

Abundance Of Love



Our Mission

We are a Central Florida volunteer organization whose members knit, crochet, loom and sew.

We create items of comfort with love to distribute locally wherever there is a need.

NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2026

Jen's Corner



Our AOL spring craft sale was a huge success thanks to all of you! We had a wonderful selection of items, and something for everyone. Once again, the crochet and knitted stuffed animals were the largest seller--pigs, chickens, bunnies, and ducks were a big hit as were handmade thank you cards that sold out quickly. With pre- and post-sales, we were able to raise \$2,827 to buy more yarn. Thanks for your creativity and support of our bi-annual sale!

I am purchasing yarn exclusively online in bulk from Michaels. We do not pay sales tax or shipping. With every purchase, we receive 9% back in vouchers to buy more yarn. While we may not obtain your preferred yarn, keep in mind that our No. 1 goal is to provide a minimum of 5,000 hats to our local schools. The Michaels brand "Loops and Threads" is the most affordable and serves our purpose well.

Thanks as always for your support.

Warmly,
Jen Smith
Founder and Outreach Coordinator

AOL Calendar April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
					La Hacienda Mtg *at Mulberry Rec 8:30am	
5	6 Everglades Mtg 10:00am	7	8 Fruitland Park 2:00pm	9	10 Big Cypress Mtg 9:00am	11
12	13	14	15	16	17 La Hacienda Mtg *at Mulberry Rec 8:30am	18
19	20 Everglades Mtg 10:00am	21	22 Fruitland Park 2:00pm	23	24 Big Cypress Mtg 9:00am	25
26	27	28	29	30		

*** Both La Hacienda meetings in April are at the
Mulberry Rec Center, 8445 SE 165 Mulberry Lane.**

OUR PROJECTS



Charities list: link to [Charities List](#)

Patterns: link to [Patterns](#) on our website

Size chart - link to [Size Chart](#). See this chart for info on sizes needed for our items.

MOST NEEDED

For Knitters, Crocheters, Loomers:

* **Peyton Project Hearts** - Challenge for April are Peyton Project Hearts. Lindy, who heads up the project, delivers to four Starbucks locations twice a month and needs more crochet hearts. It takes only a small amount of yarn, and they are quick to make. We will add tags. Thanks!

Find the pattern on their website - [HERE](#)

NOT NEEDED AT THIS TIME

- * **Blankets in these sizes: 14x14" preemie and large bed-size**
- * **Baby buntings**
- * **Hats - toddler (32-peg loom)**
- * **Hearts of love**
- * **LIFE blankets & shawls**
- * **Prescription bottles**

NEEDED AND ONGOING

For Knitters, Crocheters, Loomers:

- * **Baby items** - Lightweight blankets **24-26"** in pastels, soft yarn. Hat/bootie sets to go with blankets are always needed. **Do not make a set of blanket/hat/booties with smaller blankets such as 14x14"**. These sets go to new moms as they leave the hospital.
- * **Blankets** - Lapghans, 30-32 x 36" in patriotic colors and other colors for men and women.
- * **Critters** - any character/animal up to 6" tall, lightly stuffed so they are "squishy"
- * **Hats** - for all ages, including preemie and newborn. No toddler size.
- * **Hats/chemo** - please add 1" to bottom of hat so it covers the top of ear (requested by cancer patients).
- * **Mats/bag** - from grocery bags made on wood looms
- * **Mittens** - all sizes
- * **Picc line (IV) covers** - for all ages, baby to adult, knitted preferred
- * **Panels, 7 x 9"** - No blanket yarn please--too heavy when joined. Granny squares, typically 5x5, are not needed.
- * **Prayer squares** - must be 4 x 5", pattern on web, cardboard templates available
- * **Scarves** - **adult** 5-6" wide x 45" long (do not need short ones for children)
- * **Soap sacks** - **ONLY** made w/cotton yarn and only use AOL patterns, with or without soap
- * **Shawls/adult** - Regular shawls. No LIFE shawls.
- * **Twiddle mats** - using #5 bulky yarn, placemat size, knit or crochet. Mats should not be open weave but solid. Mats must be washable in hot water. Attach items carefully--strong thread, dental floss, or crochet cotton works best. NO glued-on items. Items needed to

affix to mats--large buttons, thread spools, keys, small zippers, small toys, textured items, items that can be firmly attached.

For Sewers:

- * **Carrots for Vitas Home Health** - Jen Smith has spoken with many nurses who visit Vitas patients with crippled hands; it would be beneficial to have a "pull ribbon" at both ends of the carrot. Sewers, please give Jen feedback on accommodating their request.
- * **Clothing protectors** - fabric, pattern, velcro provided
- * **Dolls, medical** - we provide fabric kits
- * **Eye shields for NICU babies** - size 2 x 9-10". Two-sided, SOFT fabrics, sewn & turned. Dark on one side (i.e, black flannel), pretty fabric on other side. Top stitch only opening to turn.
- * **Hats/surgical for youth** - we provide fabric kits
- * **Pillowcases** - for children up to 17 years old. One-yard fabric pieces provided; pattern on website.
- * **Pillows/heart stress for hand w/strap**
- * **Pillows/mastectomy** - sew, but do not stuff
- * **Pillows/port covers**
- * **Pillows/small** - for children, instructions on website
- * **Prayer pockets** - sewn, pattern on website
- * **Walker bags** - use sturdy/upholstery fabric, pattern & velcro provided

UPCOMING EVENTS



International Knit in Public Day

Mark your calendar and join us on Monday, 6/8/26, 9am-noon, for "International Knit in Public Day." We'll be in the outdoor pavilion at Everglades Rec Center. Bring any handcraft project and a chair.

Craft Sale, Fri. 10/9/26 at Rohan Rec Center

More info will be in future newsletters.

AOL DONATIONS - March 2026



Items donated in March 2026: **1,463**

Hats in storage for 2026: **2,485**

Bag Mats: Our dedicated team of mat makers have now completed **90 sleeping mats!** New AOL members who joined in March have taken on this project. There are instructors at both Fruitland Park and Everglades meetings if you want to learn any part of the mat making process--looming, folding bags, and making "plarn" (plastic yarn).

COMPLETED PROJECTS



Shawls by Suzy Sayers and Denise Wintemberg, Big Cypress



Kerry Pellerin very kindly gave lessons on joining panels at our recent meetings. She is attending our meetings regularly so see Kerry if you need help.



Stitcheries, flower of each month, by Johanna Cole; sold for fundraising prior to craft sale.



208 springtime & "chick" hats made by Sue Francis and Jane Christensen (Big Cypress) for the NICU at Advent Health for Children.

THIS AND THAT



Slide Program from Volunteer Appreciation Event

Here's a [LINK](#) if you'd like to view the slide program we showed at the Volunteer Appreciation event in February. The slides were a nice history of AOL activities since its inception.

A Few Project Reminders

- * Never use safety pins on hearts of love. Just keep the duplicate hearts together on the table. We cannot donate them with the pins.
 - * Trim threads on sewn projects.
 - * Do not use thick blanket chenille yarn for baby items.
 - * Do not turn in baby buntings; the hospitals will not take them.
 - * Hats - Please use medium weight yarn. Heavy #5 bulk yarn makes super thick hats which are generally too hot for FL weather so we must find people to take them north. Also please do not use the largest size loom for hats which make them too big.
 - * Wash and iron the pillowcase fabric; although it's cut to size, it should be washed. Much of our fabric comes from estate sales.
 - * If you would like a pic of something you made added to our monthly newsletter, please ask Nancy Still or your group leader to take a pic. We love your special projects!
- Thank you

THANK YOU'S



Tampa General Hospital

"Your donations mean so much to our patients, families and staff. The innovation of surgery cap and "me" doll with matching cap had our pediatric surgery staff ecstatic. If possible, they would love of these sets."

Carol Hangen, TGH Volunteer

AdventHealth Orlando

"Thank you so much! I received the package of surgical caps today. Wow! You guys are fast. We appreciate you all. You truly make a difference in the lives of our patients."

Jana McGarvey, Manager, Volunteer Program

Lake Cares Inc. Food Pantry

"This email is sent with an abundance of appreciation for your donation of mats, soap, socks, hats and blankets. We could not continue our mission without the support of good people in our community like you who understand the need and take the extra step to donate and make a positive difference in the lives of others in need. Thank you!"

Ruthie Haffner, Director of Development

Lake Panasoffkee United Methodist Food Pantry/Thrift Store

.....a HUGE thank you for your donation.... I delivered some of your items last Monday night when the church opens its doors and serves dinner to locals. some of the hats and blankets were given out that night to some thankful people. ...wow - your sleeping mats, sleeping bag, soap sacks, and other items were very much appreciated by those who took them. Thank you so much for your generosity!"

Jacki Angus

Helpers at AOL Volunteer Appreciation Event

"I really enjoyed the celebration! I was very happy to be a part of your gift of thoughtfulness to your members. You do such good things for so many." Pam Iserloth

"I learned a lot about your mission and was quite moved by it. Glad to help." Pam Schrum

Note from Lisa Strahs-Lorenc

Lisa, our snowbird member, is back in Long Island, New York, and has created a "Crafting for Good" club. She was inspired by AOL and our mission so she started a similar club in her area. The club will be donating their handmade items to local hospitals and nursing homes.

Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, Hollywood, FL

Although this thank you is a bit lengthy, Paige explains how medical play items are useful and comforting to children. We send them many items including medical dolls and hats.

"Today's message is simply to share our gratitude and thank you for the integral role you have played in supporting our patients. Your generosity plays an important role in promoting positive healing through play. Because of donors like you, we are able to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our patients and their families, and we are truly grateful for your kindness.

As you may know, play is the universal language of children. It brings comfort, encourages expression, and helps children make sense of the world around them. Within the hospital setting, play serves many important purposes in supporting a child's emotional well-being. Throughout the year, our patients receive toys and play materials to celebrate meaningful moments such as holidays, birthdays, last chemo and bell-ringing celebrations, important medical milestones, and even their discharge home. These small but meaningful moments help bring joy and a sense of normalcy during what can often be a very challenging time.

In addition, our team of Child Life Specialists uses play as a powerful tool for education and support. Through medical play and other specialized materials, they help children learn about procedures, diagnoses, and treatments in ways that are developmentally appropriate and easier to understand. This approach helps reduce fear, build trust, and empower children by giving them a better understanding of their care while familiarizing the hospital environment.

These moments of play, learning, and comfort would not be possible without the generosity of donors like you. Your contributions help create brighter days for our patients and meaningful memories for the families who walk through our doors. Please know how deeply we appreciate your support and how important you are to our hospital community.

Thank you for being such a valued part of the healing work we do every day."

Paige Cos, Special Events Manager & Donation Coordinator

Financials - March 2026

Beginning Balance:	\$16,943.84
Income:	3,873.00
Expenses:	<u>1,284.15</u>
Ending Balance:	\$19,532.69

A line-by-line detailed financial report is available from your group leader.

Leaders and Contacts

La Hacienda, Founder, Outreach Coordinator - Jen Smith, 352-250-3431, jpsmith5@comcast.net

Big Cypress - Bonnie Mulneix, 724-283-8248, dmulneix@comcast.net

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Founder Jen Smith

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