

“African Mosaic”



*This stunning full-sized quilt was donated to OMAS SISKONA of Kitchener-Waterloo by Wellington County quilt designer and teacher Renske Helmuth and The Waterloo County Quilters Guild, to support our **CREATING FUTURES, Threads of Hope for African Grandmothers** textile art project. Our goal is always to increase awareness of the AIDS pandemic in Africa and raise funds to support the work of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign in the sub-Saharan African countries most affected by HIV/AIDS.*

Title: “African Mosaic”

Individual Blocks: applique, piecing, embroidery and beading by members of the Waterloo County Quilters Guild

Assembled by Emily Hunsberger, Judy Pearce and Renske Helmuth

Machine quilted by Audry Vrooman

Co-ordinated by Renske Helmuth

Dimensions: 72.5” x 83.5”

Description and Inspiration for “African Mosaic”

Africa has long held a fascination for the rest of the world. From expansive desert to dense rainforest, from breath-taking mountains to waterfalls to broad plains, from rich, bustling seaports to tiny, nearly forgotten villages, Africa is truly a

beautiful and multifaceted continent. Sadly, it is also home to war, famine, poverty and disease.

This quilt is both a tribute to the beauty of Africa and an expression of the desire to do more to address the suffering of the people. The inspiration for the quilt arose after quilt coordinator *Renske Helmuth* travelled to Africa with her husband on a learning tour with the Canadian Food Grains Bank and the Mennonite Central Committee. *Renske* returned home with a collection of African fabrics and beads and her mind brimming over with memories of her trip. Before long she began to imagine capturing some of her memories in quilt form....and the idea for a group quilt project was born.

When *she* introduced the idea of an African-themed quilt to the other quilters at her guild, Waterloo County Quilters Guild, she soon discovered that many of her fellow quilters had connections to Africa as well. Some had travelled there themselves, or had friends or relatives who had worked in Africa as part of a mission group. *Others* have been involved with OMAS SISKONA (Grandmother Together) of Kitchener-Waterloo, one of more than 240 Canadian Grandmother groups supporting the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers Campaign, which supports community – based organizations at the heart of the response to African grandmothers who are struggling to raise millions of children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic. All women who participated in this quilt shared a desire to celebrate the beauty of Africa while reaching out to Africans in need. The blocks are as colorful and diverse as Africa itself and love and hope have gone into every stitch. The women who created this quilt send it out into the world with the hope that, one day, Africa's suffering will end, and that all will remain will be its beauty.

Renske Helmuth
March, 2015

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