



Grateful Thread – October 2025

<https://www.facebook.com/FromtheHeartStitchers>
<https://fromtheheartstitchers.org>

Needles, Hooks, and Stitches of Compassion

By Tricia Ennis



Whether we knit, crochet, or sew for From the Heart, each of our handmade creations is a direct link to a person in need. Our stitches and seams are tangible expressions of the care and warmth we extend to our communities. To help you make the most of your time and effort, here is a practical guide to some of From the Heart's most requested projects.

Knitting for Comfort

Knitting is a wonderful way to create cozy, warm items quickly and efficiently. Here are a couple of quick knits you can work on while waiting for the doctor, dentist, etc.

- ❖ **Baby Hats** Newborn hats are in constant demand but especially for the seasonal projects at hospitals, such as VCU's "Santa Baby Hats," and the pumpkin hats we need in the Fall. You can make a simple baby hat using this technique, without even looking for a specific pattern. Cast on 48 stitches using size US 7 (4.5 mm) needles and worsted-weight yarn. Work in a 1×1 rib (K1,P1) for 5 inches. Decrease by knitting two together (K2tog) every other stitch until a few stitches remain, then thread the yarn through to close. Choose your yarn color to match the purpose for which you are making the hats. Red/white for a Santa hat, orange/green for a pumpkin hat, red/white/blue for a patriotic hat...
- ❖ **"Comfort" Squares** Don't have time to complete a full blanket? That's okay! We collect squares and sew them together into beautiful "quilts." Cast on 30 stitches using size US 8 (5 mm) needles and worsted-weight yarn. Knit every row until you have a 12"x12" square. Bring them in when you have 9 or 12 squares (put them in one bag so we know they go together) and we will make quilts from them. Please be sure to leave a long tail on each square to facilitate sewing them together. Don't forget to use acrylic yarn for these. If you prefer to make washcloths, please use cotton yarn, make them 8"x8" and don't leave a tail. Neither need to be tagged.

Crochet for Warmth

Crochet is a fantastic way to create durable, dense fabrics. Scarves are quick and easy to make and can be put down and picked up again at any point in the project. They are perfect for both beginners and experienced crafters.

- ❖ **Simple Scarf** A crocheted scarf is an excellent way to provide warmth and comfort. Using a size J/10 (6 mm) crochet hook and worsted-weight yarn, chain 15 stitches. Single crochet in the second chain from the hook and in each chain across. Chain 1 and turn. Repeat this process until the scarf measures about 60 inches long.

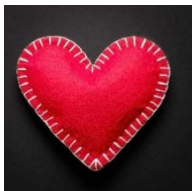
Sewing for Support

Sewing projects offer a quick and effective way to craft items that are both practical and comforting for those in need.

- ❖ **The "Tote of Hope" Bag** A simple tote bag is invaluable for memory care centers as many residents like carrying a bag containing the items they cherish on any given day. A bag can be very easy to make. We have patterns on our [website](https://fromtheheartstitchers.org) but even without a pattern you can create a nice bag. Cut two 18"x 20"

rectangles from durable cotton or canvas fabric for the body of the bag. Cut two 3"x25" strips of fabric for the handles. Hem all edges of the bag rectangles. For the handles, fold the strips in half lengthwise, sew, and turn them right-side out. Attach the handles to the top of the bag pieces, then sew the two bag pieces together along the sides and bottom.

The next time you visit the workshop, feel free to browse our yarn hall and sewing nook to pick up supplies that have been curated for our projects. Remember, you can work on these projects at any time of the year and bring them to the workshop when we send out a call for those items. We love when you bring in a whole bag of Santa baby hats in November, for example, that you've stored up over the summer!



As the winter months approach and all of us will be spending more time indoors working on our favorite items, we wish you lots of Happy crafting! Remember, every stitch we make and every piece of fabric we cut is a direct expression of our compassion and care. Should you need some inspiration, feel free to browse the pattern section of the [website HERE](#).

Thank you so much Tricia for this wonderful article!

*We All Wear Different Hats 2025 Retreat:
A Wonderful Day!*

Photos are now posted on the FtH website. Click [HERE](#) to view.



FTH DIAPER DRIVE FOR LITTLE HANDS VIRGINIA

Throughout October, From the Heart is collecting packages of disposable diapers for [Little Hands Virginia](#). Your donation will help ensure babies in our community stay healthy, clean, and comfortable.

Let's help Little Hands Virginia reach their goal of collecting over 250,000 diapers!

Save the Date - Donation Daze Is Coming!
When: Sunday, Nov. 2nd from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm
Where: In the alley behind the RIC Workshop

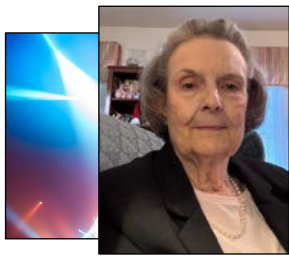


Looking for gorgeous yarn at a bargain? Donation Daze is your chance to scoop up premium, luxury yarn for your own projects — all for a fair and generous donation! Many of these yarns come straight from our generous local yarn shop (LYS) partners and others who've shared their beautiful excess with us.

Why do we offer them? These high-end yarns are often not practical for our donation projects because they can't be machine washed or dried. So we're making them available to you for a suggested donation of 50% to 75% of the retail price per skein. Your generous donations then allow us to purchase shop supplies and durable yarns and materials needed for our comfort projects.

Getting here: You may park in the lot in front of our workshop. To reach the alley, go through the white gate to the left of Empanadas Market — it will be open and clearly marked.

Come for the yarn, stay for the fun — and know that your donations help us continue our mission of bringing comfort and warmth to so many!



Spotlight on Elf Kulla Ficare

Raised in Suffolk, VA, long time From the Heart volunteer **Kulla Ficare** was taught by her mother how to crochet a chain with thread and a steel crochet hook when she was very young. As a teenager, Kulla's mother taught her the rudiments of sewing, a skill which Kulla later employed, as a money-saver, as a young mother of two children. She taught herself to crochet beyond just making a chain and took a knitting class which opened even more crafty doors.

In 1989, Kulla moved to Chesterfield Co. for a job opportunity, a move which changed the trajectory of her life and was instrumental in causing her to return to her roots of playing with yarn. One day, at her new job, Kulla spoke with **Susan Girtman**, who introduced her to From the Heart. Susan knew of Kulla's interest in making hats, especially chemo hats, and told her of the groups which met in Oxbridge Square Starbucks. Another FtH member, **Janet Newman**, quickly befriended Kulla and Kulla notes that Janet's soft words of encouragement stay with her to this day.

Having heard of FtH, Kulla jumped right in and was instrumental in starting a group in her workplace and soon began to volunteer as a donor, an elf, a weekly delivery person to recipients, an elf scheduler, a willing volunteer wherever needed, and an all-around good-will ambassador for FtH. She served on the Board of Directors from 2016 until 2025 and as President from 2024 until her term expired. Kulla is currently taking a break from workshop scheduling but plans to return to this role in February. If all of this were not enough, Kulla has also contributed to both our Facebook page and our website, her latest addition being the pattern page for our [Fiddle/Fidget Pattern Page](#).

Kulla finds a special joy in making hats, baby blankets, and Izzy dolls for From the Heart. She also enjoys making beaded crochet accessories for personal use.

When asked what she most enjoys as a member of From the Heart, Kulla noted that workshop scheduling is a great way for her to stay in touch with our essential volunteers and that "The ladies (and men) that I have met through my association with FtH and our recipients have enriched my life so much. Where else can one connect with others of a like mind of serving others and still enjoy our crafts?"

Whether she's making hats, leading the board, or inspiring others, Kulla's life embodies the very spirit of 'From the Heart': a shared passion for crafting and a desire to serve. — **Tricia Ennis**



FTH Donations Bring Comfort to Expectant Navy Moms



Photo by Nancy Gregory

The **American Legion Auxiliary in Goochland** hosted a special baby shower in August, and thanks to your generous donations, it was a wonderful success! The shower honored **45 expectant Navy wives** whose husbands are currently deployed aboard the USS Ford out of



Photo by Nancy Gregory

Norfolk. Event Coordinator **Nancy Gregory** shared, "You can see how beautifully the blankets were displayed. Everyone was so appreciative of the support offered by FTH." FtH was honored to be a part of this wonderful event!




Nominate From the Heart for the Red Heart Community Spotlight

Next year, [Red Heart Community Spotlight](#) will feature 10 individuals or groups whose stitching makes a positive impact in their communities. Each winner will be highlighted alongside their favorite Red Heart patterns and receive 150 balls of Red Heart yarn to continue their work.

We think From the Heart would be a perfect nominee!

Nomination Link: [HERE](#)

Wrap Someone in Comfort • Help Us Meet This Urgent Need!
Deadline: November 15, 2025



Backpacks for the Homeless/RVA has received 1,000-500 scarves for an urgent need. Please follow the guidelines below:

- Pattern: Any pattern is okay
- Fiber: Acrylic preferred; wool blends are okay if machine washable
- Special Note: If using wool blend, attach a small piece of red yarn to indicate wool content for allergic reactions
- Size: At least 6"-8" inches wide and 18"-72" inches long

Thank you for helping us provide warmth and comfort this winter!

You Did It! Thank You SO Much!
Winter is coming. We can always use more scarves!

FtH Donation Guideline Reminder

From the Heart accepts **only new handcrafted or purchased items**.
Used or gently used items—including clothing—cannot be accepted due to limited staff and storage.
Used items can be donated to Goodwill, Salvation Army, the two nearby thrift stores, or to the **Place for Miracles** – this organization is recommended by **Backpacks For The Homeless**.
A Place of Miracles – Clothes Closet, 2007 Willis Rd, North Chesterfield, VA 23237
A clothing drop box is conveniently located outside their facility.
804-293-5553 | aplacemiracles@gmail.com



Photo by Carol J.

From Fabric to Comfort: Cozy Hearts Back in Action

The Freeman High School quilting group, “Cozy Hearts,” recently reunited to continue making quilts and blankets for pediatric heart patients at VCU Medical Center.

On Saturday, September 13, under the guidance of **Carol Jones**—member of the All Brands Charity Sew group—the students eagerly unpacked colorful fabrics and got to work cutting and tying. Two members even completed a quilt that had been started back in June.

The group especially loved working with fleece, generously donated by two corporate sponsors who reached out to **Rebecca Kennedy**, FtH board member and Dinwiddie coordinator. Thanks to these donations, the students created six fleece blankets and one quilt during their session. **Well done, Cozy Hearts!**



Photo by Carol J.

Reminder: For Children’s Pillowcases, Please Use Fun, Child-Friendly Fabrics

For more information about selecting age appropriate fabric, see the PDF file on the FtH website by clicking [HERE](#).

Let’s Play: Is It Fun, Kid-Friendly Fabric?

FtH Richmond Workshop Happenings!



Photo by Deb A.

(Photo left) **Lauren C.** stopped in on Sept. 10 to donate these absolutely adorable critters! Lauren, your little cuties are going to make some children very happy!!

We had several donations on September 13 including an amazing stash from **Diane B.** She brought in a bunch of yarn that her daughter had found at an estate sale. A lot of red and white and orange yarn—just in time for pumpkin and Santa hats!



Sandy D. brought in a batch of pumpkin hats made by **Ann T.** (upper right) as well as scarves, wheelchair totes, an afghan, and a box of quilting books. Our thanks to **Sandy, Rosa A.** and **Ann** for making these wonderful items!

September 20th was a fun and busy day at the FtH workshop. **Brian F. and Robbie F.** (photo right) started the day off by bringing in two carloads of yarn that had been their mother's. Sadly, she passed away last May, but they had been happy to learn about the workshop because they wanted their mother's yarn to be put to good use.



Photo by Mary Jo F.



Photo by Karen P.

(Photo, lower right) **Barbara D.** turned a thoughtful idea into reality by creating port shirts for children. Thanks to her kindness—and our incredible distribution team—a local hospital will soon be providing these much-needed shirts to young patients.

(Photo left) **Mary D.** generously donated an amazing amount of her very beautiful stash of yarn. She has always been impressed with our mission and the kind and friendly elves she has come to



Photo by Betsy V.

know. Mary's sister and brother-in-law helped her with this donation. Thank you Mary and we wish you well!



On Sunday, September 28th, From the Heart visited three Richmond Michaels locations to connect with the community and share our mission. One visitor was delighted to learn about FtH because her family told her they had all the crocheted items they could ever want—sound familiar?



At the Broad Street store, **Jane A.** (l) and **Heidi R.** (r) chatted with this young man and his friend about FtH's mission. They were so impressed they wanted to help—immediately donating two skeins of yarn! (BTW, his grandmother made his hat—so cute!)



Deb A. (standing), **Rebecca K.** (far right), and **Lydia B.** (behind the camera) were at the Hull Street location. They enjoyed a visit with **FtH Founder Lois Moore** and volunteer **Charles N.**



(L-R) **Kulla F., Lois L.** and **Sheddy R.** represented FtH at the Courthouse and Midlothian location, where they showcased many of the wonderful items volunteers make and donate to FtH.

Our Sincerest Thanks to...

Martha F. for generously donating paper towels, a large box of trash bags, and copier paper from our [Amazon Wish List](#). These practical items are greatly appreciated and will help us with our daily activities.

Jane C. for generously donating paper towels and copier paper from our [Amazon Wish List](#). We are always in need of these items and will certainly put them to good use.

The **anonymous person(s)** who donated five scarves and five blankets (photo right) to FtH. We greatly appreciate your kind donation towards the scarf drive and the blankets are lovely.




A heartfelt thank-you to our **anonymous donor** for the two large bags of fiberfill from our [Amazon Wish List](#). Your generous gift will be put to wonderful use in creating fun toys for children, as well as underarm and port pillows that provide comfort to patients undergoing cancer treatments.

Katherine M. for mailing us scarves all the way from **Phoenix, AZ** to help us meet our scarf drive goal.

Susan D. for sending FtH a multipack of paper towels, two packages of knit gloves, and a large box of trash bags from our [Amazon Wish List](#). You shared that you sent these in appreciation for FtH member **Sue L.**, who provided fidget sleeves for your students in Indiana, PA. We're grateful to you both for all you do to support your community and beyond!

Our **anonymous donor** for the BIG box containing 24 pairs of knit gloves, two dolls, and a two-pack of Red Heart yarn from our [Amazon Wish List](#). We truly appreciate your generosity!

 Thank you to the 80 households who have linked their [Kroger Rewards](#) card to From the Heart! Your everyday grocery shopping is making a real difference. Between June 1 and August 30, your purchases generated a Kroger donation of \$210.48 to From the Heart! Thank you for your support! It's easy to join and costs nothing to participate!



To **Grace Episcopal Church in Yorktown, VA** for donating 12 beautiful scarves for the scarf drive (photo right)

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.

Many thanks to **CarMax** for their generous donation! We also extend our sincere gratitude to **Tom Melanson**, husband of FtH Board Member **Debbie Melanson**, for coordinating the CarMax Cares contributions—both the gift of time in moving items for the carpet installation and the very generous monetary 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.


Messages That Made Our Day!


Website comment Sept. 4, 2025 - Good morning! I am reaching out because your contact information is on these lovely items that were donated to my unit for patients who have cancer. . .the homemade warm packs were a huge success, and I was wondering if there were more that I could receive? Other items like the small pillows and hats also have all been given out and were much appreciated by the patients. Thank you so much for what you do! — **Holly C.** Director of Nursing, St. Mary's Hospital

Email message Sept. 15, 2025 - Good afternoon! My name is **Elizabeth Fallen** and I work for the **Pregnancy Resource Center of Metro Richmond**. I recently took on the role of Director of our Seeds of Success program. The program provides free parenting classes and material goods to expecting families and families with little ones under 2 years old. I was recently going through some of our material goods donations and came across some beautiful sweaters and hats from you that I will use to bless our families this week. Thank you so much for what you all are doing!

Hi **Mimi deP.**, I just wanted to send another thank you to you and the knitting club you are part of [for the lovely yarns you donated to the school!] Please let the members know that our school clubs start today and there are two crocheting clubs!! Those teachers are well equipped with a variety of beautiful yarn for the kids! It takes a village! And we thank you! ♥ Sharon



The Elf of the Month for September is **Heidi R.** Heidi, 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!

Workshop Scheduler for October

The RIC workshop scheduler for Oct. is Joyce Puller. Please contact Joyce at pullerjb@gmail.com to volunteer.

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

If you would like to become a workshop elf or a scheduler, please email fromtheheartstitchers@gmail.com. It is fun and you get to know many fellow volunteers.


September Distribution Update
Thanks to Our Volunteers!


RICHMOND: Most Requested Items to Date:

- Dialysis sleeves (we have a request for 200)
- Dialysis blankets – 40" wide x 60" to 72" long
- Blankets (all sizes)
- Newborn Santa hats (must fit a 4"-5" ball) Deadline Dec. 13th.
- Toys for children and adults
- Gloves and mittens (can be store bought)

Donation Inventory Numbers as of September 18, 2025	
Previous Total	
Mid 2002 – 2024.....	597,362
In 2025:	
Jan.- Aug.....	28,815
Sept.....	<u>2,361</u>
Year to date total.....	31,176
Grand Total	628,538

FtH Fredericksburg Has a New Home!!!!



We're thrilled to announce that **Eastland United Methodist Church** in Fredericksburg has generously offered space for our Fredericksburg area volunteers to meet and store yarn and fabrics. Thank you Eastland United Methodist Church! We are so grateful!

This new location offers plenty of parking and lots of room inside to spread out, socialize, and share projects. Everyone is welcome on the **2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon**, starting **Tuesday, October 14th**. Location: **10718 Courthouse Road, Fredericksburg, VA**



Fredericksburg Fall Gathering
The October 7 event has been postponed.
A new date will be shared soon.



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.



Have you ever started crocheting a border around a project only to see it pucker or ruffle? It can be so frustrating! Adding a crochet edge that fits takes a little work, but I've found an easy way to do it, AND you don't need to make a gauge swatch!



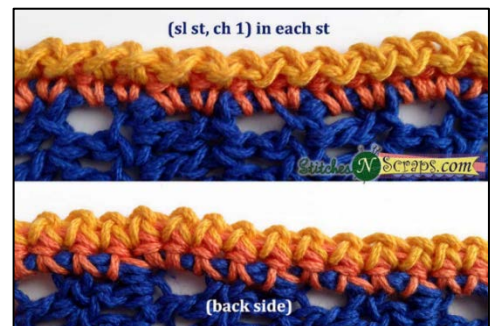
First, choose a yarn and a hook that suits the yarn size; the size of yarn can differ from that of your project, but consider choosing a yarn that works well with the washing instructions of your project.

With the right side facing you, single crochet (sc) into a corner stitch. Chain 3, then sc into the next stitch that the chain reaches (don't stretch the chain). Continue on a few more times. If it lays flat with your project, you've got your spacing correct. If not, try again, skipping fewer or more stitches, until it lays flat. The number of stitches you are skipping is your general gauge. Continue on with sc, ch3 to the end. You can also try ch2 or just ch1 between your sc sts. Join in the first sc and cut yarn. This should set you up for a nice foundation border around the edge of your project.

Once you have your foundation border, you can easily crochet your choice of border around your project. Here are a couple of easy ones that you can use:



Single crochet around – (1sc per ch and 1 per sc), plus 3sc in each corner st. Join in first sc. Here's a great [tutorial](#) from Allison Murray. You can also choose to make several rows of this to create a wide border.



Or try this one, if you're low on yarn but want a pretty border – *Sc, (Slip st, ch1)* in each stitch around, adding 3sc in each corner st, join to first sc.

For a list of From the Heart group meetings, please click [HERE](#).