

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 - JANUARY 2025



Jen's Corner

Looking back at 2024, AOL has made tremendous strides in both an increase in our volunteer members and donations. Total donations for 2024 are 4,464 items, and our total donations since AOL inception (June 20, 2020) are 66,073 items.

We now serve 28 charities, 18 hospitals, and 9 local schools. We meet at 4 locations, and maintain 2 storage units. We have learned that our volunteers are open to challenges and currently have 23 ongoing projects.

AOL is now incorporated in the State of Florida and achieved 501(c)(3) official non-profit status. Our Board of 5 members meets monthly as per our Bylaws requirements and are making plans for 2025. Some exciting things are in the planning stages.

Our financial status is greater than ever before, and we are able to easily keep up with our expenses. Thank you so much to our donors.

All of this is possible because of you! Whether you attend meetings, work on your projects at home and drop off items, or have items picked up, you are the heart of Abundance Of Love. I consider all of you my AOL family. I am honored to lead this group of dedicated volunteers with the mission of service to others.

Wishing you a Healthy and Happy New Year and many blessings in 2025.

Fondly,
 Jen Smith, Founder and Outreach Coordinator

AOL Calendar
January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
		1		2	3 La Hacienda Mtg 8:30am
5	6 Everglades Mtg & Bag Cutting/Plarn Making 10:00am	7	8 Fruitland Park Comm. Ctr Mtg 2:00pm	9	10 Big Cypress Mtg 9:00am
12	13	14	15	16	17 La Hacienda Mtg 8:30am
19	20 Everglades Mtg & Bag Cutting/Plarn Making 10:00am	21	22 Fruitland Park Comm. Ctr Mtg 2:00pm	23	24 Big Cypress Mtg 9:00am
26	27	28	29	30	31 La Hacienda Mtg 8:30am

- * This month, Big Cypress will meet in the card room. *
- * Beginning this month, Everglades group will meet from 10 to 12:20. *



Handmade
 with
 Love

OUR PROJECTS

- Patterns - see tvabundanceoflove.com Pattern Links
- Size chart - see tvabundanceoflove.com Our Needs
- Charities list - see link at end of newsletter

MOST NEEDED

- * Picc line (IV) covers - for children & adults, knitted
- * Pillows, heart stress pillows for hand

* **Soap sacks** - use cardboard template for correct size

ON HOLD

No items are currently on hold.

NEEDED AND ONGOING

NOTE: Blanket yarn is for blankets only. It is much too thick and unsuitable for baby/teen hats and scarves.

* **Baby items** - Lightweight blankets 24-26" in pastels, soft yarn. Hat/bootie sets to go with blankets. If you make a blanket, save leftover yarn for someone else to make hat/booties; helpful to include yarn label with blankets.

* **Blankets** - ALL blanket sizes needed, including LIFE blankets. Smallest is 14" square. For baby sets, 24-26". Size ~36" can be in baby colors or bright colors for children. Teen and adult sizes also needed. Pound of Love and one pound skeins are enough for blankets.

* **Boxes** - medium and large sizes, broken down

* **Clothing protectors**

* **Critters** - any animal; fabric, knit, crochet, up to 6 inches tall

* **Eye shields for NICU babies** - size 2 x 9-10". Two-sided, SOFT fabrics, sewn & turned. Top stitch only end to close. Must be dark on one side (i.e, black flannel), pretty fabric on other side.

* **Hats/scarves/mittens** - for all ages

* **Hats/chemo** - Simply Soft yarn provided

* **Hats/surgical** - sewn, for youth

* **Hearts of love** - pattern on website; materials provided.

* **Mat making from grocery bags**

* **Medical dolls** - all parts--doll bodies, gowns, hats. Materials provided.

* **Panels 7 x 9"** - knitted/crocheted, any stitch pattern but not open/lacey. Cardboard templates available.

* **Picc line (IV) covers** - for all ages, baby to adult, knitted preferred

* **Pillowcases** - for children up to 17 years old. Cut-to-size fabric provided.

* **Pillows, heart stress pillows for hand**

* **Pillows, heart-shaped/mastectomy**

* **Pillows, neck**

* **Pillows, port**

* **Prayer pockets** - sewn, pattern on web

* **Prayer squares** - cardboard templates available

* **Prescription bottles** - see-through only, labels removed

* **Scarves** - 4-5" wide, 36-50" long, fringe or no-fringe

* **Shawls** - including LIFE shawls

* **Soap sacks** - cardboard templates available

* **Toiletries** - small travel size

NOT NEEDED

* **Grocery bags** - we now have thousands to use in bag mat making. For now, please recycle them--we will let you know when we need more. Note we cannot use newspaper bags or any other kinds of plastic for bag mats. If you would like to help cut bags or make plastic yarn (plarn), we will show you how.

* **Toddler hats (32-peg loom)**

* **Bottle caps**



FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

FOOD PACKING EVENT

Live Oaks Community Church is holding their annual food packing event for Feed My Starving Children (FMSC). This event offers volunteers a one-of-a-kind experience. You will hand-pack rice, soy, dried vegetables, and a nutritionally complete blend of vitamins/minerals into bags which are sealed, boxed, placed on pallets, and shipped to others working hard to reach the neediest children around the world.

For those who signed up to assist, thank you very much. The event is Wed. Jan. 15, 2025, at 12 noon. The location address is Live Oaks Community Church, 12070 CR 103, Oxford, behind Walmart on 466.

Please arrive 15 to 20 minutes before your shift starts. Check in with your name and Abundance Of Love group name. Pick up a required hair net; no need to wear it during orientation. Everyone must attend the orientation even if you have participated before. A welcome from the organizers will be followed by an FMSC video with instructions on procedures. If you need a sit-down job, you will be called first and exit to the packing area.

Important Instructions

* If you are not feeling well, for any reason, DO NOT attend.

* Leave everything in your car except your car keys (purses, bags, etc.).

* Remove all jewelry (i.e., watches, necklaces, pins) which are not allowed in the packing area. Wedding bands are okay (if they have a stone, you will be required to wear gloves). Medical Alert bracelets/necklaces are okay.

- * Wear comfortable shoes as you will be standing the whole shift.
- * Monetary donations are also accepted by check or cash at the event or online with a credit card. [CLICK HERE](#) for the FMSC website.
- * Visit the "Market Place" after your shift to see the wonderful items all made by hand.

BAG MAT MAKING

We introduced a new AOL project in November 2024 - grocery bag mat making. We asked for and received several thousand grocery bags. We are putting a hold on collecting these for the moment and will let you know when we need more. The bags in hand now must be cut and made into plastic yarn (plarn). You may have no interest in looming a mat, but you can really help by cutting bags. We can show you how!



As of now we have 6 members making mats with 3 more members ready to start. Before you begin, it is best to come to a Fruitland Park or Everglades meeting to see exactly how it is done as there are lots of tips and tricks to make weaving easier. It is NOT recommended to watch the YouTube videos.

If you want to join this project by making your own loom or by taking the specifications to the wood shop, written directions will be provided. The loom we recommend will make a mat 30 inches wide by 72 inches long.

Mats will be donated to Open Door in Eustis where they are distributed to the homeless. The majority of homeless are transient men, never sleeping in the same place, so an over-the-shoulder strap is required for easy carrying.

THIS AND THAT

TV News Reports

In February 2024, News 6 Orlando visited AOL to present us with their "Getting Results Award." Nancy Still graciously accepted the award on behalf of AOL, as Jen Smith highlighted our medical doll project. News 6 aired a "year in review" segment this week reviewing the 2024 award winners.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see this week's "year in review" news report.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see the original news report which aired 2/22/24.



Upcoming AOL Craft Sale

AOL plans to have a fundraising craft sale in March. We have requested a rec center room. You can start making items now, but keep them at home until March 1st.

Christmas Card Ornaments

Shout out to Kathy Hughes who made over 100 Christmas ornaments using Christmas card covers and delivered them to employees and volunteers of the Leesburg Humane Society and Your Humane Society in Lake Panasoffkee. They were thrilled and very grateful to be recognized. Next year, we will be able to make/distribute even more as we collect your saved Christmas cards (front covers only from Christmas cards, not any other kinds of greeting cards).

Kathy feels that this is an easy project for 2025 and can be given to nurses, assisted living residents, first responders, etc. Credit was given to Abundance Of Love. Thank you so much Kathy!

Gateway to Hope Party

Some of our AOL members assisted with this year's Gateway to Hope Family Christmas party in Ocala on 12/14/24. There were lots of fun things for the children--singing, clown activities, games, bicycle raffle, gift-giving, etc. Boomer Loomers club handed out loads of handmade blankets, hats, and other items.



Jen Smith, Johanna Cole, Nancy Still
Ruth Young, and Caron Shortt from



Neila Davis, Everglades group, crocheted
these great dolls as gifts for the party

Boomer Loomers
Cole)

(shown here by Johanna

AOL DONATIONS - DECEMBER 2024



Items donated Dec. 2024: **4,464**

TOTAL items donated in 2024: **22,749**

(included in this total are 912 medical dolls & 480 surgical hats)

GRAND TOTAL items donated since AOL inception: **66,073**

Web site visits in Dec. 2024: **902**

The numbers are in! Linda and Dennis Ryan delivered a total of 9,135 hats, scarves, and mittens to area schools. They went to a total of 9 elementary schools--in Lake and Sumter Counties, and 3 schools in Sanford. Another 150 hats went to 5 daycare centers in Lake and Sumter Counties where Linda and Dennis do Vision Screening for Sumter Lions Club.

Thank you Linda and Dennis for your dedication to AOL, for all of the miles you traveled, for making over 9,000 children happy and warm, and for your friendship. What a great year!



This sweet boy from Fruitland Park Elementary was seen proudly wearing a donated hat. Lovely blanket made by Laura Cox, Everglades group, mixing specialty/plain yarns.

Lovely blanket made by Laura Cox, Everglades group, mixing specialty/plain yarns.



Jana Garrison is one of our main panel joiners in the Fruitland Park group. She joins the hundreds of panels we all create to magically make beautiful blankets ready for donation.

THANK YOU'S



Thank You

Forward Paths

"Thank you so much for your donation to Forward Paths. Your gift helps us by providing necessities for our young people to achieve a brighter future."

Lake County Children's Advocacy Center

"Please accept our sincere thank you for the box of socks you recently donated. We appreciate your kindness greatly. (We are) a not-for-profit corporation, advocating for the right of every child to access the services that need to begin the healing process following abuse. All services are free of charge to the child victim and family members. On behalf of the children you are helping, thank you again for your kindness."

Sincerely, Brenda S. Crellen, Executive Director

St. Theresa Catholic Church, Belleview

"Thank you a million times over for the items you delivered--hats, scarves, blankets, soap sacks and mittens. This was a tremendous gift and we want you to know that you and your volunteers are very much appreciated. Again, thank you."

Studer Family Children's Hospital

"On behalf of the patients and families here at Studer..., we are so thankful for the donation of 20 medical dolls and 15 surgical hats! They are all so wonderful! Thank you guys so much for the continued support."

Child Life Dept.

Tampa General Hospital

"Our appreciation for your contributions may be delayed, but in no way diminished. Your volunteers continue to be the source of wonderfully handcrafted keepsakes and needed tools for our staff. The surgical caps are always met with big grins as our young patients enjoy looking like one of their team."

Carol Hanger, TGH Volunteer

The Villages Elementary School

"The first really cold day of school, we gave every student in our school a warm hat, handmade just for them. Thank you so much! I wish you could have seen our dismissal that day. All smiles on students faces and parents when they picked up. Truly your work is much appreciated."

Warmly (literally), Rheda Gail Shunato, The Villages Elementary

Financials - December 2024

Beginning Balance:	\$6,145.49
Income:	1,195.00
Expenses:	<u>1,462.61</u>
Ending Balance:	\$5,877.88

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

Everglades - Johanna Cole, 352-205-9863, virginia2villages@gmail.com

Fruitland Park Community Center - Kathy Morey, 248-214-4167, kmmonroad@gmail.com

Finance - Kathy Morey, 248-214-4167, kmmonroad@gmail.com

Delivery and Pickup - Linda Ryan, 414-333-0776, LRyan8643@gmail.com

Newsletter - Nancy Still, 301-538-3103, NLSfree2paint@yahoo.com

Web Site: tvabundanceoflove.com

[Charities We Support](#)

Officially Established June 2020

Designated 501(c)(3) Non-Profit October 2024

Founder Jen Smith

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1-800-HELP FLA (1-800-435-7352)

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