

Memories of Migration

Event Report

Partner: Queens Library: Queens Memory, Fresh Meadows Community Library, Children's Learning and Discovery Center, and the Older Adults Program
Staff Name: Natalie Milbrodt, Karen Fitzgerald, Madlyn Schneider, Lynn Cole
Event Name: Memories of Migration: Making a Talking Family Story Quilt: Workshop #6
Event Date: October 28, 2017
Event Description: No formal instruction during this session. Participants worked toward the completion of their quilts. They got help from instructors with things they could not solve by themselves at home. One participant was completely finished at the end of the session (with some help from her mom, who attended and worked alongside her). The other four participants left with widely varying amounts of work to complete at home. One participant was confident on the electronics aspect of his quilt and came with that part finished, but needing to use the sewing machines available at the library and needing some advice from Karen about the sewing. Another participant got good photos of a working LilyPad, with conductive thread sewn correctly on the back, that she would then take home and use for reference. Everyone did hours of work at home between sessions and most had many more hours of work to do after the session. Finishing touches that day involved sewing pockets for the Arduino batteries, stitching buttons, using conductive thread to create a grounding wire and relays for the buttons, etc. We took final measurements and made sure the dowels and Command hooks we planned to use to hang the quilts would work. The session ran two hours, from 2:30 to 4:30 pm.
Memories of Migration Activities: Participants had a lot of fun seeing each other's nearly completed quilts. They helped each other with the aspects of the work where they had expertise and enjoyed an atmosphere of mutual support. The soldering iron was in full effect that day! People who had been fuzzy on how circuits worked before got a more concrete understanding.
Number of Participants: 5 registered attendees, +1 (Marina's mom, Karen), all adults
Comments and/or Concerns: The participant who took home photos of the LilyPad installation so she could complete hers at home, was not able to do this work successfully on her own. Kevon helped to re-sew the electronics so they would work. Karen, the textile art instructor, was not fully utilized in this session, which was a waste of her honoraria fee paid by the Older Adult Services Department. Also, an equipment note: We purchased very inexpensive speakers, which was a mistake. Their wires were very thin and kept breaking.
Analysis of Event: In future iterations of this workshop series, it might be best to lead everyone through the installation of the LilyPads on this last day, even if they aren't done with their quilts. Having a uniform way of sewing them on would be good too. If we supplied a standard piece of fabric for everyone with pockets for the batteries and cables, they could just assemble the pieces instead of having to figure out all of those elements individually. These panels could be attached with snaps onto the backs of their quilts, which would be helpful for later battery recharging and repairs.

