



THE *Heart* OF THE TRIANGLE

Sharing the vision and supporting the mission of the Triangle area non-profit community.

You Can Help **A LOTTA LOVE** Support Homeless Women and Children

by Judy Liu, MPH



Women and children represent over 30% of the homeless population in North Carolina. The A Lotta Love organization raises funds to furnish rooms at HomeStart, the only women and children's homeless shelter in Chapel Hill and Orange County. A perfect name for the group, A Lotta Love honors the founder, Lotta, and describes the motivation driving all those who so generously get involved. Love is a powerful agent of change.



A Lotta Love was started in 2014 to support HomeStart. HomeStart is run by the Inter-Faith Council (IFC), a social service organization that also runs the men's shelter in Chapel Hill as well as a Food Pantry. The Inter-Faith Council has serviced Orange County since 1963. While necessities such as shelter, meals and health services are met, there are funds for any furnishings beyond the basics.

A Lotta Love's mission is to empower women and their children to reclaim their pride while living in this temporary environment. While these rooms have simple furnishings, each is designed especially for the families, and when a family is able to move to a permanent home, they can take their room furnishings with them. The organization is always in need of donations and support.

A Lotta Love collaborates with IFC to change one shelter at a time. Currently there are active partnerships with other organizations, including Families Moving Forward Durham, The Wrenn House Raleigh and Interact Raleigh.

Each room is usually furnished with a modest budget of about \$700. Organization volunteers pitch in to paint, hang curtains, and move furniture. The organization partners with students to establish clubs and chapters to raise funding to furnish other shelters as well. Students at Durham Academy have founded an A Lotta Love club that raises money to refurbish rooms at Durham shelters. The Alpha Chi Omega sorority at UNC-Chapel Hill has raised more than \$10,000 for HomeStart renovations and has held Christmas parties for its residents.



To learn more about the HomeStart Makeover Donate a Room Project, visit www.alottalove.org or www.ifcweb.org/donate-a-room

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