undergoing critical hospital procedures. This is coordinated by Debra Guilmette. These are given to "Beads of Courage" in Tucson and then distributed to hospitals in Tucson and nation-wide. We

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More than 180 members share techniques and tips to create quilts.
Photo courtesy of Nora Eaken



In 2013 the group made and donated more than 225 quilts to the community.
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