

**Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy**  
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## NEEDLE AND THREAD: STITCHING FOR LITERACY 2008 BOOKMARK CHALLENGE

Independent needlework shops across the country prepare to celebrate Children's Book Week and encourage kids to read by collecting hand-stitched bookmarks during the 2008 Bookmark Challenge, March 20 - May 8. Bookmarks are donated to libraries and schools and used as rewards for reading accomplishments.

Many needleworkers are already avid readers. They are also eager to put their needlework to good use. Reading and stitching go together like music and dancing: It's fun to listen to a story while plying one's needle. "I'm excited to share two things I enjoy and think are important," says Karen Bente, owner of Arctic Needle in Anchorage, Alaska. "This is a great use for needlework."

In addition to collecting bookmarks, the Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy program raises money for literacy projects. Independent designers donate 10% of profits from bookmark patterns bearing a Needle and ThREAD logo. Along with their own program patterns, Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy founder, Funk & Weber Designs, invites other designers to participate, offering the logo in exchange for a commitment to donate accordingly. Currently, patterns are available from My Mark Designs and Rosewood Manor.

To further promote both reading and stitching, some shops host outreach programs during the Bookmark Challenge, teaching adults and kids how to stitch bookmarks. Gayle Horton, owner of Accents, Inc. in Metairie, Louisiana, teaches beginning cross stitch to fourth graders at a local elementary school. "It's taught as an art class, and the students love it!" says Gayle.

Ann Kramer, owner of One More Stitch in Morristown, Tennessee, and Karen Bente, owner of Arctic Needle in Anchorage, Alaska, will host free workshops at local libraries. They and members of local embroidery guilds will teach parents and kids beginning cross stitch.

The Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy program was conceived by Jen Funk Weber at Funk & Weber Designs in 2007 to celebrate and promote reading and stitching. Jen is a children's author and needlework designer.

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If you'd like more information about the program, please contact Jen Funk Weber at 907-746-5641, or visit the Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy Web site at <http://JenFunkWeber.com>