Celebration of life sewn into Aids quilt - Victim's names adorn memorial on display at ISU

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Paul R. Bassett, Marlene, Thomas George Snodgrass .... The usually festive ballroom at the Illinois State University Bone Student Center yesterday was witness to perhaps its most solemn event. Nine sections of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt were unfolded while people read the names of the more than 300 men, women and children who succumbed to the disease and were represented by the display.

Terry Royer, Rick Jordan, Riz, Ben Kepner ....
The presentation will be open again from noon to 9 p.m. today and is free. It represents just a fraction of the entire quilt, which covers the equivalent of 18 football fields and has 21,000 names.
During opening ceremonies, Thomas Lane, an ISU graduate student who is co-director of the quilt project on campus, told the audience, "For those of you who don't know anyone who had died from AIDS, that day is over. This quilt not only commemorates the dead, but celebrates their lives."
Ryan White, Tom Voge, Dixon Scott, Kenneth Scott Hood ....
"When you see the quilt, it tells the story of our lives," said Stephen Jefferies, a 26-year-old Loyola University student who contracted HIV six years ago. "When you see the quilt, remember it and bring your friends, and bring your family. It's the single greatest thing you can do for someone, to show them what love is, to touch the hem, to feel the stitches, and to know someone's life, and that life is something they shared with all of us, whether we knew them or not."
Bradford T. Allen, Stephen F. Kolzak, Franklyn Seales ....
John Keets, 18, of Canton contracted HIV through a blood transfusion in 1989. Since then, he and his mother, Liz, have toured the country as AIDS activists.
"AIDS has killed too many of us, and it's time we turn around and kill it," said Keets, drawing applause. "I'm not scared about death and dying. I'm just scared about the route I might have to take to get there."
On Sept. 19 in Canton, Keets will be at the second annual fund-raising march for AIDS research. Last year it drew 2,000 people.
"We don't want sympathy; we want compassion," said Ms. Keets. "I don't want anyone else to suffer the way we have. As mothers, we're not expected to bury our children."
Michael Sargent, Frost Waters, Rodney Lee "Pee Wee" Blair ....
"One by one, we are gaining momentum," said Gary Thiel, chairman of the McLean County AIDS Task Force. "Each of us needs to help. Individually and collectively, the opportunity to affect change exists. Take the first step, make a commitment. Help the increasing numbers in our community who have HIV and AIDS. Together we can and must end this disease.
"And then there will be no panels to add to the quilt."

Caption

John Keets, who contracted HIV through a blood transfusion, spoke at opening ceremonies for the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt yesterday. John and his mother, Liz, tour the country as AIDS activists.
LORI ANN COOK

Correction

ONE OF THREE ARTICLES ON THIS SUBJECT ON THIS DATE

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