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**Subject:** Ferris State University to Display AIDS Memorial Quilt  
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Dear Editors/News Directors:

Included below is a press release highlighting the AIDS Memorial Quilt, sections of which will be on display at Ferris State University. Please call/e-mail with questions.

For Immediate Release  
Nov. 23, 2005

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## **AIDS Memorial Quilt panels to be on display at Ferris**

BIG RAPIDS – In an effort to recognize World AIDS Day Dec. 1 and increase awareness of the disease, 20 panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display at Ferris State University from Nov. 29 through Dec. 1 in the Rankin Student Center Dome Room.

Sponsored by the Office of Residential Life and Programs, Diverse Sexuality and Gender Alliance, Residence Hall Association and Student Government, people interested in viewing the quilt may do so from 1 to 11 p.m. Nov. 29, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Nov. 30 and from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Dec. 1.

“In the wake of terrorism and other problems that continue to plague our country, we sometimes forget to realize that AIDS is still an ongoing epidemic,” said Jon Shaffer, director of Residential Programs and Services. “Bringing the AIDS Memorial Quilt to campus gives us a chance to push AIDS/HIV to the forefront.”

According to Shaffer, the process of bringing the quilt to the university began more than a year ago with the Office of Residential Life and Programs. From there, other groups were invited to join the effort.

“The quilt is a visual symbol,” Shaffer said. “Simply by experiencing the quilt, we hope to raise peoples’ awareness and enlighten people about the issues people with AIDS face.”

Collectively, the quilt is comprised of 5,712 sections and 46,000 panels. Each section consists of eight individual 3-foot by 6-foot panels and measures approximately 12 feet. Each panel of the AIDS Memorial Quilt represents the memory of a person who lost his/her life to AIDS.

People interested in adding a name to the quilt may create a panel free of charge, with the exception of purchasing materials. Materials that have been used include love letters, human hair, first-place ribbons, wedding rings, silk flowers and cremation ashes.

The quilt was conceived in November 1985 by long-time San Francisco gay rights activist Cleve Jones. Jones also organized the annual candlelight march honoring the lives of gay San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone, both assassinated in 1978. While planning the 1985 march, Jones learned that more than 1,000 San Franciscans had died of AIDS. In an effort to recognize these victims, he asked each marcher to write on placards the names of friends and loved ones who had died of the pandemic. At the end of the march, Jones and other marchers taped the placards to the walls of the San Francisco Federal building. The result resembled a patchwork quilt.

However, the AIDS Memorial Quilt was not formally established until 1987 when Jones teamed up with Mike Smith and several others to organize The NAMES Project Foundation. Since then, the quilt has become the largest community art project in the world raising more than \$3,250,000 for AIDS service organizations throughout North America.

Today, there are approximately 20 NAMES Project chapters in the United States and 40 independent quilt affiliates around the world. Since its conception, more than 14 million people have visited the quilt at thousands of displays worldwide.

For more information on the panel display, contact Shaffer at 591-3745. For more information on the AIDS Memorial Quilt visit [www.aidsquilt.org](http://www.aidsquilt.org).

Sincerely,

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