



**H.A.T.S.
(Handcrafted And Totally Special)**

"Don't leave this house without your hat on!"

Does this motherly announcement bring back childhood memories of heading out to play in the snow? How many of us had a special hat, one we considered our favorite (although we would deny it if ever asked)? Maybe it was knit by a favorite aunt to match a new winter coat. Or maybe it was crocheted by a grandmother who had limited fashion sense (what color combinations!) but lots of love. What everyone knew is that a knit hat can warm your head. What we learned is a handmade knit hat can also warm your heart as you think of the special effort that was put into creating it.

Several years ago women at the North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women (NCCIW) began crocheting and knitting hats for their children from whom they were separated. In 2003, a local artist created a display of these hats, hanging them from the ceiling with crocheted lines. Her hope was to have 1,200 hats on display – one to represent each of the women in prison in North Carolina at the time.

About that same time, Mary Stowe from Yarns, Etc. . . became involved. What started out as Mary simply providing NCCIW with yarn donated by Yarns, Etc. . . customers and other community members grew into a partnership with Our Children's Place (now Our Children's Place of Coastal Horizons Center). We are a statewide program committed to the children of incarcerated parents. We strive to be the leading North Carolina advocate and educational resource focused on these children and the need for a statewide response to ensure their well-being.

For the past several years we have been able to display at alternative markets and craft fairs many of the hats handcrafted by women at NCCIW. People who attend these fairs and markets can make a donation in exchange for a hat, with the proceeds used to support the work of Our Children's Place.

For the women, this partnership provides them with an opportunity (for many, the first such opportunity) to give back to the community, a gesture that will hopefully continue upon their release.

A few years ago we began partnering with Mothers and Their Children ([MATCH, mothersandtheirchildren.org/](http://MATCH.mothersandtheirchildren.org/)) to expand H.A.T.S. MATCH is a special family resources center within NCCIW. One of the MATCH programs brings children of incarcerated women to NCCIW to visit with their mothers. Inside the prison, MATCH runs an enhanced visitation center strictly for the mothers and their children to share.

H.A.T.S. (which has expanded well beyond hats!) is an important part of our community outreach and education work. People who choose to make a donation in exchange for a hat or other handcrafted item walk away with a tangible reminder of the children on whom Our Children's Place and MATCH are focused.

Please turn over for more information.

Donations received are used to support the awareness and outreach activities of Our Children's Place and help with the transportation needs of the children involved in MATCH.

To date, the hats have been available in various settings including several alternative holiday markets hosted by faith communities in the Triangle and beyond. Over the past several years we have raised over \$25,000.

As one example of the true spirit of giving, at one event supporters who made a donation for a hat could ensure their hat had a good home by placing it in a collection bin for young patients at the UNC Children's Hospital. If you know of locations/events where we could display the hats, please let us know!

Thank you for being part of this initiative! We appreciate your support.

YARN DONATIONS

We'll take partial and full skeins, all colors, weights, textures, etc. We have two drop-off locations:

Yarns, Etc. . ., (919) 928-8810
1322 Fordham Boulevard
Suite #4
Chapel Hill, NC
www.yarnsetc.com

Store hours
Tuesday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Great Yarns, (919) 832-3599
1208 Ridge Road (Whole Foods plaza)
Raleigh, NC
www.greatyarns.net

Store hours
Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please [contact us](#) if you would like to work out other drop-off arrangements.

Our Children's Place of Coastal Horizons Center

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(919) 904-4286
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www.ourchildrensplace.com
Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/OurChildrensPlaceNC>
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Mothers and Their Children (MATCH)

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<http://mothersandtheirchildren.org/>
Facebook:
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