

Meet Laundry Love of Georgetown

WOMEN HELPING OTHERS

Anne Marshall

One day somebody asked a homeless person named Eric, "Hey man, what can we do for you? What would make a huge impact on your life?"

Eric thought about it and replied, "If I had clean clothes, I think people would treat me like a human being."

That is a true story and Eric's comment about being disrespected was the impetus to start the very first Laundry Love in 2003.

Today there are hundreds of Laundry Loves across the country, donating money and detergent for people to wash their clothes and bedding for free.

Leslie Hearne, director of Laundry Love, pointed out that the Georgetown chapter of the organization is different. They are not in the business of providing quarters and detergent and a meal twice a month to people who otherwise couldn't afford to do their laundry. They are in the business of empowering people, lifting their self-esteem, restoring their dignity and, as their homeless friend Eric



Leslie Hearne, director of Laundry Love of Georgetown, receives a \$500 donation from WHO, represented by Vice President Maria Tolleson.

suggested, recognizing their value. They are in the business of inspiring confidence and helping those they serve fully participate in life and be accepted in the community.

During a typical Laundry Love evening, people show up throughout the evening. There is no registration, no proof of need, no strings attached. Everybody is welcome. Volunteers are ready to serve.

When the event begins, clothes and bedding are loaded into washing machines. When they are ready, enough quarters and

detergent pods are distributed to wash and dry each load.

Once everybody is settled, waiting for their cycle to finish, a meal is served. Then they visit with Laundry Love volunteers and staff.

At Laundry Love Georgetown, strangers become friends, people are known by name, hope is hustled, and the worth of every human being is acknowledged and celebrated.

Laundry Love Georgetown has a simple and very clear mission to provide free laundry service in a

friendly and respectful environment to lift self-esteem, restore dignity, and contribute to the health and hygiene which comes from wearing clean clothes.

For hundreds of families in Georgetown, Laundry Love offers some financial relief, so families don't have to make some tough decisions. Fill up the gas tank or do laundry. Buy groceries or do laundry. Pay the electric bill or do laundry.

About 10,000 pounds of laundry is washed every month. The days of washing clothes with four quarters are long gone. To wash and dry one large load of laundry costs \$7.50.

Laundry Love hosts events on the second Tuesday of each month at Mr. Laundry, 203 Thousand Oaks, Georgetown from 4-8 p.m. and on the last Thursday of each month at Washatopia, 1910 South Austin Avenue, Georgetown.

Laundry Love spends \$1,200 a month at the laundromats to nurture the human spirit of our neighbors. Women Helping Others donated \$500 to the cause in May.

Anne Marshall is a member of Woman Helping Others, a Georgetown-based club that works to help area nonprofit organizations.