

# U.S. and IF Spouses create International Spouses Quilting Group

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By: Tyler Davis



Photo by Ann Allen

A normal meeting of the Culture and Conversation group, a gathering of International Spouses and American Spouses for simple conversation and good company, turned into an opportunity to gain a new hobby when some members discovered the Carlisle Barracks Quilters.

Introduced to quilting briefly on one of the trips coordinated by the International Fellows Office and sparked by curiosity about the Pennsylvania hobby, the small group sat in on a meeting of the Carlisle Barracks Quilters. Shortly thereafter the International Spouses Quilt Group was formed by one of the military spouses in the Barracks Quilters group, with meetings held every Monday in her Carlisle home.

The spouses soon became well versed in the hobby and sought to learn new techniques. They quickly learned how to select the correct thread and fabrics, read complex quilt patterns, and cut and piece together the quilts. They also took lessons in appliqué, a specialized design technique used for quilting designs that contain curves.

More importantly, the spouses increased their understanding of the English language, picking up new terms related to quilting and sewing, and spending time regularly with local American women for lessons and conversation.

The group received instruction and guidance throughout the year with several military spouses, community members, and businesses helping the International Spouses with their distinct hobby.

The International Spouses quilting club is comprised of members from over eight countries including women from the U.S.; Macedonia, Australia, Morocco, Colombia, Chile, Bangladesh, Yemen and the Czech Republic.

After an adventurous year in the U.S., the International Spouses will soon be returning to their respective countries not only with memories of their time spent here, but with a few new skills.

“They will also be going home with new friendships and a unique view into the lives and homes of American women who share a now common interest with them, quilting,” said Ann Allen, a U.S. spouse member of the International Spouses Quilting Group.