



### **Connecting Communities with Halloween Candy for a Cause**

While Halloween may look a little different this year, Operation Gratitude is committed to continuing to give back in meaningful ways to those who serve. The Halloween Candy Give-Back Program has been connecting communities with their Military and First Responder Heroes each fall since 2007. Grateful Americans across the nation share a portion of their excess Halloween candy with Operation Gratitude, which in turn distributes it to Deployed Troops, Veterans and First Responders through Care Packages and direct community deliveries.

“Operation Gratitude’s mission is to say thank you to all who serve, forging strong bonds between grateful Americans and the heroes who serve and protect them,” according to Kevin Schmiegel, Lieutenant Colonel, USMC (Ret.) and CEO of Operation Gratitude. “The Halloween Candy Give-Back Program provides Americans of all ages the opportunity to express appreciation and gain a better understanding of service and the sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform.”

In 2019, more than 300,000 Americans donated 361,000 pounds of candy to Operation Gratitude. The nonprofit mobilizes the support of dedicated volunteers across the nation and distributed the candy to America’s heroes in signature Operation Gratitude Care Packages and through local deliveries to First Responders and Veterans in 30 states. Operation Gratitude has an ambitious goal in 2020 to deliver candy to local heroes in all 50 states!

For more information about the Halloween Candy Give-Back Program visit [OperationGratitude.com](https://www.operationgratitude.com).

#### **About Operation Gratitude:**

More than 17 years ago, in March of 2003, Operation Gratitude sent its first four Care Packages to deployed Service Members in Iraq. Since its inception, the organization has given millions of Americans the opportunity to express appreciation through hands-on volunteerism and lifted the spirits of more than 1.8 million Deployed Troops, and another 1.1 million recruit graduates, veterans, military families, first responders and healthcare heroes. Corporate partners and grateful citizens from across the country donate more than 15 million “Wish List” and handmade items each year to fill the Care Packages. Through donation drives, letter-writing campaigns, craft projects, hands-on service projects, and other activities, volunteers are the heart and soul of the organization.

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**Assets:** Media images available [here](#).