

[Story Submitted by: joanrae](#)



Although mom was diagnosed with Alzheimer's a few years back, I could see her head thinking and doing things. Even more so, I would see her wanting to do things. So when I went to visit her and dad in October/November 2008 in Florida, I brought along quilt pieces for us to work on together. I prepared the leaf on fusible using scraps from my stash. I purchased scissors for her arthritic hands, and mom helped me cut them out. She was worried when she'd cut below the line, thinking she ruined it, but I told her that not any two leaves in nature were exactly the same and however she cut was perfectly fine. She cut out most of the 130 leaves. Once our leaves were ready, she also helped to decide which four would go together on the block and I would fuse them on each square. When the time came to teach her to stitch around each leaf, I put her chosen leaf in the hoop, she chose the color floss she liked, and I taught her to do an up and down running stitch around her leaf. She watched me do the blanket stitch, and tried it a few times, and I think she would have really mastered it if not for the fact that the house was full of confusion with nurses coming in and out taking care of my father, and we did not have the quiet we needed to concentrate! We also paid a visit to the local quilt shop and she chose the fabric for the borders for the quilts. We decided that we would make three smaller versions of the quilt in the magazine, one for each of her two sisters and brother. She signed each leaf she stitched, and decided which ones would go to which sibling. I then brought our supplies home to Virginia and finished each quilt for my uncle and aunts. As a little aside to the quilt story, during the same month, I also taught mom to type (one finger!) on the computer and write emails to her sister, and we worked easy Sudoku games together. Dad's nurses were amazed, asking me if mom had ever done anything like this before in her life. She had not, and they said then she may have dementia and short term memory loss, but probably not Alzheimer's as Alzheimer patients didn't learn anything new. Mom was pretty pleased with her quilt making and I treasure the memories we made together that month. The picture shows Mom stitching, and her two sisters, Theresa and Anita and her brother Phil with their new quilts. Joan Johnson Scrappy Maple Leaf Quilt designed by Cheryl Kerestes, QUILT Magazine