Rainbows for peace and comfort

Miami-based flight attendant Timothy Johnson literally has people in stitches, and it's all for a good cause. An avid needleworker with 30 years of experience under his belt, Timothy started the Rainbows for Peace and Comfort project to honor the victims and first responders of the 2016 Pulse nightclub tragedy in Orlando. In the process, he's united hundreds of fellow needleworkers from all walks of life with his message of unity and peace.



Their goal: create 123 wall banners and quilts to honor the victims, survivors and first responders of the Pulse attack. Each handmade item will consist of 6 x 6 inch squares of fabric stitched in the same rainbow color scheme. Dozens of different designs are available for stitchers to choose from, all teaching peace and tolerance.

This isn't Timothy's first time using his textile arts skills for good. "I became close with a small group of stitchers that I met while stitching a memorial for the Sandy Hook victims," he shared. "When the attack at Pulse happened, I reached out to them immediately. I knew they'd want to help, and so that's how we started."

Eight stitchers turned to eighteen, which quickly grew by the dozens. Now there are more than 500 stitchers across the globe helping with his mission. Timothy's stitching angels can ask questions and get updates via the Facebook group he manages for the project. He frequently updates the page to share completed pieces he receives in the mail, new designs, and even photos of him working on the project as he travels (always with that same joyful smile on his face).

It doesn't stop at volunteer stitchers, though. The Rainbows project has received donations from major needlework suppliers to help offset the costs for crafters. Additionally, many designers have donated their patterns – sometimes after customizing them for the Orlando project – to support the endeavor.

A total of 617 squares have been received for the project to date, with Timothy having stitched 63 himself … so far. He's already working on number 64. Once the pieces are done, he plans to gift the finished works to the survivors, families, and first responders at a special black-tie event.

> "I call them my Army of Angels," he says with a smile that is as joyful as it is contagious."

















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