



Our SEVENTH full season of Kiawah Cares Made With Love (MWL) ended on 6/30, based on the Kiawah Cares Foundation (KCF) fiscal year. MWL remained **focused on our mission: bringing love and comfort to our underserved and under-appreciated Johns and Wadmalaw Islands’ neighbors, mainly through handmade items, and getting elementary school students to associate reading with comfort. Here are the highlights of another amazingly blessed year:**

All About Our Production and Deliveries

Our Season 7 deliveries were more like “old times” where we were able to deliver in person, see our contacts and recipients, and even host “Loved Ones’ Day” stores at the schools and interact with the kids. Numbers don’t tell the MWL story, but they sure do give an idea of the huge hearts of MWLers and the thousands of lives touched each year. **In Season 7, MWL made 40 deliveries on 34 delivery days, to 12 Sea Islands’ organizations:**

- **Angel Oak Elementary School -- 5 deliveries:** blanket/pillow/book sets for new Child Development and Kindergarten classes; highly tactile items for their newly-created Calming Rooms; Emergency Sacks of essentials and handmade items for use by the Guidance Department when there are family/student crises; toiletry packs for Hygiene Classes; assorted items for Loved Ones’ Day “store” as well as gift bags to decorate and tissue paper; Teacher Appreciation gifts; Star Reader Awards; books; and bags of various scraps of fabric and paper for the Art Department.
- **E.L. Frierson Elementary School -- 6 deliveries:** blankets/pillows/book sets for new students; items for their Loved One’s Day “store” as well as gift bags to decorate and tissue paper; Teacher Appreciation gifts; Emergency Sacks of essentials/handmade items for those in crisis; items for the ELF Comfort Rooms; Star Reader Awards; and books.
- **Mt. Zion Elementary -- 9 deliveries:** blanket/pillow/book sets for new incoming students throughout the year; Teacher Appreciation gifts; a crocheted blanket for their raffle; items for their Valentine’s Day “store” as well as gift bags to decorate and tissue paper; Star Reader Awards; and books.
- **Our Lady of Mercy -- 8 deliveries:** “Pamper” kits of blankets, totes, toiletries and more for their Prenatal Program moms; baby items for their Baby Closet; full-size toiletries for the Community Pantry; gifts for use as incentives and rewards in their programs; fabric bags and new books for the after-school program; and scarves and hats for clients.
- **Animal shelters -- 4 deliveries** to our “Furry Friend” liaison to local shelters and rescue groups: fleece braided pull-toys made from selvages; and used linens and donated pet supplies.
- **Charleston Veteran Center – 2 deliveries:** various patriotic fleece-tie blankets for PTSD clients; red/white/blue braided pulls for Vet pets; tactile and scented sachets for counseling clients; packets of essential travel-size toiletries; and cards/art made by elementary school kids as payment for their “store” gifts.
- **Blessing Baskets – 1 delivery:** handmade greeting card sets for all of their clients; art/cards from elementary school students; and Lowcountry photographs by the late Susan Budnick (Kiawah resident) for volunteer appreciation gifts.
- **Meals on Mondays – 1 delivery:** blankets, scarves, hats, and assorted fabric gifts for clients; greeting card sets for their Wadmalaw Island clients; art/cards from students; and Lowcountry photographs for their volunteer appreciation gifts.
- **Johns Island Rehab and Healthcare (JIRHC) – 1 delivery:** elementary school kids’ cards and art.
- **Owl Venture – 1 delivery:** bookmarks, messenger bags, fleece pillows for awards, books and various supplies to use with students at this summer camp program at Angel oak that helps bridge the summer learning gap; for staff, we provided appreciation gifts, among them drawstring bags with Deep Steep spa products and special thank you cards.
- **St. Johns High School – 1 delivery:** large bag of scrap fabric and fleece to use in their art projects.
- **Ronald McDonald House – 1 delivery** to our RMH liaison (a MWL supporter) and in association with KICA: nearly 10 pounds of aluminum can tabs that RMH sells for scrap to fund their programs. (Tab collection container at KICA office.)

Here are the **categories, quantities, and fair-market value of just the MWL handmade items distributed in Season 7:**

Item	Number Delivered	Fair-market value
Fleece-tie blankets, various sizes	352	\$19,360
Fleece-tie pillows	247	\$7,410
Purses, totes, gifts (fabric, various styles)	564	\$19,740
Scarves & shawls (fleece & knitted/crocheted)	176	\$4,400
Sachets (fleece)	252	\$1,260
Doggie pull-toys (fleece)	183	\$2,196
Greeting cards & various tags	2,442	\$7,326
Key fobs (fabric)	191	\$1,337
Crocheted round washcloths/exfoliating cloths	365	\$2,920
Ass’t gifts (quilted coasters, tissue covers+)	43	\$516
Heat/cold scented microwave/freezer rice packs	8	\$120
Bookmarks	843	\$4,215
Totals	5,666	\$70,800

In addition to items that are handmade, **we distributed numerous MWL mainstay non-handmade items**, among them:

2,318 toiletry items - valued at ~\$4,636	244+ books (new & used) - valued at ~\$3,065
1,636 gift bags and tissue – valued at ~\$1,227	311 artwork/cards/photos – valued at ~\$2,980

Combined, that's more than 10,000 MWL mainstay items, with a fair-market value exceeding \$82,000!

About Extra Activities

- We participated in the **Kiawah Women's Foundation Volunteer Fair in November** and gained many new volunteers. Nice.
- We collaborated with one of the Charleston area chapters of the **Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)**; **a few of their members came to Kiawah to participate in the October DAR National Day of Service by serving MWL**. Blessed.
- We spent a lot of time working with **Kiawah Security and the Charleston County Sheriff's office in the planning to provide fleece blankets to the deputies and sheriffs**, to warm and comfort those they encounter, beginning in late 2023. Special.

About Our Budget

KICA/KCF's staff again provided the 501(c)3 accounting, our meeting space, on-site supplies-closet, select admin services, and our MWL off-site storage/work space (what we call our "offices"). **We educated our new volunteers and periodically reminded our long-time MWLers that we are largely self-funded so monetary donations are always needed and welcomed. We received toiletry donations as well as fabrics from a variety of sources, and are grateful. Throughout the year, the continuing generosity of "in-kind" donations of our Leadership Team and a few other MWLers helped us do so much with a limited budget.** We further stretched every dollar as far as we could thanks to the support of KCF, the **deep discounts/free products afforded us by our long-term partner-suppliers**: Begin With Books, YourFleece.com, PillowFlex.com, Low Country Dental, Deep Steep...and MWL creativity -- we **waste NOTHING!** We spent nearly \$8,000 on MWL supplies, ending the year with \$10,000 in available funds for MWL Season 8.

MWL was awarded a \$5,000 grant by the worldwide accounting firm EY for our Star Reader program, to purchase books about creative problem solving and entrepreneurial thinking. We spent \$2,000 in Season 7 so have \$3,000 for Season 8. EY's generosity is so appreciated.

MWL applied for a **Town of Kiawah (TOKI) grant. After much work and our in-person presentation (which garnered enthusiastic response)** MWL was advised we would not get the grant as TOKI believes they'd be "funding the funder" since MWL is a program of KCF. Most disappointing, as KCF keeps *all* MWL-designated donations separate and totally dedicated to MWL, as EY can attest.

About Our Volunteers

Season 7 proved the post-Covid phenomenon of so many organizations: a surviving **hybrid model for working/volunteering**. We've slightly fewer who come in-person regularly but more who work from home/wherever – so we have more people than ever participating in MWL! We **kept in touch weekly with 130+ people on our MWL email list** throughout the Season. We had **88 unique individual volunteers** make items. Our **"Take and Make (and Donate)" area in the Beachwalker facility** stays well stocked with fleece and sewing kits, and supplies. Few MWLers report their volunteer hours outside of Fleece+ Fridays (humble group!): **between those who came to Fleece+ Fridays and those who did report their non-F+Fs MWL time, MWLers logged an amazing 3,048 hours in Season 7, with a market labor value** (based on the national value of volunteer time at \$31.80/hour) **of nearly \$97,000**. Beautiful.

About MWL Leadership

I'm so honored to be a part of the MWL Leadership Team, and am in awe of their dedication, talent, stamina, and servant hearts. Season 7's Leadership Team of 6 included full-time residents **Jane Payne, Ruth Flynn, new leader Joanne Allen and I; and part-time residents Sally Reed and Jeanne Spray**. We plan, coordinate and make deliveries, produce MWL products, and are great friends!

- **Jane Payne** again led our fleece supplies ordering, storage, organization and inventory; researches and makes new items; and shares with me liaising duties with MWL's key suppliers;
- **Ruth Flynn** continued as Lead Liaison to Frierson, KICA/Kiawah Cares Foundation, and Begin With Books – and a most creative producer of our products;
- **Jeanne Spray** again led MWL's fabric efforts (versus fleece), including selection, kit compilation, expert sewing and coordination with a growing list of seamstresses, for whom she made binders of instructions for all MWL products so they can sew anywhere;
- **Sally Reed** continued to be Lead Liaison to Our Lady of Mercy, and to lead and handle all aspects of our very much in-demand Toiletries Program (collecting, sorting, packaging, supplementing, and delivering);
- **Joanne Allen** joined us after last year's Yarn Sale. She's a terrific addition to the team, helping all volunteers feel welcome, coordinating yarn projects (she's a prolific crocheter!) and serving as liaison to Mt. Zion Elementary School.

I liaise with Angel Oak, Blessings Baskets, Meals on Mondays, and, with my Army veteran husband Sam Bromage, the Vet Center. **Five of the Leaders have reenlisted for Season 8... YAY!** Ruth Flynn is moving to Charleston so is retiring from Leadership but will still participate in MWL efforts (phew!). She's a terrific friend, and has been a partner since our beginning... we miss her already!

In Summary

We continued to show love and caring to our neighbors with items "Made With Love," and demonstrated once again that "Kiawah Cares." **THANK YOU and BLESS YOU, all MWLers, partners and supporters! Here's to a great Season 8, already well underway!**