

AFRICAN AMERICAN QUILT GUILD OF OAKLAND

Mission Statement

To preserve and continue the tradition of quilting

To promote fellowship among interested persons in all aspects of quilting

To contribute to the knowledge and appreciation of fine quilting and quilts

To sponsor and support quilting activities through regular meetings and special events with the community.

It is one thing to dream and another to make that dream come true. Esther Pancho, a longtime Oakland quilter and teacher, saw her dream realized when the first meeting of the African American Quilt Guild of Oakland was held at the beginning of the New Millennium.

This small group of eight women thoughtfully wrote the Guild's mission statement, followed by the by-laws and articles of incorporation needed to become a nonprofit organization. They knew that a solid foundation had to be laid for the future growth of the Guild.

With lots of enthusiasm, but not much money, the Guild made an agreement with the West Oakland Branch Library that the Guild would host a community workshop in January with an exhibit the following month in exchange for a meeting room. Those were the first stitches in a quilt of community service and the establishment of the annual Black History Month family workshop which is held on the fourth Saturday of February. The attendance and enthusiasm for the event grows every year and dozens children and their moms, dads or grandparents crowd the community room to learn how to make a nine patch and much more.

As the group expanded, so did the opportunity to hold shows and exhibits at dozens of locations around the East Bay and beyond including most of the Oakland library branches, numerous quilt shops, the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco, various art galleries, community centers and other public buildings.

In 2014, the Guild, led by project chair and nationally known quilter Marion Coleman, took on its most ambitious undertaking, a multi-year, multi-location exhibit, *Neighborhoods Coming Together: Quilts Around Oakland*, a citywide quilt exhibition and quilt making project. The project involved creating quilts about people, the environment, history, business, culture and other aspects of life in Oakland. More than 100 quilts were made by guild and community members during the project period.

In February, 2016, the New York Times ran an extensive feature article written by Patricia Leigh Brown, "Quilts with a Sense of Place, Stitched in Oakland." The article garnered national attention and the Guild was invited to exhibit at the National Quilt Museum in Paducah, Kentucky in the spring of 2017.

Quilt workshops continue in schools, community centers and with non-profit organizations. Community outreach extends to and beyond schools, Girl Scout troops and many church youth groups.

Today the Guild is composed of dozens multi-racial, multi-cultural women and men who live in several Bay Area counties. Membership is open to anyone interested in the purpose and objective of the guild. No discrimination is made with regard to race, color, creed, sex or national origin.

For more information visit the website at www.AAQGO.org.