

NEW LIFE FOR OLD BAGS

What is New Life for Old Bags?

Our project, New Life for Old Bags (NLOB), helps the environment by reusing plastic bags and aids the homeless. NLOB is a collaboration of volunteers of all ages and abilities. Participants repurpose plastic bags to make plastic yarn ("plarn"), which is crocheted to make sleeping mats for the homeless.

Why do we use plastic bags?

Most discarded plastic bags end up in landfills—for many, many years. Plastic bags, found in our oceans, harm or kill marine wildlife. Plastic bags are also fatal to land animals who mistakenly consume them. In places worldwide, plastic bags have been banned due to environmental concerns.

Source: earthresource.org

How can I help?

We welcome you to join us! Come and make new friends as we help others!

NLOB WORK SESSIONS:

Tuesdays, 1 to 4 p.m.

Bethesda Home

2833 N. Nordica Ave, Chicago, IL 60634

First Saturday of every month, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

United in Faith Lutheran Church

6525 W. Irving Park Rd, Chicago, IL 60634

Or start your own group!

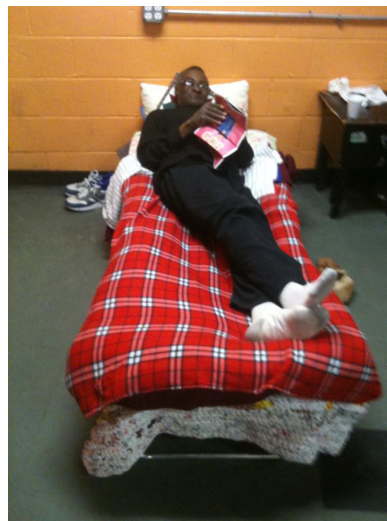
Contact Ruth Werstler, NLOB founder, at nlob-join@hotmail.com.

Find us on Facebook!

Facts & Figures



We estimate that our work diverted 277,000 plastic bags from the landfills.



- The homeless population is growing.
- In June 2011, there were 93,780 homeless people in Chicago.
- Families make up 47% of the homeless.

Source: www.chicago/homeless.org/faq-studies/



In our first 2 years, NLOB volunteers made 395 sleeping mats that were distributed to homeless people by Cornerstone Community Outreach in the Uptown area of Chicago.

Instructions for making sleeping mats are on the reverse side.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAKING SLEEPING MATS FROM PLASTIC BAGS

Supplies:

- Scissors
- Jumbo 16mm-Q plastic crochet hook
- Clean plastic bags (500-700 per mat)
Supermarket bags may be easiest to use.
- Cardboard cutting guides approximately 3" square

Preparing bags:

1. Flatten the bag.
2. Fold in half lengthwise, and fold in half again lengthwise.



3. Cut off bottom seam of bag.
4. Using cutting guide, cut folded bags into strips as shown below.



Cut supermarket bags about 3" wide.
Cut thicker bags about 1.5 to 2" wide
Cut thinner bags, such as dry cleaning bags
about 3.5 to 4" wide
Recycle unuseable scraps, such as the handles.

Make plastic yarn ("plarn"):

1. Open a strip and loop one through the other.
2. Loop end of the second strip through itself.



Pull gently on both loops until knot is tight.



Looping a new strip through the last one, repeat Step 2. The double strand should lay flat. If necessary, undo the knot, smooth the loop and tighten the knot.

3. Roll plastic yarn into a large ball.



Crochet mat:

1. Crochet a chain that is 28 – 38" long. Tip: 38" chain makes a 36" wide mat.
2. Crochet loosely using single crochet stitch. At end of row, chain 1 and turn. Skip first stitch and continue crocheting rows in single crochet until mat is about 6 feet long (adult size).
3. An uneven edge is not a problem as long as the mat is useable.

Crochet strap to wrap

around the rolled-up mat:

1. Chain 80 stitches and crochet 2 rows of single crochet.
2. Weave 2 ends together with the "tails" to form a circle, or leave the ends loose.
Fold mat in half lengthwise and roll it up. Tie the strap around the rolled-up mat.



Congratulations on completing your mat!