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## Library lovers show their pride with 40th anniversary quilt - A quilt made by the patrons of South Dade Regional Library will unveil what the library means to them.

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When Peg Wigger, a quilter of about 20 years, was asked to volunteer in a quilting project that would wrap up the 40th anniversary of Miami-Dade's Public Library System, she jumped at the chance.

"I love quilting," Wigger said. "It's a passion of mine, so I will go anywhere to help people learn to quilt."

Residents who use any of the South Dade library branches were asked to create a block that would be part of a giant quilt. Each block was supposed to represent what the library meant to them. Sessions were held bimonthly to work on the pieces of the quilt and patrons ranged in age from 2 to 80 years old.

The final masterpiece is to be unveiled at the South Dade Regional Library at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 8. This will be the final event to cap off the year-long anniversary celebration.

Wigger was just one of the many volunteers who helped bring out the creativity of South-Dade residents by teaching them to sew and make their own personalized quilt blocks. She put a picture of a girl reading a book on her block.

"I've been going to the library since I was a child and so have my children," Wigger said. "Libraries are about community and this was definitely a community project."

Volunteers helped patrons sew and offered ideas for different mediums to use such as fabric, stamps, paint and markers.

Debra Shepherd, a librarian at the South Dade Regional Library, said that residents showed their love for the library in many ways, but one particular block stood out in her mind.

"My favorite one was a block that had a stylized picture of a library card and underneath was the word, 'priceless,'" Shepherd said. "Patrons really got to feel how important the library is to them."

Victoria Galan, public affairs officer for the Miami-Dade Public Library System, said many events led up to this moment. Each quarter of the year, library branches would focus on certain decades.

"We kicked off the celebration back in January with a 1970 disco party," Galan said. "We

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also had children make arts and crafts for the particular decade. For the 70s, they made pet rocks.”

For each decade being celebrated, the branches would display books, show movies and bring in authors from that era.

“All the exhibits were related to the history of our city,” Galan said. “One of the reasons for the yearlong celebration is to thank the community for growing and changing with us. We also wanted to let the community know we’re still here and still viable”

For the anniversary each of the 49 branches of the library was also asked to make a scrapbook. Galan said there were hundreds of entries in each book from different patrons. Some of the pages displayed thank you notes from residents who were giving gratitude to the library for their ability to read.

“These activities were intergenerational, for a mom to share with her kids and grandparents to share with their grandchildren,” Galan said.

The idea to make a giant quilt branched off of the scrapbooking idea. Since South Dade already had a big quilting community, the library system dubbed South Dade Regional library as the host branch.

In the middle of the quilt, a special block was made with the library system’s logo. On it read, “40 years of library excellence.”

“It’s a beautiful quilt,” Wigger said. “I’m hoping they’ll see how much work went into it, both from the adults and the children.”

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