



Summer 2011

USO MILITARY FAMILY PROGRAMS

The USO has been lifting the spirits of troops and military families for more than 70 years. While this mission has not changed, the USO has continually adapted to meet the changing needs of our troops. Military families today are enduring the stresses of multiple deployments; coping with their loved ones' visible and invisible wounds of wars, and struggling with the grief accompanying the loss of a family member. The USO uses its presence around the world -- and the trust of troops and military families earned over a 70-year history -- to help understand and meet these needs. The USO's broad reach and reputation attracts valuable resources and partner organizations to create a comprehensive array of programs and facilities with the scale to make a meaningful difference for our military families while sending a powerful message of gratitude from the American people.

More than 160 USO locations worldwide - Military family members benefit from a variety of family programs offered at USO locations worldwide. In 2010, USO centers were visited nearly 8-million times by military members and their families. We provide a warm and comforting place where they can connect with family via Internet or telephone, play a video game, catch a movie, have a snack or just put their feet up and take a nap.

Wounded Warrior & Family Centers - On June 27, 2011, the USO broke ground and began construction on the Wounded Warrior and Family Center at Fort Belvoir, Va. the first of two stateside centers to support wounded warriors and their families. The second will be at the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Md. These centers will offer a comprehensive array of specialized services and programs designed to meet the needs of recovering troops --and their families --in a supportive and home-like setting. The buildings will encompass nearly 25,000 square feet each, and will include children's play spaces, movie theaters, classrooms and healing gardens and more, all created expressly for wounded warriors, their families and caregivers.

'Joining Forces' - On April 12, 2011, the USO joined First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden's Joining Forces initiative to strengthen military families nationwide. Joining Forces focuses on three key issues facing military families -- education, employment and wellness. Specifically, the USO is urging Americans to send messages of thanks to military families, to seek out volunteer opportunities, to share stories of support and to spread awareness of USO military family programs. Go to uso.org/JoiningForces to get involved.

USO Concert at the White House -- On July 4th, President and Mrs. Obama hosted singer Amos Lee and Grammy award-winning band Train to entertain military families for the 3rd Annual Salute to the Military USO Concert on the South Lawn of the White House. Complete with a picnic, festive games, remarks and handshakes with President Obama, the show was a tribute to America's armed forces and lifted the spirits of more than 1,000 military members and their families.



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Sesame Street/USO Experience for Military Families -- This family-focused show tailors the Sesame Street message to military children in the two to six year old age group. In a fun, laugh-packed, 25-minute, live performance, Elmo and friends tell military children about emotions that matter deeply to them and their parents, like being separated while Mom and Dad are deployed and feeling lonely while they are gone. An information fair before and after the show provides families information on local support services. Since 2008, the Sesame Street/USO Experience has performed more than 371 times at 115 bases around the world. Launched in April, this tour will deliver 147 shows on 59 bases around the world before it ends in November. This year's tour features a new character named Katie, a military child dealing with the uncertainty of making friends after a family move.

With You All The Way -- USO partners with The Trevor Romain Foundation to promote self-confidence and academic achievement in military children six to 18 years old. Using innovative, inspiring and humorous stories, During his many USO tours, Trevor has spoken with thousands of children about the difficulties of deployment while his DVDs help families with issues during and after deployment, the intricacies of reintegrating a family, and what happens when a parent returns from combat with wounds, both seen and unseen.

On Sunday, July 10, 2011, the USO and Trevor Romain partnered with ServiceNation: Mission Serve, the US and Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and Blue Star Families to host their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, better known to many as Prince William and Kate, to assemble 1,000 "With You All the Way" deployment kits for military children. This program is one of USO's signature family programs developed in partnership with the Trevor Romain Foundation to help children and their families prepare for deployment, stay connected during the separation, plan for reintegration and cope with the loss of a military parent.

United Through Reading's Military Program – USO joined United Through Reading® in 2006 to host the Military Program. Using all the emotion and inflection as if they were in the same room with their children, troops visiting a host USO Center, or even stationed at a Forward Operating Base in Afghanistan, read one of many available storybooks into a video camera. The USO mails the DVD recording and book home. Children then watch Mom or Dad and listen to their loving voice at bedtime, naptime, or just anytime. Families back home complete the circle by sending back a touch of home – a photo of the child watching their deployed Mom or Dad reading the book. In 2010, USO shipped more than 70,000 books and DVDs to military families, bringing the total recordings for the past three years to more than 184,000.

USO Photo Book Program -- Through a partnership with RocketLife, families upload up to 60 photos and create personal soft cover photobooks small enough to fit in a cargo pocket. These 20-page albums warm the hearts of troops and keep them connected with their lives back home.



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Operation Phone Home® -- The USO provides that very important personal connection for deployed troops to reach out to their families and stay in touch. Each pre-paid calling card provides 300 units of talk time. The USO also launched a satellite-based connectivity network in 2009, providing a private-phone network, dedicated high-speed Internet bandwidth and WIFI access points for deployed troops in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait. The USO has distributed more than 2.8 million pre-paid phone cards since the program's inception.

Military Family Care Package -- Sending a care package, but in the opposite direction, is the focus of this program that helps families stay connected. Troops headed overseas write a note which is placed in a special journal which is packed in a "care package" with other useful items like prepaid calling cards, disposable cameras, and gift certificates for groceries and tutoring services. The package arrives home several weeks after the service member deploys, reminding the family that their loved ones are thinking of them.

Sesame Street Talk, Listen, Connect (TLC) DVD Kits -- These kits give parents and caregivers tools to help children cope with the challenges that come with being part of a military family as well as strategies to help these families move forward. These include getting ready for a loved one's deployment, what happens when a loved one returns home, the visible and invisible changes that may have occurred, and what happens when a loved one is lost.

Caregiver Conferences -- These events provide husbands, wives, parents and other caregivers supporting wounded warriors practical advice and needed information about available resources. Sessions address such topics as post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, caregiver boundaries and intimacy, compassion fatigue, parenting, financial security and suicide prevention. The 2011 Caregiver Conference will take place September 14-15 in the Fort Bragg area.

Good Grief Camps -- Through a partnership with Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), grieving children and teens are provided a safe and supportive setting to absorb immense losses, learn how to cope and build support systems and realize that they're not alone. USO also helps support the bereavement kits TAPS provides to survivor families.

IMG Academies -- The USO has partnered with former U.S. Army paratrooper and legendary tennis coach Nick Bollettieri and his Florida-based IMG Sports Academy to provide wounded warriors and their families an opportunity to enjoy tennis, golf, basketball, football and other activities. This four-day program allows the family to play together creating powerful bonding experiences and many lasting memories.