

Clothe the Children

Vermont Grand Lodge

In partnership with

Warm Hands, Warm Heart, Inc.

Operations Manual

Objective: Through the participation of every Vermont Masonic Lodge, children's clothing will be gathered and then disbursed to designated distribution points.

- This 'drive' is to Start August 1st and continue until September 30th

- The clothes we are seeking are:
 - Outer wear,
 - Undershirts, (under pants only if new and in wrappers
 - Sleepwear – jimmies, night-gowns, and robes
 - Shoes and socks
 - School wear

for both genders, ages between newborn and pre-teens (9 year olds).

- All clothing should be new or *Gently* used.
 - ***We cannot stress how importantly that **this is not a 'Yellow Box' effort** where trash, recycling and un-usable clothing often ends.
 - *Every piece of our clothing will go to a young child – just think of them as your own.*

Regarding clothing for adults and/or older children, if asked, please say 'YES' - every item will go to good use.

Individual Lodge organization/s:

Within each Lodge, the Master of the Lodge will designate an internal committee, chaired by a responsible Lodge member to do the following:

- Provide, to the Grand Lodge of Vermont, the name of the Chairman, the names of the committee members and the pertinent contact information.
- The chairman of this committee will publicize the forthcoming with PR announcements within the Masonic body. Here, we want to suggest that the Masonic body encompasses **‘everyone’** – the Masons, Eastern Star, Rainbow Girls and Demolay - ***PLUS their families.***
 - In order to encourage a ‘Spirit of Friendly Competition,’ Warm Hands is initiating a Challenge between Lodges – the Masons, Eastern Star, Rainbow Girls and members of Demolay – within these groups, the one collecting the greatest amount will receive a plaque and very favorable mention in the their local newspaper.
 - **Rules:**
 - Open to any Lodge sub-group listed above.
 - Each item of clothing is counted: each article of clothing, and pair of shoes will be counted as ‘one item’ - (socks will not be counted).
 - At the close of this drive – September 30, 2009 – the lodge sub-group will be declared the winner and recognized for the Exemplary Efforts.

- We recommend that this become a Masonic Project within the community. Every attempt should be considered to ‘reach out to:
 - **Church groups** - Warm Hands has found in previous efforts that the churches account for a solid 35+% of our success. Suitable messages will be provided to be inserted within the church’s weekly announcements. We also suggest that a ‘qualified’ Masonic speaker (quite possible a member of that church) speak to the wonderful results that this initiative will accomplish – don’t forget ‘community recognition’ to those who participate.
 - **Places of employment** – Consider talking to the ‘boss’ or Human Resource personal and eliciting their support. Besides ‘expanding the effort’, most employers relish the favorable PR.
 - **Other organizations** – especially other fraternal groups. Consider an informative 5 minute ‘talk’ at the Rotary, Eagles, Elks , Lions, VFW and Legion organizations – a quick call to most any member will direct you to ‘the one in charge’ – these groups love to have guest speakers, love to engage in community support, and love to partner. Let them toot their own horn – the results still go through your Lodge and always remember that the ‘rubber hits the Road’ – *with the children.*
 - **Local schools** – Consider contacting the local school secretary and ask if you could introduce this drive within the school proper and would the school be willing to send home announcements with every child – we will provide the announcements.
 - **And The Press** – Warm Hands will provide ‘press releases’ that can be submitted to the local papers, radio stations, as applicable. These will introduce our over-all efforts, identify the local Lodges, and encourage the greater community to participate.

Activities:

Each Lodge will perform the following:

- **Collection Box** Place a large receptacle on their front porch. It is suggested that a used appliance cardboard box is suitable (washing machine; dryer; or stove).

This box will prominently display the Clothe the Children logo.

Signage may be needed in individual Lodges.

- A member (or members) of the Lodge will be designated to **monitor this collection box**: empty it as needed; guard it from inclement weather; etc. If the lodge is without a front porch, then an appropriate place or facility, under cover from the elements, should be identified and utilized for the receptacle.
- **Sorting.** In order to provide meaningful statistics, it is imperative that the clothing is sorted and counted. This need not be troublesome or involved.
 - Warm Hands will provide a spread sheet to the designate Committee Chairman.
 - We (and your Lodge) need this to be done to facilitate 'logistics' and the ascertain the 'count'.

- **Boxing** **Absolutely NO PLASTIC BAGS.** All clothing is to be contained within cardboard boxes. These can be obtained at liquor line if necessary. We suggest that each Lodge immediately seek out these boxes – many local stores and or businesses will donate these if asked.
 - **All box bottoms MUST BE TAPED.**
 - **All boxes must MUST BE LABELED.**

NOTE **Big boxes become very heavy when filled; we suggest much smaller boxes to ease handling.** (Our intention is to gather clothing, not patients).

- **Storage** Each Lodge is expected to arrange storage of the sorted clothing. It expected that our initial efforts will be modest and easily handled. For those Lodges in which a vast quantity of clothing is gathered, the Body of the Lodge will, again arrange temporary storage.

- **Timing:** This will not be a never ending effort. In order to achieve the maximum efforts, drives must have a start and a finish; this permits volunteers a feeling of accomplishment and allows the contributors a measure of respite.
 - Warm Hands suggests that we officially **commence August 1st and end September 30th, 2009.** This coincides with back-to-school; parents are aware of purchasing this year's clothing and the availability of last year's.

- **Transportation:** At the conclusion of this year's efforts, Lodge Masons will be expected to transport the clothing to the designated Vermont regional distributional sites: i.e. to Rutland, Burlington, etc (a full listing of distribution sites will be forthcoming.
 - Masons are advised to look to local high schools for help. Every Vermont HS graduate must fulfill specific Community Service hours – by reaching out to high schools, we will provide a wonderful way to extend an hand, mentor our youth, and fulfill this mission. Again, all in keeping with Masonic values.

- **Recommendation** Within every Lodge's local community, there usually is/are local clothing distribution points. These could be through a local food kitchen, a crisis shelter, and the churches.
 - **Warm Hands will do everything we can to identify these local folks BUT** within your communities, we stress that you seek out these local areas and distribute all of the clothing as you receive it that they are willing to accept – *and do this yourselves.*

 - **Ask at the churches, the school nurse, and the Town Clerk – these folks will know who passes out clothing.**

The impact of this is tremendous. Imagine a bunch of Masons (and their families) marching or driving directly to the distribution site – **this is truly Community Support at its very basic source.** The Vermont Masons cannot 'buy' this type of public relations – **and don't forget to let them know where these clothing come from.**

We want to keep this 'drive' as local as we can; only transporting the over-flow when necessary.

A final note, *Warm Hands*, with the wonderful partnership of the Vermont Masonic Grand Lodge, will do everything in our collective power to ‘keep things very local’ – that means we will try to disburse every single item of clothing here in Vermont.

BUT, we are hoping that this endeavor will be a ‘smashing hit’ and that we do receive far too much clothing than we can handle here in Vermont – *and that will be a very good thing!*.

However, should this become the case, we are planning to send the excess to the Appalachian Region of the United States through CAP – Christian Appalachian Project – look them up at: www.christianapp.org They serve folks in 13 states – *13 states!*

Communities helping Communities

Vermonters helping Vermonters

Americans helping Americans