

Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy
Funk & Weber Designs
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NEEDLE AND THREAD: STITCHING FOR LITERACY 2009 BOOKMARK CHALLENGE CONCLUSION

May 31, 2009 – Needleworkers all over the world celebrated reading and stitching during the *Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy 2009 Bookmark Challenge*, March 19 - May 7. Participating independent needlework shops and guilds collected 1,023 hand-stitched bookmarks and donated them to libraries and schools during **Children's Book Week** where they are used as rewards for reading accomplishments.

Bookmark techniques included cross stitch, Hardanger, paper embroidery, blackwork, canvas work, needlepoint, beadwork, pulled and drawn thread, bobbin lace, tatting, crochet, knitting, and huck weaving, to name just a few.

At the Nordic Needle Stitcher's Retreat in April, needleworkers exchanged bookmarks with one another *and* collected 102 for the Bookmark Challenge. Gail from Bermuda won a drawing and received half the collected bookmarks to take home and donate to local literacy programs.

Arctic Needle in Anchorage, AK, along with the Arctic Needleworkers chapter of the Embroiderers' Guild of America and Funk & Weber Designs hosted a bookmark Make-It-Take-It at the Loussac Library. Participants of all ages received free materials and instruction.

Needlework guilds work with participating shops, hosting events and stitching bookmarks. Where independent shops aren't available to collect bookmarks, guilds accept the Challenge themselves. The Bays Mountain chapter of the Embroiderers' Guild of America organized a collection for the Summer Reading program at the Kingsport, TN, library.

Other bookmark recipients include a fourth grade class in Seymour, WI; the New Community School in Richmond, VA, which specializes in teaching dyslexic students in middle and high school; the Kindred Library in North Dakota where rural residents are recovering from recent floods; and the Even Start Family Literacy Program, which teaches parents how to teach their children to read.

One young bookmark recipient says, "I believe in following my dreams like the bookmark says . . . I like the way it looks and feels. The texture is very cool. I never have seen a bookmark like it. I love it!"

Many participants collect bookmarks year-round for the Challenge. Beginning in September, on the second Saturday of each month from 1-3 p.m., Accents, Inc. in Louisiana will offer a free chart and perforated paper to stitchers willing to donate a completed bookmark to the Challenge.

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In addition to collecting bookmarks, the *Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy* program raises money for literacy projects. Independent designers donate 10% of profits from bookmark patterns bearing a Needle and ThREAD logo. A new pattern from Cross Eyed Cat, **Bookmarks and Banners**, joins patterns from Funk & Weber Designs, My Mark Designs, and Rosewood Manor.

The *Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy* **2010 Bookmark Challenge** will take place March 18 - May 6. Visit the Stitching for Literacy blog (www.StitchingForLiteracy.com) on Mondays for program news, events, and updates.

Jen Funk Weber, owner of Funk & Weber Designs, conceived the *Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy* program in 2007 to celebrate and promote reading and stitching. Jen is a children's author and needlework designer.

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