

Quilt becoming global tool for AIDS education

By RICK GEORGE
Jambar Editor

The reading of names did not conclude on Monday as the AIDS Quilt came to YSU.

Dale Melsness, chair of the Cleveland Chapter of the AIDS Quilt, said it takes two days to read all 11,000 names of the people on the quilt.

"We won't be able to read all the names here (YSU)," he said.

Many of the 288 panels that were on display in the Chestnut Room are from the Northeast Ohio area, said Melsness.

"Many people with AIDS come back to their hometown area to die," said Melsness.

According to Melsness, the quilt is becoming a global tool in educating people about AIDS.

"Cleve Jones (originator of the quilt) probably never dreamed it would be this big," he said. "The quilt gives comfort to those whose loved ones died from AIDS."

Melsness said originally many families never wanted it known that their loved one died from the AIDS virus.

"After they come and see the quilt, they realize they are not the only ones suffering from the loss," he said. "A lot of people don't realize but many of those who have panels are women and children."

Examining a piece of history: Spectators examine various patches of the AIDS memorial quilt. The quilt, which commemorates those who's lives were cut short by the terrifying disease, was on display yesterday in the Chestnut Room of Kilcawley Center.



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Jones, who originated the

quilt after a candlelight memorial service for people with AIDS in November 1985, wanted a national memorial for all those with the virus. In June 1987, Jones and others worked together to get the project started.

The quilt is made up of thousands of 3 X 6 feet panels remembering the life of someone who has died of AIDS.

Last week, Melsness said

over 2,000 people came to view the quilt at Lorain County Community College.

"We always get a good response," he said.

Besides the United States, people with AIDS from 18 other countries are represented on the quilt.

Melsness said the Names Project will continue to keep adding names to the quilt until there is a cure for AIDS.

"People can turn panels into

their local AIDS chapter or send it to the headquarters in San Francisco," said Melsness.

As of July 31, 1989, 1.26 million people have viewed all

or a portion of the quilt.

The Names Project reports the quilt represent only 18 percent of AIDS deaths in the United States and only five percent world wide.

Currently the quilt is being displayed throughout the country in sections after last being

seen in full in Washington D.C. this fall.

When displayed in full, the total number of seams on the quilt equal 74 miles while weighing 13 tons.

The event was co-sponsored by the YSU AIDS Task Force, the Continuing Education Program and the Multi-County AIDS Network.

The quilt will be displayed Saturday, Feb. 10 at the Jewish Community Center in Cleveland Heights.