



Grateful Thread – August 2025

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We All Wear Different Hats – and We’ll Be Wearing Them Soon at the 20th Annual From the Heart Retreat!

Can you believe it? We’re just a few weeks away from the 20th Annual From the Heart Retreat—and it’s shaping up to be one of the best doggone days of the year! I can hardly wait, and judging by the response, I’m not the only one. In fact, registration had to close early because we reached full capacity. You all are just as excited as I am!

I shared quite a bit in last month’s newsletter, and I won’t spoil all the surprises just yet—but I *can* give you a sneak peek at some of the fabulous vendors who will be joining us:



- [Stardust Bakery](#) – YUM! I can’t wait to see (and taste) what delicious treats they’ll have available for sale.
- [Sheila Weisensales Creations](#) – Sheila’s stunning botanical art never fails to impress. Check out the *Rappahannock Times* article naming her “Artisan of the Month” at the Heritage Arts Center Gift Shoppe!
- [Dances with Wool](#) – One of our favorites. Their gorgeous yarns and accessories are always irresistible.
- [Dawn Marie’s Tatted Lace Jewelry](#) – Get ready to be amazed! Dawn’s intricately handcrafted jewelry and ornaments are truly works of art.
- [Macher Creations](#) – Sarah’s pottery is playful, charming, and totally unique. A quick peek at her Instagram has me counting the days!

And let’s talk about this year’s raffle prizes—they’re absolutely amazing! We’ve got so many unique handcrafted items, beautiful shawls, adorable critters, stunning quilts, and even a sewing machine up for grabs. There’s something for everyone, and you won’t want to miss your chance to take home something special. Plus, all raffle proceeds support From the Heart’s mission throughout the year.



There will be plenty of prizes to win throughout the day!

Whether you’re a knitter, crocheter, or sewing enthusiast, we’ll have fantastic prize packages just for you.

Don’t forget to sign up for one (or both!) of the wonderful classes being offered at the Retreat. Details can be found on page two of this newsletter.

And just one more thing... I finished *my* hat—how’s yours coming along? I can’t wait to see all of your creative creations on **August 23rd**. It’s going to be an unforgettable day! — See you soon, **Dorothy Bernstein**



NOTE: The FtH Richmond Workshop will be CLOSED Saturday, August 23 for the Retreat.





*We All Wear
Different Hats!*

Are you attending the From the Heart Retreat? If so...

1. **Work on your hat!**
2. **Be Sure to Sign up for a Class! See the info below.**

There will be **two great classes**, presented by two amazing instructors!

- **Mimi de Percin** will teach the *crochet long-tail cast-on* and, if time allows, she will demonstrate a trick to make the perfect crab stitch. All materials for this crochet class will be provided. (Basic crochet skills are recommended.)
- **Capsen Stephens** will teach the *Magic Loop* knitting technique. Please bring any size circular needles with a 24" cord, with yarn appropriate for the needle size.

Registration is required. To sign up, email fromtheheartstitchers@gmail.com and indicate which class—or both—you would like to attend.



Do you know who made this quilt?

We would like to have this beautiful, queen-size quilt (photo left) in the retreat raffle, but we do not know who made it. We like to give credit for these beautiful donations. If you or you know who made this quilt, please email fromtheheartstitchers@gmail.com. Thank you so much.

Welcome Ellen Dukette to the FtH Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is delighted to announce the unanimous election of **Ellen Dukette** to the From the Heart Board during the July 20th meeting.

Ellen brings a wealth of experience, including years of board service with the *World Up Foundation*, a nonprofit founded by her daughter, Liz Dukette. Her background in nonprofit leadership, combined with her deep commitment to service, makes her a wonderful addition to the team.

A longtime FtH volunteer and Elf, Ellen will soon take on a new role as an Elf scheduler, helping to coordinate Elf training and scheduling. She loves spending time in the workshop and is continually inspired by the creativity and generosity of fellow crafters.

Ellen is a multitasking maker—she learned to knit from her mother, taught herself to crochet, and began sewing under the guidance of her 4-H teacher in high school.

Originally from Plattsburgh, NY, Ellen moved to the Richmond area and connected with From the Heart in 2019, after attending a presentation by Tricia at Dances with Wool. She was immediately inspired to get involved—and hasn't looked back since.

We are grateful for Ellen's dedication and excited to welcome the positive energy and joy she brings to everything she does at From the Heart.





Spotlight on Dana Dodge

Dana was born in the village of Rockville Center on Long Island, and her childhood was spent living on and enjoying the area between the two worlds of the beach (Point Lookout) and the city (Manhattan). Dana is a regular volunteer as an Elf at the Richmond From the Heart workshop. Dana’s “artist at heart” nature and her awareness of Richmond being where the Girl Scout cookies were baked was what first drew her to the VCU School of Arts where she studied graphic design. At first, the culture shock was difficult for Dana to deal with, but by her sophomore year, she had begun to settle in and remains surprised by the fact that she is still here!



Dana and Matzah studying knitting techniques together.

Dana was introduced to knitting by a then colleague, now a lifelong friend, during slow times when working as a graphic designer in an advertising agency. She knew immediately that knitting was a genuine calling.

In 1999, Dana launched a website selling yarn which transitioned into a brick-and-mortar store. In honor of her mother, Dana used an inheritance left her to buy fixtures and yarn. Lois (yes, that Lois - our founder) was a customer at Dana’s shop and learned to knit socks there. Once Lois began to knit for cancer patients and the From the Heart membership grew, it was Dana who suggested to Lois that she place a call to the Wilton Company about the potential of retail space and, well, the rest is history. When Dana eventually closed her brick-and-mortar store, she donated many of her yarn racks and cubbies to From the Heart and those remain at work for us in the yarn hall to this day.

Dana is a true connoisseur when it comes to the fiber arts, and for From the Heart, she prefers to knit with wool (which *is* available at the FtH Richmond workshop). She enjoys making hats for the unhoused and pet cozies for our furry friends. Her favorite thing about FtH is being aware of the fact that we bring comfort, love, and joy to so many people, meaning the recipients or stitchers. She also finds it very rewarding to be able to help those who come into the workshop. Dana remains amazed at how prolific those who create for FtH are, and she is very grateful that FtH enables her to remain focused on the positive things in life.

Thank you, Dana, for all you have done and continue to do for From the Heart.—**Tricia Ennis**

A Big Hello and Welcome to the *Lake Forest Needlers!*



We’re excited to introduce the *Lake Forest Needlers*, a vibrant new group that began meeting this summer at Lake Forest, a 55+ independent living community. Their coordinator, **Eleanor Delaney**, has been a dedicated From the Heart volunteer for about three years through *Kay’s Krafters* in Powhatan.

The Needlers gather every Wednesday to create beautiful baby blankets and hats, cozy chemo gloves, soap bags, and warm lap blankets. Their enthusiasm is infectious, and their talent shines through in every stitch! We’re so happy to have you on board, ladies—welcome!



(Photo right) July 17th was the perfect day to stay cool indoors, catch up with friends, and get some knitting done—and that’s exactly what longtime friends and From the Heart pillars (l-r) **Tricia Ennis**, **Ann Held**, and Founder **Lois Moore** did. Behind the camera, but very much part of the gathering, was past President **Kulla Ficare**.

What Is This About Wool?

YES, FtH Accepts Wool Yarn and Wool Items.

The FtH Richmond workshop gladly accepts donations of wool yarn and handmade items made with wool. Our expert yarn sorting team and distribution team will make the determination of where these donations will be most useful.

If you are looking for wool yarn, it is still stored near the baby yarn. We have reduced the amount of wool yarn on display, because wool yarn is not used as frequently. However, it is still very much available for those who would like to use it! Please remember to tag wool items by adding a small piece of **red** yarn next to the white yarn with the FtH tag. Also, if you know of a local Richmond area organization in need of wool items, we'd love to hear from you. Please email us at fromtheheartstitchers@gmail.com. with any suggestions.





Join Us in Supporting a Baby Shower for Navy Moms! Deadline Aug. 18th



The American Legion Auxiliary in Goochland is hosting a special baby shower later this August, and we've been invited to help make it extra memorable! According to event coordinator **Nancy Gregory**, the shower is being held for 45 expectant Navy wives whose husbands have recently deployed aboard the USS *Ford* out of Norfolk.

From the Heart has been asked to donate **45 baby blankets, 45 hats and 45 sets of booties**, one for each mom-to-be. **You've already provided 45 blankets and hats -- NOW for the booties!** Let's show these families just how much we care by creating soft, comforting, and handmade booties to welcome their little ones.





The USO at Richmond Airport Celebrated Its 15th Anniversary on July 13, 2025.

Volunteers at the Richmond Airport USO support its mission of keeping America's service members connected to the people, places, and things they love. Although not a government agency, the USO is a civilian-led organization that provides programs and services aimed at strengthening the well-being of the military community.

The Richmond Airport USO center, located near baggage claim, is open daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 365 days a year, and is staffed entirely by volunteers. It offers a welcoming space for active-duty military, National Guard, Reserve, and retired service members as they travel between duty stations or other destinations.

Each month, the Richmond Airport location serves an average of 3,000 military personnel and their families, offering a comfortable place to rest, chat with friends, or grab a snack. In addition to the airport center, the USO coordinates a variety of events, including support for military children, book collections for the Fort Lee base library, job fairs, and more.

This summer, From the Heart is supporting the USO by donating baby items and toys for baby showers honoring military members and spouses who have recently welcomed—or are about to welcome—a new baby. Fort Lee, Quantico, and Fort Eustis have received items. Tricia Riggs, the Director of the Richmond Center, stated, "From Virginia Beach, DC Metro and the Richmond area, each military mom/spouse has received a special gift at our Special Delivery Baby showers due (pun intended) to the amazing donations of From the Heart. Your donations have elevated what we can offer to our new and expecting military moms."



Soldiers visiting the center are also offered items donated by From the Heart including warm hats and gloves, pillowcases, and toys for young family members traveling with military members. —**Lydia B.**

Want to Knit or Crochet Baby Booties?



As you can see from the two articles above, baby booties are in high demand right now!

It is also a wonderful way to use your yarn stash of soft, washable yarn for a great cause. We've found a treasure trove of [free patterns](#)—both knit and crochet—on the [Lion Brand Yarn](#) website. With styles ranging from simple and classic to fun and whimsical, there's something for every skill level and taste.



Tracy Deluca with The Virginia Department of the Blind and Vision Impaired holds up a sensory blanket that helps babies begin to reach out and touch the world around them.

From the Heart Items to Support Babies with Vision Impairments.

FtH Board Member and Dinwiddie Group Coordinator **Rebecca Kennedy** was recently contacted by **Tracy Deluca**, Educational Coordinator with the [Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired \(DBVI\)](#). Tracy discovered From the Heart after picking up a bookmark made and distributed by the Dinwiddie Library where Rebecca has been a member of the group since 2011. Tracy was thrilled to learn about the FtH mission from Rebecca and as it turns out they knew each other from high school. Rebecca shared, “*You never know, do you, who will find you—and how you can help?*”

Tracy explained to Rebecca that she works with children from birth through age 18 with vision impairments, including in-home visits for infants and support for school-aged children. Sadly, many of the youngest clients she serves have experienced shaken baby syndrome.

DBVI is interested in a variety of handmade items that From the Heart volunteers can create—soft textured squares, crocheted or knitted blocks, flowers, hearts, and other sensory-friendly pieces. Many of the items we already make for dementia patients can be adapted and added to the blankets that DBVI provides for babies with visual impairments. Rebecca is working with Tracy on the blanket specifications so her group can begin contributing blankets as well.

These sensory blankets provide critical tactile stimulation, helping babies explore their environment through touch. Tracy shared the story of one baby who initially showed little movement. After being placed on a sensory blanket, she began reaching for one item, then another, and soon was rolling and moving to explore her new world.

We are so grateful Tracy found Rebecca—and that Rebecca is part of From the Heart. Thanks to this connection, we now have a new opportunity to bring comfort, joy, and developmental support to some of the youngest and most vulnerable among us.

Our Sincerest Thanks to...

Martha Joan F. for sending FtH a large storage bin from our Amazon Wish List!

Elizabeth G. for sending a package of t-shirts and quilt batting from our Amazon Wish List!

D. London for donating a box of yarn all the way from **Illinois!**

Peggy W. for donating a Husqvarna/Viking H-Class E10 sewing machine! Wow! Thank you so much!

Heart Stitches for sending the lovely box of yarn and knitting supplies.



Thank you to the 76 households who have linked their [Kroger Rewards](#) card to From the Heart! Your everyday grocery shopping is making a real difference. Between March 1 and May 31, your purchases generated a Kroger donate of \$205.07 to From the Heart! We truly appreciate your support. It's easy to join and costs nothing to participate!



A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Monetary Donors:

We are sincerely thankful for your kindness, generosity, and support. Your contributions make it possible for us to provide comfort and care to so many throughout our community and beyond.

We extend our sincere thanks to the **Hopewell Moose Lodge #1472** for their generous donation. A special thank-you goes to From the Heart volunteer **Rosie C.**, whose efforts were instrumental in making this contribution possible.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to **Mary D.** for her very generous donation. Her kindness and support mean so much and help us continue our mission to bring comfort to those in need.

We thank the **Encourager's Sunday School Class of Mount Vernon Baptist Church** for their kind donation.

 Please consider donating items from the FtH Amazon Wishlist .	← Additional Ways to Help From the Heart! →	 FtH members who link their Kroger Reward Card to FtH can support our organization just by shopping there.
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Messages That Made Our Day!



Such a Wonderful Thank You from Suncrest Hospice!

On Wednesday, July 23rd, Suncrest Hospice delivered a beautiful gift basket to the From the Heart Richmond workshop in appreciation of the many items we provide to their facility.

The basket was overflowing with delicious treats and was a thoughtful gesture recognizing the hard work and dedication of our amazing volunteers.

Suncrest Hospice was saying thank you to us, but FtH wants to say thank you in return—for the very important work they do every day to bring comfort and dignity to those in their care. FtH is truly grateful for this meaningful partnership.

Photo by Lydia B.



Good Afternoon, I could not be happier with this group [**Ragsdale Community Center**]. Watching you all grow, not just in numbers, but connection, creativity and kindness has been such a joy. The warmth and spirit you've created together is exactly what we envision for our community center...Kind regards, **Kokesha Shaw-Scott**, Recreation Manager - Ragsdale Community Center, Dinwiddie County Parks and Recreation



...Thank you for your donations to our patients in the past and for your time now!
Best, **Sharon Myers**, St Mary's Hospital, June 24, 2025



Good morning!! I am the Richmond Coordinator for *Ryan's Case for Smiles*. Yesterday [July 24, 2025], I picked up pillowcases! I want to thank all the talented sewists who gave their time to create beautiful and fun pillowcases! The children receiving a pillowcase will have something of their own to bring joy and comfort in the hospital! Thank you for blessing this mission, **Christine M.**

Elf of the Month



The Elf of the Month for July is **Jane Ward**, Jane, please select some of the nicer yarn that is set aside for this purpose.

Thank you to all our elves for generously volunteering your time in June!

Workshop Scheduler for August

The Richmond workshop scheduler for August is **Jacqueline Muoio**. Please contact Jacqueline at msjbangles@yahoo.com to volunteer.

In Fredericksburg, please contact **Nancy Phillips** at phillips5831@gmail.com.

If you would like to become a workshop elf, please email fromtheheartstitchers@gmail.com.



**The July Distribution Numbers!
Thanks to All Our Volunteers
for Making this Possible!**



Richmond Needs:

- LOTS of Children's print pillowcases
- Infant booties
- Colorful blankets and quilts for hospitals (child and adult, not baby) (used in ICU areas)
- NO HATS YET!!
- Toiletries
- Red, White and Blue blankets (no shawls please)
- Rectangular shawls

Thanks to all our stitchers for saving hats and scarves for the fall and winter months!

Donation Inventory Numbers as of July 29, 2025

Previous Total	
Mid 2002 - 2024.....	597,362
2025	
Jan.- June.....	22,193
July.....	2,789
Grand Total	622,344



*****Important Notice: Fredericksburg FtH Workshop Hours *****

The current location is not air conditioned, and with the extreme heat during the summer, the workshop will now only be **open from 9 a.m. to noon until further notice.**



*****Important Notice: Fredericksburg Workshop Space*****
Fredericksburg has to find a new space where they can store supplies and meet.



If you are aware of any real estate companies that might be willing to donate space, or if you know of any available space that could be used free of charge, please contact Dorothy Bernstein at fromtheheartstitchers@gmail.com. Thank you so much!

Fredericksburg Needs: Please keep creating the lovely items you enjoy making! Your handmade creations are always needed and will be warmly welcomed by those we serve in the Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania area.

Fredericksburg Workshop Access: The FXBG workshop is open on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. The address is [1320 Central Park Blvd., Suite 108 Fredericksburg, VA 22401](https://www.google.com/maps/place/1320+Central+Park+Blvd.,+Suite+108+Fredericksburg,+VA+22401). Enter through the front entrance on Central Park Bld. For hours see note above.

Couple of New Fidget Items Added to the FtH Website.

Curly Top Dolls: A Whimsical Fidget Favorite.



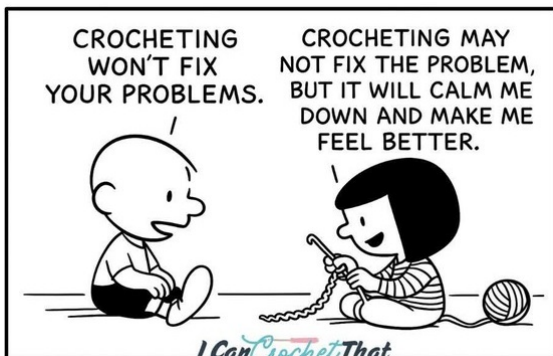
(Photo left) We're excited to share the delightful [pattern](#) for these adorable *Curly Top Dolls*, submitted by longtime member **Bonnie S.**—or as many of you know her, **Mimi S.**!


Mimi shared, “I’ve been making these Curly Tops for about five years now. I’ve been part of From the Heart since 2001, and **Beth W.**...was my inspiration—with her adorable hair color!”

Thank you, Mimi, for this charming and creative contribution. These dolls are not only cute—they also make fantastic fidget toys, bringing comfort and smiles wherever they go!

Cubes that Comfort: Another Fidget Favorite.

A [pattern](#) for another fun fidget item (photo right)—a *Sensory Cube*—has also been added to the FtH website! This creative pattern is featured on the [Hobbii website](#), and you can now find the link on the From the Heart website under the [Fiddle/Fidget Items](#) heading.



 From the Heart is proud to have a vibrant and growing network of groups meeting throughout Richmond and beyond! Whether you're in Mechanicsville, Midlothian, Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Williamsburg, Chester, Dinwiddie, Fredericksburg, Virginia Beach—there's likely a group near you! Want to find one close to home? [\[Click here for the full list!\]](#)