

WASHING THE CLOTHES AND BEDDING OF  
LOW/NO INCOME FAMILIES, CHILDREN, PERSONS.



LAUNDRY LOVE  
**GUIDE**

**“If I had clean clothes,  
I think people would treat  
me like a human being.”**

Established 2003 in Ventura California, Laundry Love (LL) washes the clothes and bedding of low/no income families and person(s) across the U.S. Partnering with diverse groups and laundromats nationwide, we brighten the lives of thousands of people each month through love, dignity, and detergent.



# CONTENTS

- 2** HISTORY
- 3** MISSION
- 4** HEALTH & HYGIENE
- 5** ECONOMIC
- 6** RELATIONAL
- 7** SIMPLE STEPS
- 8** FAQs
- 15** CONTACT





# HISTORY

The story of Laundry Love began with T-Bone, a gentleman living in Ventura California. In one particular conversation, a question was asked of him: “T-Bone, how can we come alongside your life in a way that would matter?” His response was honest and practical. “If I had clean clothes I think people would treat me like a human being.”

Every single Laundry Love effort around the U.S. is attached to this man. His desire for worth and welcome is found in us all. We all yearn to be treated as human beings. We never thought that this simple conversation 15 years ago would spark an idea that continues to influence and care for tens of thousands of people every month. The creative and collective energy used to sustain, expand and share Laundry Love with you reminds us that every human being has tremendous worth, value and possibility.

**Welcome to Laundry Love.**



@laundrylove  
laundrylove.org



# MISSION

Laundry Love (LL) washes the clothes and bedding of low/no income families and person(s) across the U.S. We brighten the lives of thousands of people through love, dignity, and detergent by partnering with diverse groups and laundromats nationwide. The friend of LL may be entirely without shelter or living in a motor vehicle, weekly/monthly-rated motel, low income housing or transitional shelter and experiencing financial struggle or loss, or may be seeking asylum or residency in the U.S.

**“We brighten the lives of thousands of people through love, dignity, and detergent...”**



@laundrylove  
laundrylove.org



# HEALTH & HYGIENE

Unwashed clothes and bedding can become a storehouse for parasites, bacteria and viruses. MRSA is one such bacteria that threatens the health of children, the elderly and people with low resistance due to poor nutrition and lack of proper healthcare. We hear from partner organizations about the emotional strain that unwashed clothing places on homeless or low income children and youths. The typical teasing that occurs in an elementary or junior high setting is heightened when a young person's clothing emits an unpleasant odor. LL exists to help prevent the physical and emotional strain that poor health and hygiene places on the under resourced living in our neighborhoods, cities and world.

**“LL exists to help prevent the physical & emotional strain that poor health & hygiene places on the under resourced...”**



@laundrylove  
laundrylove.org



# ECONOMIC

Low/No income families, single parents with children and individuals know the daily pressures of providing shelter and food. Paying \$500-\$1,200 per month for a one-bedroom or studio motel room can pull the financial rug out from under them. The cost of washing clothes is just another financial burden: \$2.50-plus to wash a single load, and \$1.50-plus to dry adds up quickly. (Costs vary by city and laundromat.) Imagine what happens to a family of four or more. Laundry Love seeks to bring economic relief by giving the individual or family the option to redirect funds toward food, medical, gas or transportation costs as well as school supplies and other basic, everyday necessities. We believe it's crucial to create a way for all people to live with dignity, and for our guests/friends to be afforded the opportunity — even in seemingly small ways — to care for themselves and their families. Therefore, in some cases we suggest that LL facilitators provide a donation/participation jar

outlining a sliding scale option of .50 cents-\$3. It's important to communicate clearly what this is, that it's optional, and in no way interferes with people receiving what they need. In many circles this is known as asset based development vs. needs based development.



@laundrylove  
laundrylove.org



# RELATIONAL

Laundry Love is designed for everyday people. We believe this initiative answers the universal question of "What can we do?" when people come in contact with poverty and homelessness on a local level. Faith communities, students, neighbors, friends, partnering organizations and local social service agencies can start a Laundry Love location in their communities by utilizing the simple, open, collaborative and relational focus this initiative offers.

Laundry Love fosters community participation within a neighborhood or city through the many layers of connection it inspires. Laundromat personnel, child tutors, medical professionals, churches, business and individual sponsors, people dropping off detergent, others saving quarters, local stores hosting candy/toy machines, shelters and motels, neighbors and strangers all come together with those being served to form a web of compassion and collaboration which can nurture future networks and relationships. We see city business, social sectors, non-governmental organizations, socially responsible corporations and neighbor relationships as important beginning points for moving beyond the laundromat experience to creating partnerships for housing options, employment and health care, education, immigration advocacy and other holistic ways to resource the lives of people we build relationship with.



@laundrylove  
laundrylove.org





# LAUNDRY LOVE *IN* 8 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** BUILD A COMMITTED GROUP THAT WILL MAKE LAUNDRY LOVE A REALITY.
- 2.** CONTACT [MANDY@LAUNDRYLOVE.ORG](mailto:MANDY@LAUNDRYLOVE.ORG) – LL DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL OPERATIONS OR ONE OF OUR REGIONAL LAUNDRY LOVE COACHES.
- 3.** FIND A LAUNDROMAT TO PARTNER WITH.
- 4.** READ OVER ALL LAUNDRY LOVE GUIDE. (WHAT YOU'RE READING NOW.)
- 5.** DEVELOP FUNDS TO SUSTAIN YOUR LAUNDRY LOVE EFFORT – BE CREATIVE.
- 6.** BUILD INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION, ALLIANCES, AND IDEAS.
- 7.** REGISTER YOUR LL LOCATION/GROUP ON THE NATIONAL LAUNDRY LOVE MAP VIA WEBSITE ([WWW.LAUNDRYLOVE.ORG](http://WWW.LAUNDRYLOVE.ORG))
- 8.** SHARE BEST PRACTICES YOUR DISCOVERING WITH LAUNDRY LOVE U.S AUDIENCE VIA LAUNDRY LOVE FACEBOOK AND SLACK



@laundrylove  
[laundrylove.org](http://laundrylove.org)



# FAQS

## What is the hope of Laundry Love?

In short, remember:

**LL** is about people joining together.

**LL** believes that through the neutral space of a laundromat, every guest and stranger can become a friend.

This idea tears at the labeled constructs of “us” and “them” and erodes the societal, economic and cultural divides that separate people.

**LL** is not the goal, but a beginning.

**LL** believes in meaningful collaboration. It seeks interagency partnerships.

**LL** chooses to enter laundromats not only to make a difference, but we enter the laundromats so those who are served make us different. **LL** fosters a mutual life change. It fosters a mutual life change through relational reciprocity.

**LL** seeks to pull neighbor out of neighborhood and encourage hospitality and trust within a community or neighborhood through human care. A unity built by selfless concern and consistency.

**LL** calls us to live lives that return. **LL** is not meant to be a one-off event. It is a commitment. Returning is a practice of love.

**LL** is not a service project or something you “do to” “or for” people. It's an expression of living “with” others.

**LL** can be contextualized for every neighborhood and city everywhere. There are 35,000 laundromats in the U.S. We have much room to grow.

**LL** leans toward asset based community development (ABCD). ABCD is learning what gifts are present among those you serve and encouraging and kindling responsibility and dignity through the thoughtful process of moving the **LL** guest/friend away from dependency toward interdependency.



@laundrylove  
laundrylove.org



# FAQS

## What are the benefits of hosting a Laundry Love?

In addition to providing care for those who are struggling financially, Laundry Love is a great way to begin friendships and network within your neighborhood and city. Laundry Love offers time to engage in meaningful conversations both with those who are committed to the effort, and those who benefit from your care and concern. All you have is time in a laundromat, make the best of it. Next to the post office, the laundromat is one of the great remaining neutral spaces where worlds collide. Within the four walls of such spaces you will meet people from all around the world, just from many cultures with many experiences and stories. The laundromat is one of the most beautifully diverse places to be. We sometimes say, "If you want to see the world, just walk to your local laundromat."

## Where should we host a Laundry Love?

It is best to choose a laundromat that's accessible to those you seek to care for and be with. It should be within walking distance for guests/- friends with transportation restrictions and close to motels, low income housing, shelters or city transit stops. Look for laundromats that provide adequate space, are well lit, and have an adequate number of working machines and preferably with restrooms facilities.





# FAQS

## How should we approach a Laundromat owner?

- 1.** Approach the owner/manager of the laundromat directly.
- 2.** Begin by explaining who you are and who you represent (group, community effort, faith community, student organization, etc.).
- 3.** Share how your group would like to host a LL evening/day, perhaps once a month to start. Present the general information of what LL does. A flyer has been created to help you with this, you can find this on the website / LL facilitators page.
- 4.** Share with them the benefits of hosting a Laundry Love:
  - Laundromat will be listed on the Laundry Love website for hundreds to see each week.
  - Additional economic benefit to the laundromat.
  - The laundromat will be known for its good will in its neighborhood/city.
- 5.** Stress that your group will finance the effort, and that the laundromat will benefit from the patronage and the advertising. Assure them that you and your group will be present for the

duration of every event. Discuss with the owner/manager about the business days and times that might be the least intrusive and explain that Laundry Love does not want to interfere with their regular business operation.

**6.** Be sure to leave the laundromat owner/manager your contact information and followup with them in a few days with a phone call or personal visit.

**7.** If you are looking at a self-run laundromat, check for contact information posted on the walls or ask a customer if they know when the manager/owner comes in and then follow the steps as outlined.

**8.** Use non-objective language or labels. e.g. “homeless”.





# FAQS

## How can we advertise/market our Laundry Love effort?

To protect the integrity of the Laundry Love in regards to intellectual property and trademark please read the following:

Permission is required to use all Laundry Love collateral material (logos, designs, images, language) for any and all use, including but not limited to print, apparel, Internet (including social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, websites, e-mail, blogs, Pinterest, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) Permission is also required to change, augment, redesign or share any element of Laundry Love promotional materials (name, people, prior names i.e. laundry love project, logo, design, etc.) with anyone anywhere.

Laundry Love was established as an open source idea, giving away nearly created for the sole purpose to expand the initiative and care to as many cities, towns, and neighborhoods as relationally possible.

Three agreements are to be established between the Laundry Love national and local effort(s).

**1.** The Laundry Love story/movement doesn't start and stop with a single local effort. Each location is connected to much larger story and Laundry Love community.

**2.** The visual story/assets and cultural vision of Laundry Love are to be respected and present in/through all local Laundry Love efforts nationwide via Laundry Love icon, design, URL, digital and news medias.

**3.** Any local Laundry Love effort seeking non-profit 501c3 status using the Laundry Love name and/or icon needs written permission from Laundry Love National before entering the tax-exempt process.

For PR, media and other communications and /or if your Laundry Love effort is reported on via a news source, magazine, newspaper, digital, radio or website, basically all media correspondence, please direct people to:

[www.laundrylove.org](http://www.laundrylove.org)

&

[mandy@laundrylove.org](mailto:mandy@laundrylove.org)

**ALSO:** Please be sure to tell them the story where Laundry Love originated. Thank you.



@laundrylove  
laundrylove.org



# FAQS

There are downloadable LL door hangers, fliers and posters in English and Spanish available for you to write in the location and time for your LL. You can place these in the laundromat, surrounding motels and shelters, business, churches, social agencies or hand them out directly to people in need. They are available to all registered Laundry Love locations. You may also place a 4-inch by 4-inch Laundry Love laundromat sticker on the front door of the Laundromat, designating it as a Laundry Love laundromat. You can find these in our store at [laundrylove.org](http://laundrylove.org). We ask that you seek permission before placing a sticker at a laundromat.

## What materials will our Laundry Love require?

We recommend the following:

- Group of at least 4-10 people.
- Pens and paper, digital platforms, to create a logbook for counting loads so you can calculate how many guests/friends attended and how much money was spent.
- Use liquid detergent and/or pods as these are gentler on commercial machines.
- Setup a station where the detergent is visible. Participants can check in, receive direction, receive washing/drying coupons and/or any other important info regarding your LL effort. Be visible to first time guests.

## How long is a typical Laundry Love session?

It typically runs for 1-3+ hours, but it depends on the number of guests/friends participating. Start exactly at the time advertised and explain to the guests/friends that the last load must go in 30 or 45 minutes before the LL session ends. Be hospitable to the laundromat staff and remember, if your LL happens during the evening be mindful of the hour the laundromat begins its closing process.

## How should we structure the session?

Arrive early because the word gets out, and participants will often get there early and save washing machines which interrupts the laundromat's regular business. This is something we advise you address right away if it occurs. Set up the station for your detergent and check-in. There are different ways that the washing process can happen; some hand out vouchers, some use stickie notes others have laminated cards for each wash and dry. You will have to navigate this for yourself and figure what system works best. If you do have a papered or digital sign-in sheet, you may want to help the participants as some may have literacy challenges and may find this process embarrassing, or you may experience a language barrier.



@laundrylove  
[laundrylove.org](http://laundrylove.org)



## FAQS

Let participants load laundry into the machine(s) and if you can provide detergent welcome your guests to use it. In order to respect privacy, we advise not touching the laundry. Once the machines are loaded, have your team administer the quarters/cards as necessary. Once a load is finished, guide the participant to load their clothes into the dryers, and again, go to each machine and administer the payment.

### **How many loads should a guest be allowed to wash?**

This entirely depends on the group sponsoring the LL, the money you have, and the number of participants making use of your effort. Things can change from month to month, but we highly encourage you to have a system in place and outlined on a flier so the participant understands and respects the outline created. Most LL efforts start with three loads per individual and five loads per family. Ultimately you will have to discern this based on funds and participation. We are frequently asked “how much money does a group need in starting a Laundry Love”? — We suggest you do some homework on the laundromat locations close to you, and the washer/dryer costs associated with

those locations. This will help create a cost estimation which will help create a budget for your first and future Laundry Love effort. Remember, it’s difficult to guess how many people will attend your first effort, so calculating washing / drying costs will be a great help in preparation.

### **What to expect from those served?**

Most of the time, expect nothing but gratitude. Most people who are truly under-resourced will welcome not only the LL care but your conversation and friendship. Be mindful and considerate of those who come with mental impairments, chemical addictions, physical and emotional abuse, or an attitude of entitlement due to the rigors of marginalization and poverty. Each person carries a story that is original to them and will require patience, graciousness and discernment from you and your team. If abuse or manipulation happens or continues over a period of time, it’s best to confront with love reminding the participant of the scripted outline and responsibility as a guest of LL.





# FAQS

## How can we finance LL and make it sustainable?

**Bottom line:** get creative and build monthly sponsors.

**Quarter collection:** Purchase or make cheap coin containers, put the containers into the hands of people, their homes, local business, faith communities, schools, dorm rooms, etc. This is one way to have many people participate regardless of age and availability.

**Local sponsorships:** Individual or business, one time or ongoing. Place their name on your fliers, Facebook page, etc. to give them public sponsorship credit.

**Detergent drop off:** As people in your network go grocery shopping, encourage them to pick up an additional box of detergent and drop it off at your Laundry Love location.

**Other ways to generate funds:** Garage sales, bake sales, other assorted events. Check for loose change in your couch or friend's couches. Recycle cans, glass, bottles, paper, anything. Ask your neighbors to invest by collecting quarters for your effort.

**Read and see more at:**  
[www.laundrylove.org](http://www.laundrylove.org)  
and add your ideas.

## Others ideas to consider:

- Partner with local tutoring programs to tutor the children who are participants at your LL.
- Designate a children's area inside the laundromat with coloring, learning and play options.
- Create food, toiletries and clothing distribution options.
- Work with a student nursing program or local medical personnel to give basic medical care to participants.
- Set up Wi-Fi access for those you serve to read e-mail and explore job and housing opportunities.
- Create or work with an interagency alliance in your neighborhood or city. Seek housing options, health care, addiction recovery, financial planning, safe houses, etc.
- Host birthday or holiday events for your LL friends.
- Offer haircuts inside the laundromat.
- Create off site educational opportunities such as personal finance, nutrition and health, job training, GED graduation and study.
- Have bilingual team members
- Help build resumes or assist in filling out forms for possible living or work opportunities.
- Draft press releases to bring attention to your LL and share the news.



@laundrylove  
[laundrylove.org](http://laundrylove.org)





## FAQS

- Host quarterly dinners in an off site location to share a meal with those you serve and have built relationships with. Let the participants speak into the LL effort, find ways for those who are regularly attending to start participating in running and developing your LL, possibly taking it over.
- Look to the future and help us multiply your LL effort into other laundromats in your city.

### Fundraising for Local Laundry Love Efforts

Laundry Love has partnered with Pure Charity to help you raise money, care for your donors, and operate more efficiently. Pure Charity provides a story telling platform which helps you invite donors to participate in your local Laundry Love effort.

**To learn more go to:**  
[www.laundrylove.org](http://www.laundrylove.org)  
and click on the 'get-involved' link.

### The Role Laundry Love National

Laundry Love National serves the local Laundry Love effort through Coaching, Design, Development, and Partnerships, while expanding the Laundry Love movement nationwide.

### For more information contact:

#### Mandy Martinez

National Director of Operations  
[mandy@laundrylove.org](mailto:mandy@laundrylove.org)

#### Greg Russinger

Co-Founder & Board President  
[greg@laundrylove.org](mailto:greg@laundrylove.org)



@laundrylove  
[laundrylove.org](http://laundrylove.org)



WASHING THE CLOTHES AND BEDDING OF  
LOW/NO INCOME FAMILIES, CHILDREN, PERSONS.



[laundrylove.org](http://laundrylove.org)



@laundrylove