Support for the Project

Prominent groups stand behind our message.

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June 5th, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

Lincoln High School is proud to collaborate with John Sorensen and the Abbott Sisters Project to bring The Quilted Conscience experience to the Lincoln area. During the 2013-2014 school year, Lincoln High refugee students from Burma and Thailand had a wonderful opportunity to experience The Quilted Conscience. This project led them through a reflection of their individual immigration experiences, prompted them to explore their goals for the future, and provided them with an artistic outlet for expressing their dreams and memories. Additionally, the students built lasting relationships with local quilters who taught them the skills needed to create their individual quilt blocks that were ultimately joined together in the creation of a large quilt masterpiece.

The goals and objectives of The Quilted Conscience Project enhance the efforts of Lincoln High and Lincoln Public Schools to help immigrant and refugee students and families solidify their identity and reach their full potential. John Sorensen and his support team delivered vision, management and implementation of the project seamlessly, beginning in the fall with pre-workshop gatherings between students, families and quilters, the weeklong workshop, collaborating with families, arranging quilters to complete the final product and a final showcase.

Lincoln High School is excited to learn that John Sorensen and the Abbott Sisters Project are applying for funding that will help sustain The Quilted Conscience project in the Lincoln area. The project was an event that students learned and grew from and families were proud to see their children be a part of. We fully support The Quilted Conscience being replicated at Lincoln High and other schools for future students. We are confident the project will be direct and deliberate and – most important – it will have a positive impact on students, families and the larger community.

We are happy to support this proposal for The Quilted Conscience and we look forward to partnering in the success that will result from this project.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephen C. Joel  
Superintendent  
Lincoln Public Schools

Susan Hertzler  
Teacher and Department Chair  
Lincoln High School English Learner Program

Dr. Mike Wortman  
Principal  
Lincoln Public Schools

Lisa Tolliver  
Advocate and Family Resource Specialist  
Lincoln High School English Learner Program
September 26, 2014

Dear NAC Arts Learning Grant Reviewer,

Last week Joslyn Art Museum engaged with sixteen young Karen immigrants (students at Omaha Public Schools Benson High School), their families, and local quilters, during a seven-day ("memories and dreams") quilt workshop – a piece of a larger The Quilted Conscience Project initiative to unfold in February–April, 2015. The extraordinary outcomes – experienced by all, I believe – compel me to write this letter in support of The Quilted Conscience (TOC) Interactive Learning Website being developed by TOC and Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET).

The quilt workshop was remarkable for many reasons... foremost, for the way it brought together people of diverse cultures, languages, ages, and life experiences to create community and shared purpose – and, ultimately, a lasting, beautiful work of art. Success was due to the openness and willingness of the student and adult participants, the collaborative spirit of many community partners, and to the tried-and-true guidelines set forth by the project director. Digital availability of these workshop guidelines, curriculum content, and related resources – as proposed by the Interactive Learning Website – would make it possible to replicate this kind of meaningful experience in communities throughout the state of Nebraska (and the world!).

I have yet to meet a person who, after hearing about TOC, wasn’t fascinated by it. And while people are not surprised by the power of the arts to engage and to make change, they are, however, surprised to learn how the mix of "players" and logistical necessities come together to make things happen. There is a complexity to it, but one that can be clearly described, disseminated, and used, in some form, in many different circumstances. The Interactive Learning Website is the perfect platform for that – and the possibilities are endless for the layers of content that could be made available and the extended learning that could occur.

Joslyn looks forward to contributing to this venture, which will benefit citizens and newcomers of Nebraska and beyond, through the arts, and we hope you will support The Quilted Conscience Interactive Learning Website.

Sincerely,

Nancy Round

Director of Education and Outreach

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September 29, 2014

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It is my pleasure and honor to write this letter of support for John Sorensen regarding the continued Quilted Conscience work and especially the potential of the web based curriculum. I have seen the benefit of these quilting projects in the Nebraska communities where workshops have been held, in places the film has been shown and even at a national level when presented at the Welcoming America conference. With this movement of creating communities that are welcoming to new immigrants and refugees, we find huge value in The Quilted Conscience to help long time community members learn about new neighbors, about how and why they have come to live here but more importantly, to learn what common dreams we all have for ourselves and our families. The partnership has allowed me to use this tool to deepen community relationships between long time U.S. residents and new immigrant and refugee neighbors.

Nebraska Is Home, an affiliate of Welcoming America, is part of a movement working to create inclusive and integrated communities where everyone feels welcome and valued. As demographics have changed, we recognize long time community members must also be prepared and have ways to get to know their new neighbors. Fabric art has a universal appeal as every culture has some fabric art. The tactile nature of fabrics, the intimacy of the quilters and students sewing together and sharing their stories create unique opportunities for both participants and later for those who view the quilts that have come from the workshops.

With the development of the curriculum and interactive website now schools, churches and community organizations can create a Quilted Conscience workshop in their own community meeting the needs of their individual and unique community. Offering digital resources through the partnership with NET will allow so many more people to become engaged and to embrace the vibrancy of a diverse community. The Quilted Conscience is more than a quilting workshop and more than a community building exercise. Organizations who provide direct service, schools, faith groups and community leaders have appreciated the increased awareness, dignity and respect leading to increased community partnerships and volunteerism when community members have come together through The Quilted Conscience workshops and film screenings.

Christa Yoakum
Coordinator, Nebraska Is Home