ANNUAL REPORT
2019

OPERATION GRATITUDE
SAYING "THANK YOU" TO ALL WHO SERVE
LETTER FROM OUR CEO

As the CEO of the largest and most impactful nonprofit in the country for hands-on volunteerism in support of Military, Veterans, and First Responders, I have never been more confident about the direction and state of our organization.

2019 - An Unprecedented Year
Operation Gratitude volunteers assembled and delivered an unprecedented 370,000 Care Packages in 2019; increased total in-kind product donations to over $11 Million – a 60.7% increase and the highest value recorded since inception; more than doubled our total reach on conventional and social media combined; and served alongside 1,005,236 volunteers nationwide – a 32.7% increase over 2018 – eclipsing the one million mark for the first time in the organization’s history, while adding more than 17,000 Handmade With Love volunteers.

We are Bridging the Civilian-Service Divide...
...through large-scale Assembly Days
Civilians worked side by side with service members, veterans, first responders and their families -- 5,000 volunteers at 10 Assembly Days in 9 cities produced 100,000 Care Packages
....through Corporate Engagement Events
We brought together veteran employees with their civilian counterparts at more than 700 corporate employee engagement events in 2019 alone.
...through In-person deliveries
With hundreds of volunteers, our staff participated in the direct delivery of our Care Packages at 65 individual Police and Fire departments, Veteran organizations, and Military units in 35 cities and 16 states.

Our Care Packages brought more smiles to the faces of our nation’s heroes than any previous year in our organization’s history, AND they are the start of a conversation that leads to a better understanding of service, which is what will ultimately forge strong bonds between civilians and their Military and First Responder Heroes. I am honored and humbled to serve alongside the 1,005,236 volunteers who joined Operation Gratitude in 2019 to say “thank you” to all who serve, and I look forward to another year of making impact with our actions in 2020.

With Gratitude and Semper Fidelis,

Kevin M. Schmiegel
WHO WE ARE
Operation Gratitude is the largest and most impactful nonprofit in the country for hands-on volunteerism in support of Military, Veterans, and First Responders.

OUR MISSION
To forge strong bonds between Americans and their Military and First Responder heroes through volunteer service projects, acts of gratitude and meaningful engagements in communities nationwide.

WE BELIEVE
★ Actions speak louder than words
★ Saying “thank you for your service” is the start of a conversation that leads to a better understanding of service
★ Hands-on volunteerism, acts of gratitude and meaningful engagements are the best ways to bridge the civilian-service divide
★ We focus on empathy, resilience, service, and sacrifice rather than sympathy, challenges, needs, and pity

Click here to find out more about our ethos.
WHO WE SERVE

RECRUIT GRADUATES
Together with devoted community volunteers, we hand deliver Care Pouches to our nation’s newest Service Members at Boot Camp graduations across the country. Operation Gratitude congratulates and serves as the first “touch point” for more than 100,000 Recruit Graduates annually, including Airmen at Lackland AFB, Sailors in Great Lakes, Coast Guardsmen in Cape May, and Marines at MCRD in San Diego.

DEPLOYED TROOPS
Volunteers assemble thousands of Operation Gratitude Care Packages containing millions of thousands of snack, hygiene, and handmade items at our main facility in Chatsworth, CA, and in organized large scale assembly events across the nation. We ship individually addressed Care Packages to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen, who are deployed overseas.

MILITARY FAMILIES
We send our trademarked “Battalion Buddy” stuffed bears to the children of deployed service members. Our cuddly Battalion Buddies wear tags that say “Hi Brave Young Warrior! I am your Battalion Buddy. I am here to cuddle with you while your Mommy or Daddy is away.”

2019 CARE PACKAGE BY PROGRAM

- Recruit Graduates: 68,156
- Deployed Troops: 50,606
- Veterans: 90,550
- Military Families: 17,413
- Wounded Heroes + Caregivers: 9,828
- First Responders: 108,811
WHO WE SERVE

VETERANS
We coordinate with VA hospitals, Veteran and nursing homes, Veterans Service Organizations and other best-in-class nonprofits to provide care packages to Veterans of all generations and to provide them with a sense of purpose as volunteers. With our actions we let them know that their service and the sacrifices they made are appreciated and will never be forgotten.

WOUNDED HEROES + CAREGIVERS
We recognize the commitment and dedication of Wounded Heroes and Caregivers from all eras, and with our custom designed Care Packages, acknowledge and thank each of them in a special and individualized way for their sacrifices. Together with our partners, we continue to serve this community through Care Package deliveries as well as community-building events.

FIRST RESPONDERS
We are on a mission to say "thank you" to the men and women who serve as Police Officers, Firefighters, and EMTs in communities nationwide. The direct delivery of our signature red Care Pouches to hundreds of departments across the U.S. gives Operation Gratitude team members, volunteers, donors, and corporate partners the opportunity to thank their local First Responders in person.
2019 IN REVIEW (vs 2018)

- Letters Sent: 391,311 vs 186,680 (+109%)
- Handmade Items: 1,005,236 vs 791,491 (+27%)
- Care Packages Sent: 371,093 vs 264,430 (+40%)
- Volunteer Hours: 1,876,878 vs 1,040,460 (+80%)
- Items Sent: 13,205,295 vs 10,549,800 (+25%)
- Volunteers: 452,783 vs 450,508 (+1%)
OUR BLUE SHIRT VOLUNTEERS

As a Blue Shirt volunteer at Operation Gratitude, I usually work alongside a multitude of others preparing packages to try our best to show our appreciation for all the miraculous and amazing tasks you perform so courageously on behalf of all of us, the people of your families, your towns, your country and beyond. My most frequent spot is teaching volunteers how to prepare the Battalion Buddies, the adorable stuffed bears we send to the children of deployed troops. Our mission is to support your mission with all the love and dedication you so richly deserve. This is my opportunity to share how honored and eternally grateful I am for all that you selflessly give.

Judy Lamppu

I have volunteered at Operation Gratitude for the past 15 years and has it been the most rewarding thing I have ever done. The opportunity to give back to the men and women who give so much to us every day is extraordinary, I must constantly remind myself I am doing it for them, because my reward is so great. I have met and worked alongside the finest people I have had the pleasure of being near and for this, I will be forever grateful. I would encourage anyone looking to feel good about themselves and the rest of world to come and join us wherever you live and bring a friend.

Bob Donovan, Veteran
Operation Gratitude increased total revenue and support by 26.8%, which demonstrates an enduring commitment from corporations and individuals alike for our mission.

An increase in assets of 23.8% to $13.3 million reinforces Operation Gratitude's strong financial position and prepared the organization for the challenges presented during 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Operation Gratitude continues an historical precedent of devoting more than 95% of all donations to Program Services.

Click here to access detailed financial breakdowns.
Our Corporate Partners

$100,000 +
Addo Worldwide, LLC
CSX
L3Harris
Josh Cellars/Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits
Mortgage Research Center, LLC
One OC
Prudential Financial
Target Corporation
USAA

$25,000-$99,999
BAE Systems
Bank of America
Carolina Handling, LLC
Connexus Credit Union
Comcast
Cummins Emissions Solutions
Diageo
Facebook
Mars Wrigley Confectionary-C
Mercury Insurance
Monat Global Corp
Morgan Stanley
Navy Federal Credit Union
New York Life Insurance Company
Northrop Grumman, Azusa
OneMain Financial
Pizza Inn
Salesforce Foundation
Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company
Under Armour
United Healthcare
Verizon
Western Digital

$10,000-$24,999
Allegis Group
Anheuser-Busch
Boehringer Ingelheim
Boeing
Chase Bank
Cigna
CK Running, LLC
Clark Schaefer Hackett
CSR Solutions of Colorado
Fiserv
GRC Wireless, Inc.
Intrado
Jet.com
Lexington Law Firm
Linquest Corporation
Lockheed Martin
Lund Food Holdings, Inc.
MedExpress Urgen Care
Nestle USA
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Red Sox Foundation
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Ronco
Shearman & Stearling
Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield
Vertex Foundation
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