

Presentation Speech by Mia Blumenstock

Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2012 for Cary Lou Canfield

Good morning –

It gives me great pleasure to be back on this podium, especially for such a wonderful occasion.

It is a joy to help celebrate - firstly, one of our guild's great outreach programs, and - secondly, an extraordinary member who has ensured its lasting effectiveness with her hard work, compassion and enthusiasm.

As all of you know by now, the Bedford Correctional Facility is New York State's only maximum security prison for women. Since 1997 we have been making quilts for newborns, and, shortly thereafter, going to the prison to teach new mothers there how to sew their own quilts for their own babies. With the support of Sister Elaine Roulet, our program got off the ground. In the beginning, members Elizabeth Creighton, Viola Lull, Leda Kahn, Margaret McTigue and many others kept the project going. Fifteen (15) years ago leadership was taken over by Cary Lou Canfield.

Under her steadfast direction, and with the support of many VSQ members, Cary Lou's troubled students have sewn hundreds of colorful quilts for their children. A tangible and enduring way to say, "I love you" to their little ones. It is marvelous to witness Cary Lou cajole and inspire sometimes reluctant young women to master new skills, bringing forth new-found self assurance.

Has does one say "Thank You" to one who has given so much?

The idea for creating a memory/thank you quilt for Cary Lou was proposed by Maureen Carline and she has maintained an active role in its creation. Barbara Powers found the pattern and adapted it to our purpose. She 'oversaw' the "production team", including:

Pat Waill: appliqué

Millie Speciale: embroidery

Dorothy Pandaleon: photo transfers

Mary Ann Ciccotelli: quilting

Barbara Powers: binding

Maureen Carline and Alice Claque: design of the backing

Jean Sparacin, Carolyn O'Leary and Barbara Powers: assembly

Thank you all, and thanks to the many others who made their contributions.

Cary Lou, you grace us all with your gentle ways and steely determination, with your compassion and your generosity. It is only fitting that we show our appreciation by presenting you with this memory quilt, our concrete sign of our awareness of your rare gifts. Many, many thanks from us all.