

# Activity Idea

## World AIDS Day Quilt Activity

*Recommended for Adults*

Established in 1988 World AIDS Day occurs on December 1<sup>st</sup> and helps bring awareness about HIV/AIDS.

It is believed that transmission of HIV and AIDS jumped species from monkeys to humans in the 1920s. In the decades that followed, known human cases-- then a mystery-- remained sporadic until an epidemic started brewing in the late 1970s. In 1984, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which causes AIDS was discovered. By the end of that year, a total of 7,699 AIDS cases and 3,665 AIDS deaths would be reported ([Avert.org/professionals/history-hiv-aids/overview](https://www.avert.org/professionals/history-hiv-aids/overview)). While several decades have passed between the discovery of AIDS and now, hundreds of thousands of people worldwide die every year from AIDS-related illness, and tens of thousands are newly diagnosed daily ([Avert.org/global-hiv-and-aids-statistics](https://www.avert.org/global-hiv-and-aids-statistics)).

According to the CDC, in 2019, 36,801 people were diagnosed with HIV in the United States and its territories, bringing the total number of people known to be living with HIV in the area to 1,059,784. HIV disproportionately affects marginalized people, including queer people ([CDC.gov/hiv/basics/statistics.html](https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/statistics.html)).

The queer community has been hit particularly hard by the AIDS epidemic. Sexual contact between men is the most prevalent way HIV is transmitted in the United States. This has created a stigma around AIDS and HIV. Homophobia and misinformation prevent people from getting tested for HIV and seeking out the resources and services they need. If you or anyone you know is interested in getting tested for HIV, testing locations can be searched here: [GetTested.cdc.gov](https://www.gettested.cdc.gov). While there is no cure for HIV, a variety of medications have been developed that can be used to control the virus.

More information and statistics can be found at these websites:

[Avert Global HIV and AIDS Statistics](https://www.avert.org/global-hiv-and-aids-statistics) – Global statistics broken down by different demographics

[Avert Homophobia and HIV](https://www.avert.org/homophobia-and-hiv) – Information on how homophobia affects access to resources

[CDC HIV](https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/statistics.html) – Resources on HIV, prevention, and treatment

[CDC Statistics Overview](https://www.avert.org/global-hiv-and-aids-statistics) – US statistics broken down by different demographics

## AIDS Memorial Quilt

Under stewardship of the National AIDS Memorial, the AIDS Memorial Quilt is made up of almost 50,000 panels 3 feet by 6 feet in size, weighs over 54 tons, and contains over 105,000 names of people who have died from AIDS-related illness. The quilt began as an idea by Cleve Jones in 1985, and the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt was officially underway by 1987. The first panel was created to honor Marvin Feldman, a close friend of Jones'.

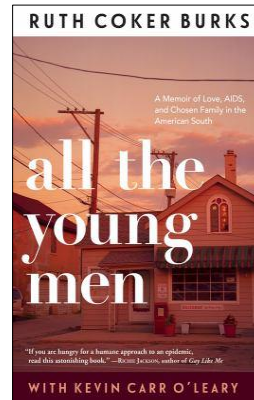
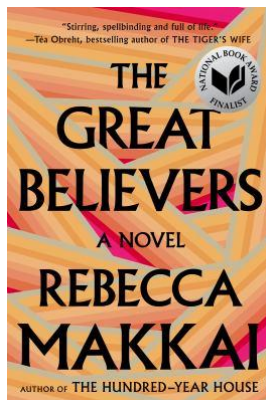
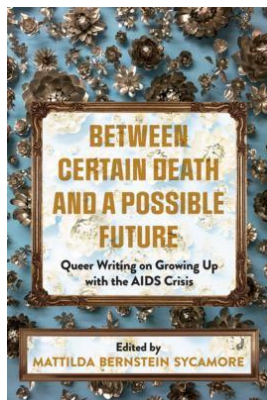
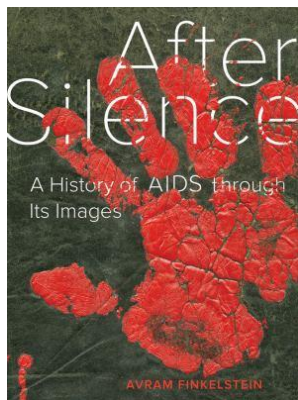
Displayed for the first time in October of 1987, the 1,970-panel quilt was laid out on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. during the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. It was so popular that it was taken on a 20-city tour soon after. By the end of the tour, the size of the quilt had grown to over 6,000 panels when local panels were added as the quilt moved from city to city. By 1992, the AIDS Memorial Quilt included panels from every state and 28 countries.

The quilt is a living memorial and continues to grow. Panels can be created and sent by anyone interested in doing so. Information on adding to the quilt can be found at [AIDSmemorial.org/make-a-panel](https://aidsmemorial.org/make-a-panel)

People around the world are invited to take a virtual tour of the quilt at [AIDSmemorial.org/interactive-aids-quilt](https://aidsmemorial.org/interactive-aids-quilt).

## Library Resources

For more information on HIV, AIDS, and the quilt, check out our [curated resource list](#). This list includes the Oscar-winning documentary [Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt](#), available on Kanopy.



**Activity: Make A Panel Representation**

Make a panel at home using craft supplies to honor, recognize, and learn about someone who has been lost to AIDS. Consider the following:

- Who do you want to recognize?
- What materials will you use to best reflect the person being honored? The base of the panel can be paper, cloth, felt, cardboard, fabric, or anything else you feel is appropriate.
- How will you decorate your panel? What colors and symbols will you use? Do you want to use markers, crayons, and paint? Do you want to make a collage?
- What were this person's contributions? Were they a good friend? A great parent? An award-winning creator? A notable member of the community?
- What resources are available to help you learn more about this person?
- What can you do to contribute to HIV and AIDS awareness today?

This example, highlighting artist Carlos Almaraz, uses paint, as Almaraz was an incredible Chicano painter. The colors green, white, and red are prominent as Almaraz was born in Mexico City, Mexico. His year of birth and death are displayed at the bottom. The eagle symbol in the middle is representative of his involvement with the United Farm Workers. This panel, like so many others, helps us celebrate the life and beauty of someone lost to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

