

Mary Deiter tells how she and her husband planted spring onions and green beans to earn enough money to buy materials to make a quilt. Using 800 yards of quilting thread, Mary spent 200 hours quilting the off-white quilt in the Forget-Me-Not pattern.



In between truck farming, working in a green house, volunteering at a hospital, and many other tasks, Mary finds time to quilt about one quilt a month. The quilt that will be sold for worldwide relief is not pictured as it's already been donated to MCC for the Pennsylvania Relief Sale scheduled for March 31-April 1 at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg.

## Onions, String Beans And A Quilt Provide Money For World-Wide Relief

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff  
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— Give Mary Deiter a \$10 bill and with sweat, time, and talent, she will turn it into hundreds of dollars.

Mary said that her efforts in stretching a dollar began last year when she heard a sermon on talents at the Millersville Mennonite Church. Afterward, the deacon challenged the congregation to put the sermon into practice. He offered each member \$10 as seed money to take home and multiply by combining the money with the talent God had given each one. The profit would then be given to overseas relief.

Mary and her husband Robert each took \$10. They planted a crop of spring onions and green beans to sell.

Although the Deiters have planted produce for years on seven acres of their Lancaster County farm, the patch of green beans and onions was the most prolific ever.

"The beans just kept bearing and bearing. We picked them eight times," Mary said.

The Deiters sold the onions and green beans to stores and farmers' markets. With the proceeds, Mary purchased material to make a quilt.

She chose off-white material and had enough money left over to pay a woman to mark the material to be quilted in the Forget-Me-Not pattern.

"I wanted to have lots of close quilting because buyers prefer it," Mary said.

She used 800 yards of thread to quilt in feather and diamond patterns. The no-seam quilt is finished with scalloped edges. It required 200 hours of diligent quilting for 34 days.

The quilt will be auctioned at the

39th annual Pennsylvania Relief Sale held March 31 and April 1 at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg.

All proceeds from the sale go toward worldwide relief and development efforts of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). MCC is the relief and development agency of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches of North America. It has about 900 people working in 50 countries around the world.

"Mary's quilt is gorgeous," said Ann Roth, who is in charge of quilting projects at MCC's Resources Center in Ephrata.

Although it is not known how much the quilt will bring, it's certain to bring several hundred dollars.

It brings much satisfaction to Mary that the proceeds will be used for overseas relief efforts.

"Our church is using the (seed money) profits to help remove bombs dropped in Laos by the U.S. 20 years ago," Mary said.

When Laotians are working in their fields, these bombs sometimes explode and kill people.

"When I'm working in my garden, I think how scary it would be if a bomb could explode anytime without warning," Mary said. "We don't know how good we have it here."

Although Mary is quite modest about her efforts to raise money for world relief and likes to tell of the many other members in her church who raised money through novel

ways, her project required squeezing work into her already demanding schedule.

In addition to helping her husband with truck farming, they both work four days a week from January through May at a local greenhouse. They both volunteer one morning at week at a Lancaster hospital. Robert also drives a van to haul senior citizens and handicapped persons. Mary quilts about one quilt a month year-round to sell.

"Fortunately, all my life I never needed much sleep," Mary said of her ability to work from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m.

"I grew up on a farm — the only girl with five brothers — and always liked working outside better than inside. And, I still do."

She and her husband have truck farmed for 32 years. Previously, they had a market stand at Southern Market, but when that closed down, they sold their produce to local supermarkets and auctions.

The couple has four married children and six grandchildren. Mary enjoys babysitting her grandchildren and playing the piano and organ.

The couple will celebrate their wedding anniversary in April by helping at the Relief Sale craft stand on Friday evening, staying overnight at a nearby motel, returning to the Relief sale the following day to watch the quilt sale that begins at 9 a.m. on April 1. Mary's quilt is #188 in the relief sale booklet.

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