



## Celebrating 'dementia week' in our region

The project is a collaboration between DGRI's Specialist Palliative Care Unit, Alzheimer Scotland and Ann Hill - Quilter in Residence with NHS Dumfries & Galloway.

Throughout the project those participating have been involved in the choice of fabrics, the colour and the design. The quilts have been inspired by the conversations between Ann Hill, and the person with dementia. Members of the families where possible, and members of staff have always been involved.

### Forgetting piece by piece - Ann Hill's interpretation of dementia before the project started



Each block in the quilt has nine squares, and in each block darker squares gradually replace the red squares. This displacement of colour represents the journey experienced by those who live with dementia and the family and carers around them. In the final square there is both a heart and a forget-me-not flower to symbolise the love and memories that can endure in the face of progressive illness.

Jocelyn loves daffodils best but doesn't like yellow ones. I found some lilac daffodil fabric and made her a quilt. I was excited about showing it to her but Jocelyn had no recollection of the conversation or interest in the quilt. This was an emotional personal learning experience for me as I gained insight into the reality and impact on the family and friends of the person with dementia.

### Lilac Daffodils



### Daisy Floral Quilt



The flowers on this quilt are based on a template that was drawn by Helen at the Kirkcudbright Day Centre. On the day that Helen drew the flowers she was wearing a red butterfly brooch which she kept touching because she said she loved the feel of it. Helen is a keen gardener and likes to spend as much time as possible in the garden, where she can watch the butterflies that flit around.

### New Zealand Quilt

One of the group told me her sister was visiting from New Zealand and how this had brought back memories of her mother. The woman talked about having tea with her mother and sister and how her mother would have been making potato scones with the leftovers from lunch.



### Heart and Flower Quilt



This quilt was made from photographs of hands printed onto fabric and also fabric which was painted by the day centre groups at Castle Douglas and Kirkcudbright. The Alzheimer Scotland logo features in the centre of the quilt. This quilt will hang in the Dumfries offices of Alzheimer Scotland.

She told me about the farm that she grew up on and the animals they kept. She loved the chickens that they kept as pets but refused to eat them. She told me how her mother would hide cooked chicken amongst the vegetables on her dinner plate so that she wouldn't realise she was eating it.

### Vegetarian Chickens



Myndin" Quilts

## Myndin Quilts



"Myndin" is an old Shetland word which means caring, looking after and remembering. For many years quilters around the world have made Linus Quilts for seriously ill children. I have started a similar project making lap quilts, etc., for people with dementia. They love to feel different fabrics and even "smells" in their quilts. The project is extending around Scotland

starting with Glasgow, Selkirk, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Shetland and Falkirk. Some of them are used as "comfort quilts" others are used to trigger memories.



## The Accountant's Quilt

Arthur is an accountant, who likes to draw and paint in straight lines and place objects in boxes- particularly numbers. He inspired the design of the quilt by suggesting that it should be made up like a spreadsheet with numbers on it. Arthur has had pet cats all his life and so we used cats as a pattern in the border as well as on the quilting. On the day I visited Arthur said he had felt lonely. We sat and held hands for a while and talked about both our families and how I had also had cats.

Arthur particularly enjoyed the company of the other members of the group and took part in the preparation of the fruit for the afternoon snack.



## Black and White Quilt with a red zinger



There were four residents in our group, three ladies and one man, and up until the point when I brought out this black and white quilt one lady had remained silent and I thought she was asleep. However, she shouted "No, no, put it away, I don't like it", then went back to being silent. There were quilts of all colours on show but none of them brought any further reaction.

"Life can be a little confusing at times; memories come and go; pieces of the jigsaw don't fit; she is very happy today; he remembers my childhood toys; I was called by my own name; today I feel loved again..." These are comments regularly made to me by families living with a relative with dementia.

## Confused love



## A Cup of Tea



There seems to be two things in life that bring comfort : True love and Tea! Everyone I have had the pleasure of meeting during the first part of the 'Yes we can - together' Project has emphasised the importance of 'Love' - between family members; staff, carers and the the person with dementia; and most importantly that person knowing they are still loved. Everywhere I have gone we have had tea!

## Touchy, feely, smelly

There are a number of articles (owls, pot holders, etc) which are popular to touch, feel and smell.

A new exhibition of quilts entitled "Families living with Alzheimers" will take place in the cafe area of Gracefield Arts Centre from 28<sup>th</sup> August to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2010 to include World Alzheimer's Day.

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