



Peace Through Pieces

Trauma Healing through Quilt Making

Stories from the THARS Support Groups

Peace Through Pieces is a ministry of North Seattle Friends Church, 7740 24th Avenue Northeast Seattle, WA 98115 206-525-8800 office@northseattlefriends.org www.northseattlefriends.org

in cooperation with Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services of Burundi, (www.THARS.org), Burundi Yearly Meeting, and Congo Yearly Meeting,

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Virginie

“During the war, I saw many from my family dying. I came home and found my husband and child laid down dead on the floor. This was the greatest torture I’d ever gone through in my life. It was as though my head were going to burst.”



Beatrice

“We were badly off. No one would dare look at us. We looked like animals; we acted like animals. And talking about what had happened was like being stabbed with a knife.”



Magrate

“In 1996, August, they broke into my house and stole all that I possessed. I was six months pregnant, and as I ran out of my house, struggling with my four-year-old baby, someone was waiting for me with a grenade. He threw it to me. I was injured—the whole of my right side including my right eye taken off—and my four-year-old baby died.”

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The civil war in Burundi and problems in bordering countries have traumatized people in Burundi and the surrounding region. Today, many who were forced out due to fighting, threats, or political unrest seek to return home, bringing their experiences of traumatic events with them. Those who stayed have also experienced violence. Traumatized people tend to become isolated from others. They find it difficult to be active. The fun in life is not there for them. They have a sense that other people do not understand their situation.

It is estimated that nine out of 10 people over the age of 15 have experienced trauma. With so many traumatized people communities tend to be disconnected. As an important part of their recovery, traumatized people need support in rebuilding relationships and finding a sense of purpose. A Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services (THARS) support group helps people regain energy and connections and is a visible sign to the community that it is possible to get better. It heals and it recruits. It helps people become productive and it rebuilds community. ■

Eleven Quilting Support Groups Meet in Burundi

The Peace Through Pieces quilting ministry of North Seattle Friends Church held its first quilting training for trauma healing in Burundi less than five years ago. In the short time since then, we have trained 31 quilting teachers and established eleven quilting support groups in Burundi. In addition, we've trained 19 teachers in Eastern Congo. The women who are making quilts have gone from being victims to being celebrities in their communities. Everyone wants what they have learned

The THARS support group in Kibimba has over 60 members and has been meeting for several years. They call the group "Women in Development." With the support of Peace Through Pieces, the support group members have learned to make quilts. Quilters know the silent but powerful statement of concern that quilt can give. It is a very effective way to reach out to someone who is in a stressful situation. In Burundi, one traditional form of offering comfort to a sick, grieving or



Quilters meet at the THARS training center near Gitega



Kibimba support group members show off their creations.

distressed friend is to give that friend a blanket. Quilt making works hand-in-hand with an already existing tradition.

In addition to making quilts, the support groups use their new skills to make pot holders, aprons, tote bags and other sewing projects. The groups also select other projects to work together for a better life. These include basket weaving, soap making, gardening, and goat raising. ■



Trauma Healing Through Quilt Making

More Stories from the THARS Support Groups

“I was so relieved to know about THARS and I’m very grateful that it came because my life has completely changed and I’ll never depart from it.”
—Virginie.

“I have recovered all that I lost, such as my writing skills and my reading skills. I feel good and healed from all my trauma.”
—Magrate.

“I thank God because I have gained a lot of skills. I got a lot [of] experience from the group. I learned from other people’s lowly hands [to] become creative. I thank for all the help provided by

THARS because this quilting ministry has changed our lives.”
—Annicele

The quilters often select a sick or severely traumatized member of their group to receive one of their quilts as a gift to aid in her healing. In this way the quilts offer a double blessing—blessing those who make them and those who receive them. ■



The gift of a quilt.

Quilt Making in Congo

Working in partnership with Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services of Burundi, Peace Through Pieces has now expanded that same tool of trauma healing through quilt making to the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Patty Federighi, director of Peace Through Pieces, recently spent a month in Burundi and Congo where she directed the third quilting training workshop. THARS provided trauma healing listening training and Peace Through Pieces provided quilting training to women of Congo Yearly Meeting (CYM). Held at CYM’s Peace Center in Uvira, these trainings provided tools for CYM leaders to be an outreach for peace in this war-torn region.

“Oh, yes, the Congolese. They are known as the ‘Joy of Africa.’”

Conditions in Congo continue to be appalling. Deaths from violence, hunger and disease are expected to exceed six million. Incidents of rape and sexual torture of women exceed 100,000. And yet, among these Friends women, many of whom are

victims of this outrage, there was great joy. Joy in learning a new skill. Joy in making something beautiful. Joy in the gathering of women together, with outbreaks of singing and dancing several times a day. One THARS staff member in Bujumbura, Burundi, on hearing the stories of joy, said, “Oh, yes, the Congolese. They are known as the ‘Joy of Africa.’” ■





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A ministry of

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You Can Help

The Peace Through Pieces ministry supports Patty Federighi part time and several staff in Burundi. We provide training, classes and on-going support for the trained groups. The annual budget for Peace Through Pieces is \$25,000.

Peace Through Pieces director Patty Federighi will make her next trip to Burundi to train quilting and sewing teachers in February 2012. Support is needed to complete this training. You can help!

Donate. Your tax-deductible donation goes a long way in Burundi. One hundred dollars will buy a treadle sewing machine. Ten dollars will buy a pair of scissors or five yards of fabric. A gift in any amount is appreciated.

Would you like to "adopt" a quilting group? Eight hundred dollars will provide all the equipment and supplies to keep a group working for a year.

Buy a quilt or other African craft. Purchasing the great quilts or other craft

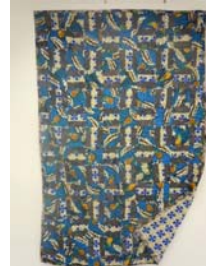
items made by the African quilters helps in several ways. It provides income to the African quilters. It supports Peace Through Pieces in its mission to train additional teachers in Africa and it helps the THARS support groups to continue quilting.

Other craft items available include aprons, pot holders, tote bags and baskets made by the THARS support groups. Additionally, local artists and crafts people donate handmade items for sale to support this work. Locally-made items available include pottery, jewelry, hand wovens, and framed photographs.

Invite Patty to speak. Patty Federighi, director of Peace Through Pieces, is available to speak at your church or meeting, your quilting group, service club, volunteer, or study group. ■

Please call or email to inquire about products or scheduling Patty to speak.

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Baskets, tote bags, aprons, quilts and more available for purchase.