

# COLCHA°

a guide to crochet, code  
& community

by Doris Caçollo

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# FOREWARD



**col·cha** (koal-sha) noun. Portuguese word meaning bedspread.  
An outer covering, usually decorative, for a bed.

In Portuguese tradition a mother or grandmother would crochet a colcha for a new bride to include in the bride's dowry or wedding chest. This especially elaborate white cotton crochet colcha would often be used only on special occasions and might be handed down as an heirloom.

As a little girl I remember crocheting a long row of chain stitch that I would drag across the house, spiraling and zig-zagging, catching it on the furniture and the dog, the white cotton becoming a grayish-brown, my sticky hands coating the crochet hook with candy spit. I couldn't seem to turn the chain stitch around and begin a project.

My mother tried and tried to teach me the complicated "abertos" and "fechados" (open and closed stitches) that made up her elaborate table runners, blankets, socks and dresses. I wanted nothing to do with these delicate white doilies and instead longed for striped sweat socks and logo t-shirts. As her cancer progressed, her award-winning designs grew. She found comfort in making more and more of these delicate objects.

My mother passed away when I was seven years old, but she was sure to complete and present me with a beautiful, elaborate, white crochet bedspread: my wedding colcha.

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## INTRODUCTION

This guide holds basic instructions for creating your own collaborative colcha. In these pages I offer you a script for the process of the *Colcha* experiment. In following these instructions and suggestions you too can experience *Colcha* and all of the secrets, surprises and treasures that come from craft and collaboration. I leave it to you to fill in the details, the stories and the design for yourself. Each colcha holds the motivations, intentions and labor of its makers. Take these ideas and create your own experience. Then, if you wish, tell me about it.

Suggested uses for the Colcha guide:

- \*Bringing together family members.
- \*Team-building activity.
- \*Learning crochet.
- \*Collective escapist therapy.
- \*School group project.
- \*Creative meeting of the minds.
- \*Cover for a think tank.
- \*Prioritizing time with a group of friends.
- \*Resolving political conflicts.
- \*Creating peace.
- \*Keeping warm.

Sometimes all we need is a reason to connect.

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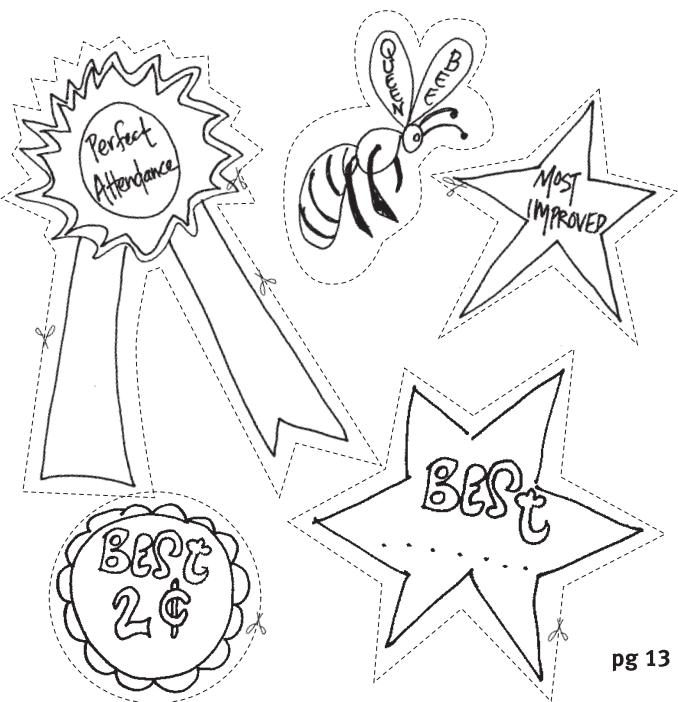
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## SUGGESTIONS

pass out awards



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## SUGGESTIONS

keep a journal

(notes, photos , colcha guide, etc...)

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# Congratulations!

You have completed the colcha.

To share your colcha and to see other colcha projects visit:

[www.thecolchaproject.org](http://www.thecolchaproject.org)



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