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Compeer Quilts on Display at St. John Fisher College African American Heritage Quilt Show

Quilt show celebrates Black History Month

ROCHESTER, N.Y., Jan. 31, 2006 — Nearly 60 quilts created by participants and instructors in the Compeer Quilters program will be on display at St. John Fisher College throughout the month of February in celebration of Black History Month.

Many of the works depict quilting as a tradition in African American heritage, including a group project focused on the Underground Railroad. The show also features:

- A quilt created by five African American students from School #23 in the city of Rochester.
- Several quilts created with fabric and fibers depicting cultures from around the globe.
- Quilts or wall hangings created by each Compeer quilter.

“Touching our African Roots with Fabric: African American Heritage Quilts,” exhibiting at the St. John Fisher College Lavery Library (L 100 areas), is free and open to the public. The library is open Monday through Thursday from 7:45 a.m. to midnight; Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday from 11 a.m. to midnight. For questions about the exhibit, people should contact Dr. Arlette Miller Smith, Dean, Office of Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Programs, 385-8378.

A special public reception to celebrate the exhibit will take place on **Thursday, Feb. 16 from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.** in the college’s Lavery Library. Compeer Quilters program instructors and students will give a quilting demonstration and be available to discuss how their quilts were created. The suggested donation for attending the reception is a quilting supply gift for the Compeer Quilters program, such as cloth, scissors and thread.

“Compeer is thrilled that St. John Fisher College is allowing our quilters to be part of its Black History Month celebration,” said Charmaine Bennett, program coordinator, Compeer’s Quilters program and a contributor of eight quilts. “It is a tremendous opportunity for the community to see the beautiful quilts that our program participants and instructors have made -- and to gain a better understanding of the significance of quilting in African American culture and in cultures around the world.”

Compeer’s Quilters program teaches quilting, sewing and fabric/fiber skills and allows participants to experience social interaction, friendship and personal support. Many of the students have a diagnosis of mental health and/or substance abuse issues. Compeer created its Quilters program in 1999 as a six- to eight-week session to teach quilting techniques. It became a stand-alone program as a result of its outstanding outcomes and popularity. Approximately 40 clients currently participate in the program.

About Compeer

Established in 1973, Compeer (www.rochester.compeer.org) is an innovative, not-for-profit organization that cultivates supportive friendships and mentoring between volunteers and individuals in mental health care. Compeer volunteer friendships, which serve as a supplement to therapy, help alleviate the isolation and loneliness of mental illness and build the self-esteem, self-confidence and independence of children and adults in mental health recovery.

Routinely recognized as a model mental-health volunteer program, Compeer is based in Rochester, N.Y., and there are nearly 100 affiliate locations in the U.S., Canada and Australia.

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