

# Davis Report: Davis County at Your Fingertips

## Francine Ogden

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I'd like to introduce you to one of my heroes. There's no medal of honor hanging on her door, no trophy on her shelf to tout her accomplishments. (Not that she doesn't deserve them).

Her name is Francine Ogden. She lives in a town of 800 people in Council, Idaho. She is a counselor and teacher at the local high school. I was blessed to meet her last week.

Every year I help at the Home Machine Quilting Show ([www.hmqs.org](http://www.hmqs.org)) at the South Towne Center in Salt Lake City. They run a trade show each year in May around Mother's Day. If you're not familiar with this quilt show, basically its a place where you can take classes on a wide variety of quilting subjects taught by instructors from around the world and there is a huge vendor mall that sells everything from thread and fabric to rulers, templates, machines, etc. There is a quilt competition included in the show. This year about 500 quilts were on display and \$26,000 in prizes were given away to winners of the competition. This is where my story starts.

At HMQS 2010 I heard of Francine and her students. This year I learned a little more and thought what a great thing she was doing to give these students the opportunity to participate in something fun and good. It wasn't until I called her after the show that I realized what she was creating. I hope I can do justice to her story.

Francine began her sewing class at the high school eight years ago. She had been a Home Economics teacher and the school needed an extra class so she suggested sewing. She told the kids before school that year that she was going to offer the class. Eight students transferred in. With a little laugh, she told me she expected well-behaved, quiet little girls as students. The next year 12 students signed up, and the next – 28. The student count has stayed steady at about 30 students per year since then. That's saying something as there's only 77 kids that attend the high school. Last year 52% of the kids in Francine's class were boys. Some students take the class once, others take it every year. They learn about textiles and make rugs, crochet and, as luck would have it, make quilts. A few years ago Francine's friend told her about the Home Machine Quilting Show in Salt Lake. She called the director, Ann Collet, to explain what she wanted to do. Ann

excitedly told her to bring some of the kids' quilts to compete in the "Youth" category at the show. That year, 2009, Council students took 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in that category. They were thrilled!

In her determination to push the kids and give them even more, Francine made it possible in 2010 for some of the students to attend the show with her. To make their quilts, the students earn money for the batting and backing. They rely on donated fabric for the fronts.

Last year a 17 year old boy on the track team from Council won first place in the Youth category. Upon hearing about Francine's students, Handi-Quilter, a local manufacturer of quilting machines and accessories, donated a quilting machine to the high school (they retail for thousands of dollars). Handi Quilter delivered the machine to Idaho and set it up personally.

In 2011 Francine was able to bring 9 students to the quilt show with her, 6 girls and 3 boys. This year they entered quilts in the competition and each student took several classes (ranging from \$45 – 150 per class per student). Along with travel, hotel, and food Francine paid over \$2000 to the show for the kids to have these opportunities (HMQS donated part of class registration fees to help the students with costs).

When I asked who paid for the trip, I was overcome by the tale of service and selflessness.

Francine and her students auction off quilts, sell some of the donations they receive (at big discounts) and Francine cleans sewing machines on the side. She is careful to use coupons and buy at discount where she can. They received a large donation a few years ago of fabric, zippers, thread, etc that Francine has made last 3 years. When I asked if she quilted for people to help pay for the cost she said, "Oh, I'm not a professional quilter. I'm basically at the same level as the kids, I'm learning along with them." Though she does do some simple quilting for people and "puts the money in the pot."

Francine made sure to tell me that these kids are not just sitting around sewing all afternoon. They run track, play sports and are very active in their community. In February Francine's students donated 52 childrens quilts to Mountain States Tumor Institute in Boise, Idaho for children with cancer and other diseases. They've also donated quilts to the fire department and a local fun run.

There were some serious stipulations put on their 2011 trip to Utah. Some of the students are on the track team at their high school. Their commitment to work out at the hotel every night was the only way the track coach would let them go to Salt Lake.

While here, Francine arranged for a tour of Handi-Quilter and other fun time when the students weren't attending quilting classes. Not to keep you in suspense any longer . . . Council students took 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Youth category this year. Way to go!

Francine's example of service has not just touched a heart or even changed a life. She has encouraged, inspired and provided a means for the next generation to do the same. The hours she spends earning money to donate for these students added to the time she spends teaching them is amazing. As you can see, she was an easy pick to add to my hero list.

Thank you, Francine and thank you, students. We are awed by your dedication and I am grateful to have had the chance to rub shoulders with you.

Happy Serving!