

Adventures of Iditarod's Traveling Quilts!

October 2006

Back to Alaska: Quilt 1

Teachers from around the United States arrived in Wasilla, Alaska for the 2006 Summer Conference for Educators. Quilt didn't want to miss the opportunity to meet all of the teachers, so when Sheryl Cater, Eden Prairie, MN educator packed her bags to go to Alaska to be a presenter at the conference, Quilt accompanied her on the trip. Quilt had been visiting at Sheryl's school and had learned a lot about Sheryl's 2006 Iditarod Trail teaching project that she did for her school district.



Gary Paulsen, author and musher, stopped by the Iditarod Headquarters and posed for a picture with Quilt.



Gary welcomed 2007 Wells Fargo Teacher on the Trail™ Kim Slade to Alaska. Kim and Gary were also speakers at the conference. The little dog didn't get to be a speaker, but did enjoy meeting people. This dog is one of Gary's pets. Will we read about this pet in a future Paulsen book?

Quilt made a special guest appearance at the teacher's conference. Teachers decided to create a sibling for Quilt, so Quilt 2 was born at the conference--- the squares were born- or created, that is, by the teachers at the conference. After the conference, the quilt's squares went to Wisconsin with conference participant, teacher Carol. More about the new quilt later! Quilt went back to South Dakota for the rest of the summer.

As the start of school approached, Quilt headed to North Dakota to meet with students in Dickinson, North Dakota, in the classrooms of teachers Diana and Kelly. Quilt got to meet lots of students and teachers. Last year, students at this school created a quilt which was auctioned off to raise money for a good cause.

From North Dakota, Quilt traveled to Richland, Washington, to the classrooms of Marsha and Candy. Students and staff at the school enjoyed seeing and learning about the quilt.

Quilt then left for Elizabeth, Colorado, home and school of Iditarod's 2001 Wells Fargo Teacher on the Trail, Diane Nye. There is a special 'blank' quilt square on the quilt, waiting for Diane to create a message before sending Quilt on to the next school in California.

Quilt has already put quite a few miles on and visited quite a few cities and states! Stay tuned for future updates!

The Story of a Quilt 2 by Carol

The 2006 Iditarod Summer Conference quilt had its beginning on June 19, 2006, on a partly sunny day in Wasilla, Alaska. Diane Johnson, Iditarod Education Coordinator, gave each conference participant a large, square handkerchief and asked he/she to design a square by the end of the week. The square was to reflect the week in some manner: character education, the race, the dogs, the mushers, Alaska, the conference, or the people attending the conference.



Well, some of us had a difficult time coming up with an idea, a design, or just getting it finished by week's end. During this time, I volunteered to put the quilt together. As it turned out, quilt squares were still being sent to me at the beginning of August. By the end of that month, the quilt was finished, and it began its debut.

The quilt's first exhibition was at a faculty in-service at Winskill Elementary School in Lancaster, Wisconsin on August 28, 2006. I shared with my fellow teachers my experience of attending the conference, teaching materials, and explained about the quilt and my part in getting it completed. The next stop was my classroom. I teach 57 fifth graders. I described my Alaskan experience, the Iditarod, and of course, the quilt. The quilt made another appearance in Lancaster in mid-September. At a P.E.O. (a women's organization) meeting, the quilt and I were the guest speakers. It was a fun night and the ladies loved the quilt and its significance.

Now it is time for the quilt and I to separate. It has truly been a labor of love for me to construct this quilt, share it with friends and students, and now pass it on to others who will also love and cherish it. It is such a wonderful symbol of what the Iditarod stands for and the people who share this common passion. Enjoy and take care of this treasure, until it returns to me in June.

Where is the Quilt now?

Quilt is currently in Ellicottville, New York. Stay tuned for future updates!



Students around the world will be introduced to the Iditarod Traveling Quilt project this year via Internet and this website as schools share information about the quilt's visit. Both quilts have a tight traveling schedule for the year.

We encourage you to map the journey each quilt takes and learn about the places the quilts visit. We encourage you to get a glimpse of the squares on the quilt and think about the messages and what message you'd put on the quilt if you designed a quilt. We encourage you to think about and compare your own personal quilt, the shapes, sizes, and designs that are 'covering' you. We encourage you to follow the adventures of each Iditarod Quilt and be a part of our adventure.

We encourage you to create your own quilts and tell us about them. Last year, many schools did this, some sending them to people in need, some selling them at auctions to raise money for good causes, and some sharing the learning with others in their state. One quilt was created and sent to someone who was struggling to beat cancer, a message of strength and courage was carefully created to provide warmth and comfort for that person. Congratulations to all of you who participated in projects last year.

If you have questions about the quilt or the project, please email us! If you are interested in being involved in future projects, please contact Diane Johnson at djohnson@iditarod.com.