

From the Heart

What we do and why we do it

A bit about us:

From the Heart is a community-based volunteer organization that shares hope, joy and comfort by creating and distributing hand-stitched items that improve the physical and emotional well-being of individuals who are sick or in need. Our organization was conceived in the Spring of 2001 when a small group of women began meeting on a regular basis at a local Starbucks Coffee Shop to knit and crochet together, share patterns and then donate their hand-crafted items to the community. As a result of the positive response from our volunteers and the continued need in our community, *From the Heart* was incorporated as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization in July of 2005. We currently have more than 1,800 members, primarily from the Commonwealth of Virginia with a smaller number from surrounding states. In addition to helping the those in need, our volunteers gain a tremendous amount of satisfaction from this creative work.

Our dedicated volunteers contribute their time, hearts and skills by knitting, crocheting, and sewing blankets, hats, scarves, socks, mittens, and quilts. Their efforts provide warm and gentle head coverings for cancer patients who have lost their hair; a variety of items including blankets to warm chemotherapy and dialysis patients during their chilling treatments; hand-made outfits for premature babies in neonatal and intensive care units; burial outfits to ease the pain of parents whose baby never came home with their families; mittens, and hats for the homeless to provide warmth on cold nights.

Since our group's humble beginning in 2001 and as of late 2022, we have donated over 500,000 hand-made items to organizations including, but not limited to:

- ✚ Chemo hats, blankets, underarm pillows, shawls, and drain-tube bags to several locations of VCU/MCV's Massey Cancer Center, Virginia Cancer Center, St Francis Hospital, Bon Secours Cancer Centers, Chippenham Hospital, McGuire's Veterans Center, Southside Regional Cancer Treatment Center, Regional Memorial (Mechanicsville), John Randolph Hospital (Hopewell), Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, Hematology-Oncology Associates of Fredericksburg, Surgical Associates of Fredericksburg, Fresenius Kidney Care in Fredericksburg, King George, Stafford & Spotsylvania, the Kidney Foundation, Children's Hospital of Richmond, Henrico Doctors' Hospital, Riverside Doctors' Hospital and Crossover Ministries.
- ✚ Twin size blankets to VCU/MCV Bone Marrow Transplant Unit, blankets, hats and teddy bears with hand-stitched outfits to VCU/MCV's Burn Unit for children.
- ✚ Baby blankets, hats, sweaters and booties to NICU and regular newborn nurseries at VCU/MCV, Johnston Willis, St Francis Hospitals, The Pregnancy Resource Center, Tri-City Crisis Pregnancy Center, Henrico Doctors' Hospital, Southside Central Hospital, St. Matthews (Fredericksburg), Southside Regional Medical Center (Petersburg), Pregnancy Crisis Center in Farmville, Birthright of Fredericksburg, Public Health Departments of Chesterfield, Spotsylvania, King George and Caroline Counties, and the City of Fredericksburg, Hope House of Fredericksburg, Rappahannock Area Community Services Board, Healthy Families Rappahannock Area, Urban Baby Beginnings (Richmond), RVA Light, Capital Area Health Network (CAHN – Richmond), Welborne Food Pantry, and Health Brigade Free Clinic. We also supply burial gowns and pouches, in addition to burial cradles, for still-born babies, at some of these locations.
- ✚ We make comfort blankets for the critically ill at VCU/MCV. We supply small flannel hearts and crocheted octopuses for use in comforting infants at the NICU in MCV in Richmond, St. Francis Hospital in Midlothian, Southside Regional in Petersburg, Mary Washington Hospital at Fredericksburg, and Regional Memorial Hospitals in Mechanicsville.
- ✚ Teddy bears wearing hand-made outfits and soft hand-created toys go to pediatric emergency rooms, children's' clinics, and oncology areas at VCU/MCV, to police, rescue and drug enforcement units, Child Savers, Avalon Women and Children's Shelter, Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania County Child Protective Services, Spotsylvania County Social Services Dept., and Mary Washington Hospital Ambulatory Center.
- ✚ Wheelchair blankets, shawls, lap robes, hats, socks, slippers, catheter bag covers, wheelchair/walker totes, adult dignity bibs and teddy bears to Ascend Hospice in Richmond, Hospice and Palliative Care for Bon Secours, Hospice of Virginia (in-home and hospital programs), Hospice at VCU/MCV, Compassionate Care Hospice in Chesapeake, McGuire Veteran's Hospital, and AARP in Petersburg, Patriots Colony Convalescence Center and Springhouse in Williamsburg, Heritage Hall Rehab Center, Home Instead (Fredericksburg), disAbility Resource Center of Fredericksburg, and Woodland Retirement Center.
- ✚ Warm hats, blankets, scarves, mittens and sleeping bags are sent to The Hopewell Warming Shelter, The Healing Place, Friends of the Homeless, Mercy House (abused and 're-uniting' women), YWCA Women and Children's Shelter, and CARES, (Crisis Assistance Response Emergency Shelter) in Petersburg, Hope House of Fredericksburg and Commonwealth EMS.

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- Hats, scarves, toys and blankets are sent to our local public-school systems (Chesterfield, Henrico, Hanover, Cumberland, Powhatan, King George, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Caroline and Richmond City, Prince Edward School System, and Fredericksburg City Public School systems), The Giving Tree at James Monroe High School – Fredericksburg, Interfaith Community Council – School Dressing Days and Sussex Social Services, Fredericksburg Veterans Community Based Outpatient Clinic, Fairy Godmother Project, Empower House (Fredericksburg) and Williamsburg-James City County Head Start.
- Warm woolen hats, sweaters, socks, toys and blankets are sent to the Christmas Mothers in most of the surrounding counties (including Chesterfield, Cumberland, Caroline, Sussex, Dinwiddie, and also Richmond City and Farmville) and distributed through Operation Christmas Child, Meals on Wheels, Communities in Schools, Vessels of Mercy, RVA Light, the Hopewell Food Pantry, Powhatan Food Pantry, Sussex County Social Services, homeless shelters in Richmond and Fredericksburg, Healthy Generations of Fredericksburg, Love Thy Neighbor (King George), SERVE (Stafford Emergency Relief Through Volunteer Efforts), SECA – Spotsylvania Emergency Concern Association, Birthright of Fredericksburg, Public Health Departments of Chesterfield, Spotsylvania, King George and Caroline Counties and the City of Fredericksburg Rappahannock Area Community Services Board, Healthy Families Rappahannock Area, the Dinwiddie Christmas Store, Charles City Public Schools, Corinth Baptist Church, New Kent, Ellie's Hats and Nichols Baptist Church, which shares items with the homeless.
- Lap blankets, shawls, book totes, dignity bibs, walker/wheelchair totes, twiddle muffs/mats/ cuffs, fiddle aprons/mats/squares, and other soothing items to The Magnolias, Assisted Living in Chesterfield, The Pearl Senior Living, Falls Run Nursing and Rehabilitation, Fredericksburg Health & Rehab: Nursing Home, Fredericksburg Health & Rehab: Assisted Living, Capital Caring of Fredericksburg, Poet's Walk, Paramount Senior Living, Hughes Home, The Culpepper, Dogwood Village, Greenfield Senior Living of Spotsylvania, Commonwealth Senior Living, The Village at Gordon House, Louisa Rehabilitation Center, Spring Arbor Assisted Living, Cardinal Village, Charter Senior Living, Noble Senior Living of Louisa, Noble Senior Living of Culpeper, Bickford Senior Living, Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU – Children's Therapy Center: Fredericksburg. Many of these items are also given to Capital Caring (Richmond) which, in turn, passes them along to Memory Care Facilities in the Richmond area.
- The needs of our animal friends are met by providing warm cozies Richmond Animal Care and Control, Powhatan Animal Shelter, Prevent a Litter, Richmond, the Fredericksburg SPCA and Smitty's Cat Rescue Shelter in Chester.
- We also make and distribute items as we are called upon for any need or emergency wherein our talents can be of comfort; for example, following national tragedies, earthquakes, COVID-19 pandemic, etc. We work in concert with various groups (including Remote Area Medical) to provide needed items in the Appalachian region.

How you can help:

- Volunteer and become a member! There are no membership requirements or fees, other than a caring heart!
- Donate materials! Since From the Heart is strictly non-profit, we must rely on the generosity of others for yarn, fabric and fleece materials. Monetary donations are accepted to help off-set our operating expenses and purchases for materials. **We do not pay salaries and our overhead is limited to basic knitting, crochet and sewing materials.** Since we are a 501(c)(3) organization under the Internal Revenue Service, all donations are tax deductible. You can also sign up [with Kroger Community Rewards](#) to donate to us when you shop.
- Come to our location at 1114 Westbriar Drive, Henrico, VA 23238. Spend a few hours helping prepare finished items for delivery and pick-up supplies for your next From the Heart project. We are open from 10 am until 2 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. **Please note that From the Heart does not sell yarn or finished items.** We meet at this location to knit, crochet, prepare our items for delivery, etc. We would love for you to come by, take a tour and see for yourself the many ways we support our communities.

Thanks to those of you who already support *From the Heart* whether it's by volunteering or donating materials. If you'd like to get involved or learn more about *From the Heart* we can be reached via our website at <http://www.fromtheheartstitchers.org>, on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FromtheHeartStitchers> or email at fromtheheartstitchers@gmail.com.

Other organizations supply blankets and hats. From the Heart also provides happiness and a sense of purpose to the fiber artists who knit, crochet, and stitch!

