



MEDIA CONTACT INFORMATION

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ABOUT

Operation Gratitude is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, volunteer-based organization that sends Care Packages & letters of support to individual Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines deployed in harm's way, to their children left behind, and to First Responders, Veterans, New Recruits, Military Families, and Wounded Heroes and their Care Givers.

Operation Gratitude's mission is twofold: to lift morale in the Military and First Responder communities; and to provide every American an opportunity to say "Thank You" to all who serve.

WHAT WE DO

Since its inception in 2003, Operation Gratitude's 350,000+ volunteers send, on average, more than 250,000+ Care Packages every year.

The organization sends a Care Package to every currently deployed Service Member whose name is received; to New Recruits upon their graduation from Boot Camp; to First Responders on the frontlines here at home; and to Veterans of earlier eras under the banner: "It is never too late to say 'Thank You.'" Special 'Battalion Buddy' stuffed animals are sent to the children of Deployed Troops.

Operation Gratitude embraces supporters in every state. Scout troops, religious congregations, senior citizen centers, homeowner associations, places of business, civic groups, and schools from nursery through graduate programs are some of the communities that join the mission.

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Operation Gratitude

NATIONWIDE VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

- Organize Collections of: Wish List Items, “Cents for Service,” Halloween Candy and Smart Phones for Recycling
- Host Fundraisers and Letter Writing Campaigns
- Collect Beanie Babies, Webkinz, Trolls, and other stuffed animals
- Assemble “Care Kits” of 5-10 items to include in the larger Care Packages
- Make Paracord “Survival” Bracelets & Knit/Crochet Scarves and other treasures
- Write Letters

OUR PACKAGES

Each Care Package contains dozens of donated snack, entertainment, and personal care items valued up to \$100, but the morale lift they offer is priceless. More than 400 major corporations have donated products as “Corporate Partners” (donations of at least 10,000 items) or as “Friends of Operation Gratitude” (donations of 1,000 items or more). Donated funds are used to pay the assembly and shipping costs of \$15/package.

OUR HISTORY

After 9-11, founder Carolyn Blashek started volunteering at the military lounge at Los Angeles airport. In March 2003, a soldier came into the office and broke down at her desk. He was on leave from a war zone for his mother’s funeral, his wife had left him, and his only child had died as an infant—he had no one else in his life. “I’m going back over there; I know I won’t make it back this time, but it really doesn’t matter because no one would even care” he told her. Right then, Blashek realized that when bullets are flying, troops must believe that someone at home cares about them as an individual. That’s when Operation Gratitude was born.

While this grassroots movement started at Blashek’s dining room table, it now encompasses Americans all over the country donating items and writing letters to those who serve.

The One-Millionth Care Package was celebrated on December 7, 2013 and delivered in person to a sailor on a U.S. Navy ship deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 1.5 Millionth Care Package was celebrated two-and-a-half years later on April 16, 2016. The 2 Millionth Care Package milestone will be achieved on December 9, 2017.



STATISTICS

- 94 cents of every dollar donated goes to program services; fundraising expenses are less than 2%
- 1.8 Million+ Care Packages assembled and shipped
- 50,000+ volunteers and donors per year
- 335,997+ opted-in contacts in: Email, Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, Blog
- Average Annual website hits: 24,600,000; Average Annual website visits: 593,828
- One of the top viewed charities on Guidestar.org
- Four-Star rating on Charity Navigator and Platinum level rating on GuideStar

WISH LIST

- Socks
- Unused Greeting Cards or Stationery
- Batteries (AA, AAA, packs of 4 or fewer)
- Mini Flashlights
- [Beanie Babies, Webkinz, Trolls, or other small plush toys](#)
- Gum, Mints, Breath Strips
- [Knit Hats & Scarves](#)
- [Cool Ties](#)
- [Paracord Survival Bracelets](#)
- Video Games
- Flash Drives
- Earbuds
- Used Cell Phones
- Gift Cards to Walmart, Walgreens, Target, VISA, MasterCard, American Express
- Lip Balm/Chapstick
- Toothpaste
- Dental Floss
- Toothbrushes
- Deodorant (solid only, 3oz or less)
- Disposable Razors (packs of 5 or fewer)
- Non-aerosol Shaving Gel in Tubes
- Individual Packets of Moist Towelettes (30 wipes or fewer)
- Hand/Foot Warmers
- Foot Powder (travel size)
- Cotton Swabs (packs of 50 or fewer)
- Facial Tissue (travel size packs)
- Mini Sewing Kits

** All donated items must have a shelf-life/expiration date of at least 6 months from the date of our receipt. Thank you for your understanding of this important requirement.*

Shop Our Amazon Wish List: bit.ly/OGWishList

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WHAT'S NEXT?

Given the state of world affairs, at least 150,000 U.S. Troops will always be stationed far from home for long periods of time; thousands are currently deployed in dangerous combat zones. At the same time, 40,000 Wounded Heroes, 23 million Veterans, 150,000 New Recruits every year, 2.3 Million First Responders, and all of their families wonder whether they have been forgotten. Operation Gratitude's goal remains the same: lift the spirits and meet the evolving needs of all who serve our nation, and provide opportunities for Americans everywhere to express their appreciation through hands-on, active Volunteerism.

IMPACT

H.S., US ARMY tells us his favorite item in the Care Package:

"Tonight, when I got back to my base, all kinds of tired and worn out, I get a package from Operation Gratitude. Inside had many things, but one of the best things is what is in my hand. A thank you letter from a child. NOTHING can beat that to me. Thank you for all the support you give us. This is not my first deployment, nor is it my first package from you, but each and every time I am touched, and rejuvenated."

E.U. describes the smiles our Care Packages create:

"All of the snacks, letters, and hygiene necessities give us such a big morale boost. Whether we're feeling a bit lonely or just tired from training, it's impossible not to smile when reading the letters from kids & students thanking us, seeing their creative illustrations, and their curiosity in the military. I can't imagine how many smiles your program has put on servicemen & women's faces but we're beyond grateful for what you do for us. Again, thank you!"

MARINE LCPL N.D. explained the critical importance of certain items in the Operation Gratitude Care Packages:

"I am one of the many Marines that you sent a Care Package. I want to thank each and every one of you for supporting us and for letting us know how much people support us back at home. I live with 17 Marines and Sailors in one room. Everyone got a package and everyone loved it especially the cookies and beanie babies. The cookies are excellent and the beanie babies help us out a lot with the local kids. We give them candy and toys and they give us the location for IED's. Once again, thank you for everything and for all the hard work that you put into the package."



IMPACT

BRIGADIER GENERAL F.A.E. expresses thanks for the “little bit of home” each Care Package provides:

“Among all the considerate items we especially noticed the handmade scarves and are very thankful to have them. We imagine the tenderness with which each was knit and consider them as able to warm the soul as the body. The other handmade item, the paracord bracelets, were also highly coveted by our military members, and we are grateful for the effort invested to weave each of these as well. By doing so, you have provided all of us with a little bit of home during this deployment. Our service members could not provide the valuable service they provide our nation without the support of friends like you and organizations like yours and their families on the home front.”

Once again, thank you for your continued support of our service members and for the generosity and kindness you have shown our Team. Best regards and with great appreciation.”

C.P. OF THE USAF says Care Packages bring “strength, resolve and a piece of home” to deployed troops:

“Dear Operation Gratitude: I am a deployed member of the US Air Force just writing to thank you all for what you do. Your kindness, cards, goodies, and most importantly your prayers mean the world to all of us overseas. Your time and love give us strength, resolve, and a piece of home. Thank you and God Bless.”

C.L.J. OF THE U.S. NAVY says "getting a package has changed my entire attitude":

“Good morning! I wanted to say thank you for the Care Package. I am currently deployed and getting a package has changed my entire attitude. This is my first time away from my children, and I will miss all of their birthdays this year so to say that I have been down is an understatement. Thank you so much. I truly appreciate your generosity. Very Respectfully.”

Thousands of additional troop letters can be found in the “Mail Call” section of the website.

