

## **“On the Homefront”** USA Freedom Corps

Today, the USA Freedom Corps launched a new resource for people seeking to support our troops, their families, and their communities called “On the Homefront.”

### **Background**

While hundreds of thousands of men and women from all over America are serving in the armed forces and away from their homes, those on the homefront can be making a difference too. Many individuals and organizations are looking for ways to support our troops, their families, and our country.

Partnering with the Department of Defense, the USA Freedom Corps is offering resources to Americans who want to express their support for members of the military, and help their families in meaningful ways. Here are some of the ways to support our troops, give time and care to their families, and strengthen our communities.

These resources are available online at <http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/>.

### **Support Our Troops**

There is a long tradition of writing letters and sending care packages to troops stationed away from home. To minimize delays and complications in getting this kind of support to our troops, the Department of Defense recommends the following:

- Through **Operation Dear Abby**, send e-mail messages to deployed troops of any Service from your home state (<http://www.dod.mil/specials/abby/>).
- Through **America Supports You**, sign an online thank you card for troops (<http://www.dod.mil/americasupportsyou/support/>).
- Through **Operation USA Care Package**, contribute to the purchase of a care package of items requested by troops such as sunscreen, disposable cameras, prepaid calling cards, and toiletries (<http://www.operationcarepackages.org/>).

### **Help for Families**

Families of reservists, National Guard men and women and active duty military may need extra help in meeting basic home and family needs during deployment. There are many ways individuals, organizations, and businesses can offer their time and resources to help families of deployed troops. Here are some of the opportunities now available through the USA Freedom Corps’ new “On the Homefront” web resource:

- The local chapters of the American Legion, American Red Cross, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, BPO Elks of the USA, Camp Fire USA, National 4-H Council, National Fraternal Congress of America, The Salvation Army, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and YMCA of the USA are among leading community service organizations providing ways for volunteers to help local military families.

- Working with the National Guard and Reserve, as well as with military bases, these organizations will match volunteers with families that need help in areas such as household repairs, spring cleanings or tutoring and direct those families to businesses and organizations that may be offering free or discounted services. Volunteers can also help families, including those who own small businesses, with specialized skills like major repairs, financial planning or legal services.
- Some of these organizations are also helping to take care of children, after school and on the weekends, whose families have a parent or caregiver stationed away from home. Organizations such as Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Camp Fire USA, National 4-H Council, and YMCA of the USA are playing important roles in these efforts.
- Individuals can also make a difference at home by reaching out to share their time and compassion with veterans to say “thank you” for their service to our country and by volunteering with a Veterans Administration hospital or other facility.

### **Service In Communities**

Individuals who want to help strengthen their community and America can do so through volunteer service. Some communities may need particular help to replace valued volunteers who have been deployed.

Local opportunities for volunteer service such as mentoring a child, teaching someone to read, working in a local police department or serving at a local food shelter can be found through the USA Freedom Corps web site at <http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/> or by calling **1-877-USA-CORPS**. President Bush created the USA Freedom Corps office at the White House to foster a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility.