

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

Blanket support

QUILTER TAKES PANES FOR ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH

Flint Township, MI – Since 2006, Ami Simms has used quilting and Priority Mail to raise funds for Alzheimer's research.

Simms, an accomplished quilter and author, uses quilting to remember important people and places in her life. So it was only natural that she would turn to quilting to express her pain at Alzheimer's devastating effect on her mother.

It began with a message to her fellow quilters.

"I e-mailed them about my plan for a quilt to

express my anger toward Alzheimer's," Simms said. "The quilt would represent the knotted tangled thread of my mother's mind. I saw it as a catharsis for my frustration."

Her inbox immediately filled with messages. Her colleagues also had friends and relatives ravaged by Alzheimer's. And like Simms, they wanted to use quilting to express their hurt, and to raise public awareness.

Thus began the Priority: Alzheimer's Quilt Project. Donors create miniature

quilts, no larger than 9-by-12 inches, for auction online.

"I tell them to get a Priority Mail envelope, stuff the quilt inside, and ship it to me," Simms said.

"The project has really taken off. Quilters from all over the country, at all levels of ability, donate 50 to 60 quilts every month. The average auction price of a Priority Alzheimer's Quilt is \$50 to \$60, but we've had them sell for as much as \$350."

Some quilts have Alzheimer's themes, but

donors are free to create quilts with any theme or from any idea. Auctioned quilts are shipped by Priority Mail to the successful bidder. In two years, the Priority: Alzheimer's Quilt project has raised more than \$157,000 for Alzheimer's research.

"People treat the quilts as works of art," Simms said.

Some of the country's most famous quilters — Sue Nichols, Judy Mathison, John Flynn — have donated quilts.

For further information, visit www.alzquilts.org.