Nearly 30 years ago a group of strangers gathered in a San Francisco storefront to remember the names... of their loved ones they feared history would forget – and with that seemingly simple act of love and defiance, the first panels of The Quilt were created. That same year those first memorials began to travel the nation and in October of 1987, they were display alongside 1,920 other Quilt panels on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. – making it impossible for the world to dismiss or deny AIDS. Today, The Quilt weighs 54 tons and includes more than 52,000 panels created by more than 100,000 individuals across the country and around the world.

Established: 1987
Number of visitors to The Quilt: over 25 million
Number of names on The Quilt: more than 97,000
Number of panels in 1987: 1,920
Number of panels in 2016: over 49,000
Total Weight: approximately 54.5 tons
Size (in square feet): 1,725,000 (equivalent to 367 NCAA basketball courts)
Viewing Time: 34 days (spending only one minute per panel)
Number of people cured of AIDS: 0

Names you may recognize on The Quilt: Peter Allen, entertainer; Arthur Ashe, tennis player; Michael Bennett, director/choreographer; Kimberly Bergalis, advocate for HIV testing of health care workers; Mel Boozer, black & gay rights activist; Arthur Bressan, Jr, filmmaker; Michael Callen, singer; Tina Chow, clothing designer; Roy Cohn, attorney; Brad Davis, actor; Eazy E, rap artist; Perry Ellis, fashion designer; Wayland Flowers (Madame), comedian; Michel Foucault, philosopher; Alison Gertz, AIDS activist; Halston, fashion designer; Keith Haring, artist; Rock Hudson, actor; Richard Hunt (Scooter. Janice, etc), muppeteer; Liberace, performer; Robert Mapplethorpe, photographer; Freddie Mercury, lead singer of Queen; Rudolf Nureyev, ballet dancer; Tim Richmond, NASCAR Winston Cup driver; Vito Russo, writer; Randy Shilts, author; Willi Smith, fashion designer; Sylvester, singer; Dr. Tom Waddell, Olympic athlete; Ryan White, AIDS Activist; Ricky Wilson, B-52’s guitarist; Pedro Zamora, AIDS activist (MTV’s Real World)…….

Materials used in The Quilt: Afghans, Barbie dolls, buttons, car keys, condoms, corsets, ashes, credit cards, dresses, feather boas, ribbons, flags, gloves, hats, jeans, badges, uniforms, tennis shoes, vinyl, wedding rings, jackets, hair, curtains, stockings, stuffed animals, boots, paintings, sequins, silk flowers and more.

A panel is 3 ft by 6ft approximately the size of a human grave.

A block usually consists of 8 panels bundled together to form a 12 ft by 12 ft section

In addition to the panels, The Quilt includes an archive of nearly 500,000 objects that were sent in with the panels. These items include handwritten notes, letters, cards, cd's, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, books, etc.