



## What is Blanket Statements?

Blanket Statements, an online retailer based in Spring Grove, IL was founded with the simple goal to provide physical warmth, spiritual comfort and love by means of sharing a blanket. For each blanket purchased an additional identical blanket is donated to a women's shelter and includes a personal note or uplifting statement for the woman in need. It is a simple premise – get a blanket – give a blanket. Share warmth, comfort and love.

Founder Leslie Armstrong McLeod started Blanket Statements in January of 2011 with the goal to provide some comfort to women in shelters who may need emotional support. With 15 years experience in corporate marketing, Armstrong McLeod found herself wanting to make a difference. "I wanted to do something to benefit others rather than the corporate bottom line. I left corporate America and took a job working for the local school district. "

Taking a severe cut in pay, though, left Armstrong McLeod working multiple jobs to make ends meet. Within 5 years her marriage fell apart and she found herself contemplating how to move out of an unhappy and unhealthy environment. "I researched local women's shelters, but never made contact because I was afraid I would be taking the place of someone who needed more help than I did."

After separating last July, Armstrong McLeod began toying with the idea of starting a business that would focus on eco-friendly resources and benefit a greater good. She was drawn back to wanting to provide support in some way to women who just needed that little bit of encouragement – a boost to their self esteem – in a time that they probably need it most. Blankets were always a comfort to her and the idea to pair an encouraging statement – some words of wisdom, even from a stranger, seemed like the way to go.

As the business concept began to take shape Armstrong McLeod was thrilled with the outpouring of support she received from both friends and strangers who learned of the plan. Bootstrapping the business, she turned to the online service Flickr.com to ask users to borrow their blanket photos for the developing website. "The kindness of strangers in allowing me to utilize their fantastic photographs was a great boost." Photo credits and links back to the photographers' websites are posted on the Blanket Statements website.

"This business, from concept to reality, has truly been a blessing to me. The support I've received since beginning has been immeasurable. For someone who is very shy and has low self esteem the ability to bolster someone else's day through the simple donation of a blanket with some kind words attached to it is success."

More than a blanket retailer, the business focus is on the donations. Profit is not the motivating factor, although selling more blankets means more blankets being donated. As a social entrepreneur, Armstrong McLeod just wants to make a difference to someone, who like herself, could benefit from sharing warmth, comfort and love.

Leslie Armstrong McLeod, Owner  
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