

Young quilter inspired to enter Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

What mother wouldn't be delighted to have her 10-year-old son have a positive, healthy male role model?

Erin Langan of Elmhurst, Illinois discovered after coming to the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show (SOQS) last summer with her son Ben, that Ben had met such a role model while at the Quilt Show.

Ben had the opportunity to meet Rob Appell at the 2016 SOQS and was so inspired by him that he decided to enter a quilt in this year's show. Rather than enter his quilt in the Next Generation category for young people, Ben opted to enter his "Boy Quilter v 1.0" in the Made by Men exhibit. The quilt is priced for sale at \$400.

When informed by the Quilt Show office of Ben's story and seeing his photo, Appell responded, "You have made my day. What a fantastic quilt from this awesome young man. I just love that I get to inspire others to be creative. Sure hope I get to meet Ben this summer."

Not only is Appell a good role model for a boy

interested in quilting, he is also dedicated to the environment and loves the ocean. He is viewed as a high-energy inspiration to those in the world of quilting, who uses his passion and talent for quilting to help spread awareness and to make a difference.

In 2014, his quilt, "And the Flag was Still There," was featured at SOQS in the national touring exhibit "Quilted in Honor." The exhibit, created by Island Batik Fabrics, was intended to raise funds for Operation Homefront, an organization that assists veterans.

**"Well, I am a man who loves to sew and I'm proud of it."
— Rob Appell**

In 2015, Appell requested permission to bring that quilt back to the SOQS, when he was featured as the 2016 Inspirational Instructor. He certainly inspired young Langan.

In the last year, Appell started a GoFundMe campaign to purchase back the

quilt, with all funds collected going to Operation Homefront.

Appell has said, "Once the goal has been met, the quilt will be back in my possession permanently, so that I can continue to tell its story and continue to raise awareness about the mission of Operation Homefront."

Appell spent 15 years as a sewing machine mechanic after helping out in his mother's quilt shop, The Cotton Ball, in Moro Bay, California. He started making Hawaiian shirts, the scraps of which he used to make quilts, learning by trial and error. Now after 20 years in the industry, he has designed quilts for Michael Miller Fabrics as well as written several books, created numerous quilt patterns (including the Endangered Species Quilt Project), invented sewing and quilting tools, and occasionally services sewing machines in his studio.

Appell has gained a large following with his Man Sewing tutorials "every manly Monday." He explains Man Sewing by saying, "Well, I am a man who loves to sew and I'm proud of it. I'm passionate about sewing



PHOTO PROVIDED

Ben Langan of Elmhurst, Illinois with his quilt "Boy Quilter v 1.0," entered in the Made by Men exhibit.

and creativity and have a desire to teach, so I want to share my passion with you ... Where creativity meets caffeine. Welcome to Man Sewing."

His description of himself sounds like a good résumé for a role model.

"I'm a guy with boundless

energy and enthusiasm for life and creativity. I love God, my wife, son and daughter. I enjoy waking up excited each day to see what lies ahead. I'm happiest when I'm outside or in my studio. I have been told that I inspire others, and for that I feel very blessed."

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