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The AIDS Memorial Quilt on display at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in October 1996. Photo Credit: The AIDS Memorial Quilt, The Names Project Foundation, 2006.

AIDS Quilt heads to Western NC

WNCAP brings famed memorial to Asheville

by **Will Billings**
Contributing Writer

ASHEVILLE — This December will mark the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day, an annual memorial and action day observed on Dec. 1 and set aside to remember those lost to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

In honor of the anniversary, the Western North Carolina AIDS Project (WNCAP) will showcase sections of the AIDS Memorial Quilt in a week-long exhibit beginning Nov. 24. Organizers expect to have approximately 75 sections of the Quilt on display at Pack Place, as well as provide music and special events throughout the exhibit.

The week-long memorial will end on Dec. 1, with a Candlelight Interfaith Memorial Vigil.

World AIDS Day began in 1988 as an effort to assist the United Nations in keeping the fight against AIDS on the agenda for global political leaders. For many, it is a day of solidarity with those affected by the epidemic. Through the years, the memorial has grown to

recognize those who have died, those who are living with the disease, the advances in science and medicine and more.

"The AIDS Memorial Quilt is an inspirational and intimate memorial to those who have died from AIDS," WNCAP said in an Aug. 31 release. "There are over 47,000 panels that make up the Quilt and it has been seen by over 16 million people since 1987. The AIDS Memorial Quilt is intended to foster healing, heighten awareness and inspire action in the age of AIDS."

WNCAP organizers are specifically looking for assistance from the Western North Carolina community and those in Asheville. They need people who would be willing to organize or volunteer at special events and are also looking for AIDS Quilt panels remembering those lost in Western North Carolina. Those with loved ones with a Quilt panel are encouraged to contact organizers so that they can request specific panels before the arrival of the Quilt. Those wanting to display the Western North Carolina panels can contact WNCAP at www.wncap.org or at 828-252-7489. All submissions and requests must be made by Sept. 14. ▀

Calling panel participants

HICKORY — October is HIV/AIDS Awareness Month and the AIDS Leadership Foothills-area Alliance (ALFA) will be holding panel discussions throughout the community to share personal testimony about how the virus has impacted the lives of those who are living with or have been affected by HIV/AIDS.

ALFA is currently looking for volunteers to sit on one of the panels, which will be held at locations throughout the month. A question and answer session will be held to allow the audience to gain insight and information about the disease.

For those who are interested in being part of this endeavor, either as a panelist or an attendee, call Hilda R. Cook at 828-322-1447, ext. 233 or Shasta Burton at 828-322-1447, ext. 232 for more information. They can also be reached by email at gettested@charter.net or prevention@charter.net.

In other news, ALFA has spent the summer working on AIDS Quilt panels in remembrance of a number of their clients. Despite their efforts, there are still a few names unclaimed. Quilting bees have taken place on Thursday evenings from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Once squares are completed, the task of assembling them takes place.

For more information about joining this group, call Andie Brymer at 828-332-1447, ext. 229. Volunteers, community members, clients and staff are welcome. ▀

info: www.alfainfo.org