



OPERATION TROOP APPRECIATION



SUMMER 2014 NEWSLETTER

WHAT WE DO

- 01 OFFICERS CORNER
- 02 "WELCOME HOME" VETERAN PROGRAM
- 03 FROM THE FRONT LINES
- 05 COMMITTED TO OUR COURAGEOUS

HOW WE DO IT

- 06 COLLECTION BENEFIT FOR TROOPS
- 08 "WELCOME HOME" SPONSORS
- 09 MARCH FOR THE MILITARY
- 10 SkillsUSA RAISES \$12,000
- 11 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION
- 13 COMFORT CONVOY

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- 10 KonectIDY BRACELETS
- 14 MARK YOUR CALENDAR
- 15 YOU SHOP, AMAZON GIVES
- 16 DOING MORE TO HELP

OFFICERS CORNER

As we celebrate our 10th (yes it has been 10 years!) anniversary on July 1, we reflect on the hundreds of thousands of lives that have been touched by OTA.

We approach this milestone with bittersweet memories, as our greatest accomplishments have been realized because they have served the needs of people facing incredible challenges and great adversity in some of the harshest conditions.

We have shared in the pain of those who suffered loss and injury, and experienced the joy of families welcoming loved ones home from war. We've been privileged to hear the stories of veterans from WWII to our current conflicts in the Middle East.

Our volunteer staff, sponsors and donors have charted our path from the very first project (sending moisture-wicking t-shirts to a Pittsburgh unit of the PA National Guard deployed to Iraq in 2004), to our newest program, "Welcome Home," which provides beds and household necessities to our veterans in need.

In between those two projects, 10 years apart, more than 136,000 members of the deployed military community have received help from OTA.

There is one common thread to each project and experience along the way—our desire to honor those who serve.

We are truly blessed to be supported by those who understand and appreciate the service and sacrifice of our military and veteran communities. With your help, we look forward to continuing our work into the next decade and beyond!

We hope you enjoy this issue of the OTA newsletter. Learn about our "Welcome Home" program, and meet some of the very special men and women who have received help from OTA.

Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,



KRISTEN HOLLOWAY QUERRIERA
FOUNDER & CEO



MONICA ORLUK
PRESIDENT



AMANDA THOMPSON
VICE PRESIDENT

“WELCOME HOME”

VETERAN SUPPORT PROGRAM



OTA is pleased to announce “Welcome Home,” our veteran-support program. This **brand new program** provides much needed assistance to our **returning war veterans** and their families.

OTA has focused on the needs of our deployed military members for 10 years. And we will continue to do so. But as more come back home and encounter challenges in re-establishing their civilian lives, the need in our **war-veteran community** is great.

Working with the **VA Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program** and the **Veterans Leadership Program** to identify veterans with **legitimate needs**, OTA’s “Welcome Home” program provides support for veterans by defraying the costs associated with establishing a home.

You can help by **sponsoring a veteran and their family**.

Support and appreciation from the community are critical for our troops and our veterans. We continue to support our troops and **now** serve our veterans because of **YOUR** ongoing generous support. We thank you!

Please consider making a financial gift today to help OTA reach more deployed and veteran military members.

DONATION PACKAGES:

\$250 | Welcome Home Kit

- Pots
- Pans
- Dishes
- Laundry Supplies
- Towels
- Sheets
- Bathroom Supplies
- Cleaning Supplies

\$500 | Single Adult Veteran

- Full Size Bed
- Mattress Set
- Welcome Home Kit

\$750 | Adult Couple

- Queen Size Bed
- Mattress Set
- Welcome Home Kit

\$1000 | Family of Four

- Queen Size Bed
- Mattress Set
- Twin Beds
- Welcome Home Kit

SO WHAT IS WELCOME HOME?

- It **fills a gap** in support that our veteran community receives today.
- It helps to **prevent homelessness** and provides a “**hand-up**” for our veterans experiencing financial challenges.

HOW DOES OTA DO THIS?

- Our culture has a tradition of providing “**house warming**” gifts to friends and families moving into a new home.
- We extend this tradition by providing gifts that help veterans and their families **establish residence**.
- We all know that moving into a new home can be **stressful and costly**. In the case of many veterans, they enter new empty homes with only the clothes on their backs.
- Critical components of their full recovery and transition into a **productive and meaningful civilian life** are health, rest, safety and comfort.
- OTA provides these families with new beds, mattresses, and essential household items to give them the **best possible new start in a new home**.



FROM THE FRONT LINES

GRATEFUL TROOPS SEND THEIR THANKS

Dear Kristen,

We just received the package last week with all of the volleyballs, basketballs, soccer balls as well as other items. I am very appreciative of all of the items for the unit. I proudly presented, on your behalf, all of the balls to the MWR committee to share with the entire 135+ personnel at the Hospital.

In addition, I received a total of 4 boxes of shorts and shirts of various sizes and colors. These were distributed to many of the members that needed additional shirts and shorts to work out in. Many members came with just one set of workout clothes not realizing none was going to be available here.

Thank you again, so much for everything. I cannot begin to express to you how thoughtful it was and how much the troops are thankful for these items.

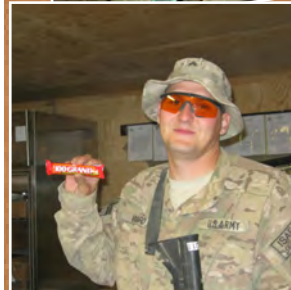
LCDR Coffman (Navy)



Operation Troop Appreciation,

Thank you so much for the boxes you sent us. It means a lot to see the level of support that you give to deployed soldiers. This is my seventh combat deployment and I appreciate from the bottom of my heart the things you send myself and my fellow soldiers out here.

SFC Cote (Army)



To All the Wonderful
family of Operation
Troop Appreciation
Thank You!!

Words cannot express
how I felt when I
opened my gift bag.
Wow!

GOD BLESS You!

Jamie

Thank You So Very Much for
this Gift of a blessing.

Dawn

Thank you for being there in a
time of need, may God Bless you

Maecus



Dear Kristen,

Thank you very much for the socks... I know a lot of the Marines can use them. The dart games have been tough. I played some with the office the other day, ended up doing around 80 push-ups. They created a new game recently called the Top-Gun (appropriately named for the game, where we are stationed, and the fact that they play that movie every day) in which five people throw a dart at the bulls eye, the closest person is the winner, everyone else drops and gives 25 push-ups. It is essentially a reverse elimination. The worst player either gets better at darts or gets strong (after 125 pushups). Morale is high.

SSgt Schneider (Marines)





Operation Troop Appreciation,

There is no way to tell you how much your gesture of selflessness has affected the morale of my unit. I had a late show today because I am flying late and when I entered the work spaces everyone was eagerly awaiting me. I had no idea that there were care packages of this size in my office. The young Marines were overwhelmed when I finally opened them.

Again thank you for your support and please let all those involved with these packages that we appreciate the hard work and support as well.

GySgt Warren (Marines)

Dear Operation Troop Appreciation,

Thank you so much for the care packages it really means a lot to everyone here. It was amazing to see the smiles on soldier's faces when they received these gifts. It is your support and prayer that supplies the fight for our country. No choice of words can explain how grateful we all are not for receiving these items but for the thought behind it. God Bless you all until every soldier, airmen, seamen, and marine is back home may there be great Americans like you.

SPC Spencer (Army)



I would like to thank everyone at Operation Troop Appreciation for my special shoes that I could not afford

SINCERELY YOURS
William

Dear Operation Troop Appreciation,

The socks are quite comfortable and the shirts are a hit! You may feel that your organization only helps in a small way but it is important that you understand your small help goes a long way these days. After being here for as many years as we have, most Soldiers come here believing that they are coming to a place that has an amazing infrastructure in place and they will have all the amenities of home. We as leaders know this isn't true, but Soldiers only believe it when their socks wear out and finding them at the PX is all but impossible!!

You have touched each one of us with your kindness and generosity. You all are appreciated for all of your support to all the Soldiers!!



SFC Weiler (Army)



WE ARE COMMITTED TO OUR COURAGEOUS

Operation Troop Appreciation (OTA) has expanded its mission and commitment to our military community, reflecting our dedication to past and present members of our Armed Forces.

Our mission is to build and sustain the morale and well-being of the military community, past and present, with the assurance that the American public supports and appreciates their selfless service and daily sacrifices.

Operation Troop Appreciation is dedicated to the active and veteran members of our Armed Forces who serve and sacrifice for our country. By providing them with items that contribute to their morale and well-being, we present a united front to our military by supporting them as individuals.

Dear Operation Troop,
Its like Christmas in March with the basket of things in it. We can use everything in there Thanks! What was a real surprise was the food card. We desperately need food & this will be greatly used. Thank-you for sharing and thank you for caring.

My family thanks you also.

Sincerely
Susan



COLLECTIONS BENEFIT THOUSANDS



We are incredibly fortunate to have a great support network of corporations, individuals, schools, churches, and families who sponsored OTA's troop units these past few months, ensuring thousands of troops would receive their "wish list" items.

We thank everyone who donated funds and supplies so generously to bring smiles to our troops so far away! Although we don't have room to include everyone who contributes, we are happy to list a few of the many generous groups who made the last few months so special for our troops.



- Ace Sporting Goods
- Aetna
- Alcoa
- All-Pro Embroidery & Screen Printing
- Arrowood at Southwestern
- Bethel Park Interact Club
- Borland Elementary School
- Bower Hill Community Church
- Boy Scouts of America Troop 231
- Castle Shannon Red Hats Society
- Chartiers Valley School District
- Chick-fil-A at South Hills
- Clara Barton Elementary School
- Concord United Methodist Church
- Daisy Troop 58125
- Danza Fitness Club
- Dirty Dogg Cigar Shoppe
- Dollar General Brentwood
- Dravosburg United Methodist Church
- Elizabeth United Methodist Early Learning Center
- Etna Commons
- Fiserv Lending Solutions
- Girl Scout 54520
- Girl Scout Troop 1434
- Girl Scout troop 1613
- Giuseppe's Pizza & Pasta
- Glass Works of West Monroe, LA
- Hickory farms
- Highmark / Pittsburgh Cares
- Holy Angels Church
- Holy Child Knights of Columbus Council #12043
- Interact Club at Bethel Park HS
- Jefferson Hills Library
- John McMillan Presbyterian Church
- Liberty Borough Veterans Club
- Liberty Presbyterian Church
- Longhorn Steakhouse
- Marion Elementary PTA
- Massaro Corporation
- Mohawk Elementary School
- Morgan Stanley Wealth Management
- National Honor Society, Carrick High School
- North Versailles Parks & Recreation
- Oxford Athletic Club
- PA Dept of Education
- People's Natural Gas
- Peters Township Neighbors and Newcomers
- Peters Township Schools
- Pittsburgh International Airport
- Pittsburgh Firefighters FCU
- Pitt Dental School
- Pittsburgh Banjo Club
- Pleasant Hills Apartments
- PNC Aviation Dept. 25 Allegheny
- County Airport
- Queen of Rosary Church
- Quilters Depot
- ReMed
- Risen Lord Church
- RTI International Metals
- Saint Rosalia Academy
- Sargo's Barber Shop
- SDC Nutrition
- Shamrock Womens' Club
- SkillsUSA Pennsylvania
- Sons of American Legion Post 760
- South Hills Interfaith Ministry
- St Joan of Arc Youth Group
- St. Anne School
- St. Elizabeth Elementary
- St. Sara Serbian Orthodox Church
- Steel Valley Ortho Associates
- Stephen Foster Senior Care
- Stitching Group of Sunbury Fields
- Target
- Team Builders
- The Clearing
- Trinity Point Applebees
- University of Pittsburgh, Nursing School
- VFW Post 188
- WesDyne International
- West Point Elementary School in Surprise, AZ

ACHIEVEMENTS

OTA EARNS "TOP RATED" STATUS

For the fourth consecutive year, OTA has made the "Top Rated" Charity List at GreatNonProfits.org.

In 2013, we ranked #2 nationally, #1 for Veteran Issues, and #1 in the state of Pennsylvania!

This year, we'd love to say we're #1 across the board! GreatNonProfits is the nation's leading provider of reviews and ratings of nonprofit organizations throughout the U.S. Hosting a database with more than 1.4 million charities, GreatNonProfits represents the largest collection of first-person stories about organizations ever assembled.

Ranking so highly is quite an honor, because it is achieved through the ratings of those who are personally touched by OTA. Reviews are posted by volunteers, donors, and the troops and veterans we serve. The more 5-star reviews we receive, the higher we rank on the overall charity list.

Also important, is that recognition by Great Non-Profits will go a long way in introducing OTA to more and more potential donors. This means more military supporters and grant makers will hear about our work, and help us raise funds so we can continue our 10-year track record of providing support for the military.

You can help by visiting our page and writing your own 5-star review of OTA.

Visit www.greatnonprofits.org/operation-troop-appreciation. Give us a 5-star rating and write a positive review so we can continue supporting our military and veteran communities.



LOCAL BUSINESSES MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Throughout our history, OTA has relied on generous sponsors who provide much needed services at reduced costs. Our "Welcome Home" program is supported by two sponsors such as these and we are extremely grateful for their support!

2 GENEROUS SPONSORS, WHO PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED SERVICES

KonectIDY

OTA'S NEW PARTNERSHIP

OTA is proud to announce our new partnership with **KonectIDY**. Donors can buy a bracelet, or create their own to connect with a charity and share their message.

KonectIDY debuted the "Support Our Troops - A Soldier's Story" as a place to share individual stories and support OTA at the same time. Each unique bracelet designed has a specific soldier's story associated with it. OTA receives \$2 for every "Support Our Troops - A Soldier's Story" bracelet sold.

YOU CAN BUY OR CREATE A BRACELET FOR YOUR SPECIAL VETERAN AT: KONECTIDY.COM



"WELCOME HOME" SPONSORS



Mattress Discounters Century III store in Pleasant Hills, PA supplies the beds and mattresses we provide to our veterans. Store Manager, **BJ Toth**, works closely with OTA volunteers and veterans to match the right bed with the needs of our veteran families.

A good night's sleep is critical to the health and well-being of our veterans, especially those recovering from injuries. We wish to thank BJ Toth and his Pleasant Hills store for their commitment to this project. If you are in need of a new mattress, be sure to visit BJ and tell him OTA sent you!



Veterans in need don't always have transportation to take them to doctor appointments, therapy sessions, or to work. OTA is pleased to provide this service through our arrangement with **Veteran Taxi** from the Star Transportation Group in Pittsburgh.

Owner and Army Veteran, **Robert DeLucia**, gives veterans the opportunity to own their own cabs, and become business owners as they acclimate to civilian life. By using the Veterans Taxi service, OTA provides support to the veteran driver and to his veteran passenger. The next time you need to call a cab, call Veterans Taxi Service and help a vet build a life! **412.481.VETS(8387)**

THE LITTLE RACE THAT GREW

THE MARCH FOR THE MILITARY



In 2011, Ryan Coennen wrote a wonderful senior project paper on the mental and physical injuries suffered by veterans of war. But Ryan wanted to do more than write a paper: he wanted to do something meaningful for veterans. So he talked to his mom, Karen, about it.

The previous November, Karen ran her very first 5K Veteran's Day race in Hampton Township, coordinated by OTA's Veteran's Day 5K Director, Alice McLaughlin. As a walk-in registrant, there were no race shirts available. A few days after the race, Alice sent her a shirt in the mail, with a simple note that said she was happy she found an extra shirt and asked Karen "to do a kind act for someone in the future."

That shirt was the catalyst for Ryan's project, and **March For The Military** (MFTM) was born.

That first year, Ryan put on his first 5K race and raised \$5,000. The Coennens realized how important this was and decided to carry on the event.



Race Coordinator Karen Coennen pumps up the runners

EMPLOYEE DONATIONS RAISED AN ADDITIONAL \$1,400



Running the course

Years two and three grew little by little, each generating more donations. Year four exploded. The race was moved to Graham Park in Cranberry. The new course had room for more runners and the two things that MFTM is now famous for: **Hot Soup and Gift Baskets!**

After the race, participants enjoyed vegetable soup from King's Family Restaurants and homemade nacho potato soup while taking their chances on winning one of the forty gift baskets.

MFTM is really two fundraisers in one: the race and the raffle. The success of the race would not be possible without the support and commitment of the merchants in the Cranberry, PA area, many of whom have supported the event for years.

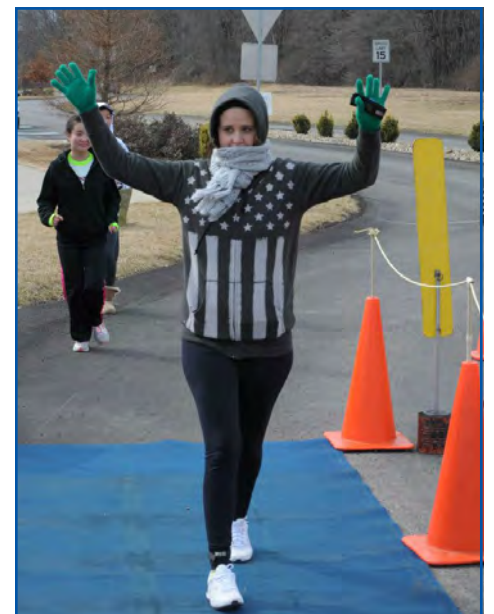
This year, more than 400 people registered for the race. Despite freezing temperatures, wind and snow, the 4th Annual March For

The Military raised more than \$12,000 for OTA, making it the Coennens' most successful race. An added bonus came from local business Alcoa, who sponsored their employees to join the race, and made a \$1,500 grant on behalf of MFTM.

Karen's employer, Aetna, also got involved, sponsoring employees to run in the event, and setting up a friendly competition to see which offices could raise the most.

Employee donations raised an additional \$1,400 bringing the total to \$13,500! Thus MFTM is the Little Race That Grew!

Plans are currently under way for 2015. Dress warm and come to run or walk and enjoy some hot soup at the March For The Military race!



Runners cross the finish line

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

OTA IS RUN BY 100% VOLUNTEER STAFF

We are so grateful to each of our volunteers for the gift of time and passion to OTA. While our volunteers may not be aware of all the other work that is being done aside from their own contributions, it's clear OTA is a perfect example of synergy. That is, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Some of our volunteers come to pack boxes; some engage in fundraising activities on their own; some work as ambassadors at our headquarters and out and about in the community. Still others stock shelves, shop, write letters, do the administrative tasks. Whatever task they complete, each piece is critical to our mission. We thank you, our many and dedicated volunteers!

In addition to thanking all the volunteers who work hard for OTA, we'd like to take this opportunity to recognize three volunteers who have made outstanding contributions.

Congratulations to **Karen Coennen** who made this year's "March for the Military" race the most successful one ever, raising \$13,500. See Karen's whole story on page 09.

Two other volunteers, **Kathie Gasior** and **Tricia Staley**, were recognized at a recent OTA Volunteer meeting for their significant contributions to our military's health and well-being.

...THE **WHOLE** IS **GREATER** THAN THE **SUM** OF ITS **PARTS**



Kathie Gasior (left) receives a Volunteer Award from Vice President, Amanda Thompson (right)

By constantly advocating for our troops over the past 10 years, **Kathie Gasior** has raised over \$45,000 for Operation Troop Appreciation. Her tireless efforts inspire others to help serve our nation's best and bravest.

Kathie works with schools, churches, her American Legion Ladies Auxiliary and others in the community to help patriotic citizens of all ages harness their passion for our troops. She has led book and jewelry sales, card signing events, collection drives and fundraisers during her 10 years as an OTA volunteer.

VOLUNTEERISM IS WHAT WE ARE ALL ABOUT

Tricia Staley has secured individual and corporate donations of over \$40,000 through local 5K races and the annual Pittsburgh Marathon. Since 2007, Tricia has combined her passion for running and helping the troops by creating teams of runners who raise money for OTA.

She has been OTA's Race Coordinator for seven years, managing every aspect of putting on a successful race. She also helps OTA runners train for the annual Pittsburgh Marathon and various community 5K races throughout Pittsburgh so they realize their own personal racing best!

In addition, Tricia also represents OTA at community events and helps pack care packages for our troops.



Race coordinator Karen Coennen and her son Ryan present check to VP Amanda Thompson (left) and Monica Orluk (right)



Tricia (left) at the 2014 Pittsburgh marathon

COMFORT CONVOY

THE CONVOY WAS A HUGE SUCCESS



ON APRIL 25-27, OTA PARTNERED WITH WALGREENS AND Y-108 TO HOST THE FIRST "COMFORT CONVOY" OF 2014! A SECOND EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE IN OCTOBER.

The PENSKE truck leaves Walgreens filled with donations for our troops and veterans

For the April event, Penske donated the use of a truck which made stops in Irwin, Canonsburg and Moon Township. With personal gifts and purchases made at the Walgreens stores, the Pittsburgh community generously donated much needed hygiene, snack and other items that OTA will send to our deployed troops overseas.

This convoy was special because it marked the first event that collected household items for our new "Welcome Home" program as well.

Thanks to the overwhelming support of the Pittsburgh community, the Convoy was a huge success! Over 50 boxes of items were collected along with \$4,000 in monetary donations.



OTA volunteer Lindsey Handshue is thrilled to sort and inventory items donated during the three-day Comfort Convoy

We thank the following individuals and organizations for making this a success:

Mark Anderson (CBS Radio Executive), **Tom Minerva** (Walgreens District Manager), and **Cory Krebs** (Walgreens District Pharmacy Manager) who sponsored the event.

Jeff Davidson (CBS Radio and Y-108 Event Manager) who coordinated, planned and executed the Comfort Convoy.

Walgreens Moon Township Manager **Jason Belczyk**, who managed the effort, secured and ordered the inventory, implemented the "scannables" monetary donation program, and allowed use of his store.

Shawna Laughlin, Walgreens Moon Township Assistant Manager, who coordinated all the sale items at the three locations, secured the sponsors, and worked the event for all three days.

THANK YOU!

Sean Makowiecki (North Huntingdon, PA Walgreens Store Manager) and **Keith Nice** (Canonsburg, PA Store Manager) for use of their stores.

Y-108 on-air personalities **Monty, Charlie, Heather,** and **Stony** who promoted the event and broadcasted live from the stores.

Amy Welder at Penske Corporate for donating the moving truck that hauled supplies from area stores to Operation Troop Appreciation headquarters.

And finally, we thank the **OTA volunteers** for staffing the event at three stores during the three days, and helping Walgreens customers participate in this successful event.



A young customer drops off donations for our troops at Walgreens

MARK YOUR CALENDER

REMEMBER TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE
AND FACEBOOK PAGE FOR UPDATES

13 SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER

COMMUNITY DAY

Enjoy good food, unique vendors, great music and fun raffles at **West Mifflin's Annual Community Day**. This year's event will take place at Century III Mall.

04 SATURDAY
OCTOBER

SOLDIER'S SALUTE CONCERT

Enjoy a patriotic event with great music at the **Y-108 Peoples Natural Gas Soldier Salute Concert** with **Craig Morgan** at the Pepsi Roadhouse.

16-19 WEEKEND
OCTOBER

COMFORT CONVOY

Rochester - 10/16
Oakmont - 10/17
Carnegie - 10/18
Pleasant Hills - 10/19

Join us again for another great weekend sponsored by **Walgreens** and **Y-108**. Drop off donations at participating Walgreens, or purchase needed items from the store and give them to OTA volunteers on hand.

NOVEMBER

RIVERS CASINO "FREE PLAY"

Details coming soon on the **Rivers Casino "Free Play"** weekend that benefits OTA.

01 SATURDAY
NOVEMBER

SALUTE THE TROOPS

Bring your friends and enjoy the Third Annual **Salute The Troops** event at the **LIT Club**. For this special event, the private club is open to the public to support the troops. Enjoy raffles and drink specials at this special benefit event.

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER

OTA VETERANS DAY 5K

Hampton Community Park
3101 McCully Road
Allison Park, PA 15101

This **Annual Veterans Day** race gets better every year! Join hundreds of runners, walkers, baby strollers and dog walkers for another unforgettable day of fun, awards, entertainment and a post-race buffet. Register at OperationTroopAppreciation.org

CONNECT WITH US

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS OF UPCOMING EVENTS, NOTICE OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, PICTURES AND POSTINGS FROM TROOPS WE HELP.

If you are not already receiving the OTA newsletter via email, go to OperationTroopAppreciation.org and sign up and the newsletter will be conveniently delivered to your inbox.

And don't worry. We will never share, sell or trade your information to third parties.



@OTATroopSupport



Operation Troop Appreciation

WE'VE MOVED

OTA HAS RELOCATED

But don't worry, we have only moved to a new location within in Century III Mall. We are now located on the upper level, above the food court, near Sears. When visiting the mall, park at the entrance near parking post #100. We are located inside the mall door.

Our new space has separate areas for a military tribute space, inventory, meeting room, and a spacious office! Please plan to visit us soon.



YOU SHOP, AMAZON GIVES

DONATION PROGRAM THROUGH AMAZON



HOW DO YOU DO IT?

WHAT WILL YOU SEE?

A new **FREE** program from Amazon, called **AmazonSmile**, allows Amazon shoppers to direct **0.5%** of their eligible purchase totals to their favorite charity.

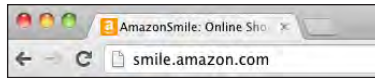
That's right: It's free for shoppers. The Amazon Smile Foundation makes all the donations from eligible purchases, and shoppers still get the same low prices on all items.

And what charity would be grateful for your designation? **Why OTA of course!**

There is **no cap on your donation** amount, so there is **no limit** to how much OTA can receive.

Go to smile.amazon.com

1



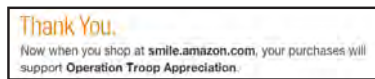
Search & select
Operation Troop Appreciation

2



Now just start shopping and
Amazon will start giving

3



- The **shopping experience is identical** to the regular Amazon.com site – same selection, same prices – with the exception that eligible products will be marked as such on product detail pages.

- On the top left hand corner of your Amazon page, you'll see the **AmazonSmile logo** (instead of the regular Amazon one). And next to that, it will show the charity you're supporting. (And what is that again? You're right! **Operation Troop Appreciation!**)

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR PURCHASES ARE ELIGIBLE?

- **Only** purchases made through the **SmileAmazon** site will receive 0.5%

- Purchases made through the regular Amazon.com website are **not** eligible.

- Kindles and items through Subscribe & Save are **not** eligible.



**GO TO
SMILE.AMAZON.COM
AND START SHOPPING
(AND SUPPORTING)
TODAY!**

SkillsUSA PA SUPPORTS THE TROOPS IN A BIG WAY

COMMUNITY SERVICE FOCUSED

The student officers who participate in SkillsUSA programs in Pennsylvania are focused on community service.

Every year, they choose a charitable effort to support. This past school year they chose to support the troops through OTA.

Schools held activities, conducted collection drives and fundraisers culminating in a donation presented to OTA at the SkillsUSA PA annual conference in April.

OTA President, Monica Orluk attended the conference and was presented with a check for over \$12,000! Now that's an A+ effort!

OTA is grateful to these students, and wishes them great success in their future endeavors. They've already demonstrated outstanding leadership and commitment which will serve them well.

2013-2014 State Officers

Shannon Stirling,
W. Region Vice President
Lenape Technology Center

Shane White,
E. Region Vice President
Bucks County Technical HS

Sarah Welch,
Secretary Eastern Center
for the Arts & Technology

Hannah Dillion,
President Central
Westmoreland Career &
Technology Center

Brock Peracchino,
Parliamentarian Greater
Johnstown Career &
Technology Center



DOING MORE TO HELP

Please remember, there are troops deployed all over the world. OTA is always in need of donated items and monetary contributions to fulfill our troops "wish list" requests and to support our veteran "Welcome Home" Program.

Easy Donations or Organized Collection Drives: Troop drawdowns mean that PXs (military exchanges) are closing as FOBs (Forward Operating Bases) and COPs (Combat Outposts) are being dismantled in Afghanistan. This means our troops are unable to purchase these items on their own and must rely on packages from supporters at home.

Please consider donating any of the following items to OTA to help our troops and veterans stay stocked on critical needs.



- Beef jerky
- Crackers
- Chips and pretzels
- Dried fruit
- Granola bars
- Easy Mac



- Shampoo
- Shave gel (not aerosol)
- Toothbrushes
- Body wash
- Men's deodorant
- Baby wipes
- Men's triple blade razors



- Cleaning supplies
- Laundry supplies
- New **full-sized** sheet sets
- New bath towel sets
- New kitchen towels

YELLOW RIBBON CAMPAIGN:

A simple and easy way to help raise money for OTA! We provide you with a "Support the Troops" Yellow Ribbon template, you print them and distribute for a donation (typically \$2-\$5). Donors write their names on the ribbons which are then posted in your church, school, store, or workplace.

LETTER WRITING:

Our troops love to get cards and letters from supporters (especially school children) back home! It is a great boost to troop morale and facilitates pen-pal correspondence. This is a popular project for schools, church youth groups, day cares and senior centers.

SPONSOR A UNIT:

A great and interactive way for individuals, companies, churches, schools and other civic groups to support our deployed troops. OTA provides you with specific information about your unit; you or your group raises the funds and sends them to OTA for the purchase of military-approved items. We encourage you to write cards and letters to your sponsored troops!

SPONSOR A VETERAN:

What better way to say "Welcome Home" to our veterans than to help OTA provide a new bed or household items to a veteran family in need?

MATCHING GIFTS PROGRAMS:

Many employers will match an employee's donation to their favorite charities. Ask your Human Resources department if OTA is eligible for a matching gift from your company.

CENTS FOR SOLDIERS:

This campaign is a great way to raise funds simply by collecting loose change. Place a *Cents for Soldiers Donation Jar* in a central location, and ask family, friends and coworkers to toss their spare change in. It's also a great program for schools to teach math and counting skills while engaging in some friendly competition.

FOR **MORE INFO** CONTACT **OTA VP,**
AMANDA THOMPSON,
AMANDA@OPERATIONTROOPAPPRECIATION.ORG