

OSOTIL is critically low on items to send to our troops. The following email was prepared in an effort to generate more collection activity. We are asking every member to send this out to all of your contacts to generate some collections. Also please consider organizing a collection yourself to keep OSOTIL packing.

Over the past six years Operation Support Our Troops - Illinois has served as the link between the citizen and the military person by collecting items from the community, packaging them into "care packages", and mailing them off to troops serving in harm's way. Each 25 pound package contains a wide variety of snacks, toiletries, books, treats, first aid items, etc. While each box is addressed to an individual military person (whose name is submitted through our website), there is enough to share with approximately 10 people. Each box also contains hand written letters from the community as well. In total, OSOTIL has sent over 220 tons of these packages - one 25 pound box at a time! We hear over and over in letters and in person from our troops that say "you have no idea what it meant to know that someone cared about me - someone I didn't even know took the time and effort to think about me".

We know that American citizens want to support our military and we provide a vehicle for them to do this by collecting items off of the "Top Ten" most requested list and bringing them to us along with letters of support. However, with the events of the past months and the shaky economy that has developed, people have their minds on other things. Our troops, however, continue to serve regardless of political or economic changes here at home. They need us to continue to support them, but for the first time in our six years, our ability to do that is threatened by a lack of collections from the community.

We are reaching out and asking all of you who care about our troops to consider organizing a collection of goods off of our "Top Ten" list. It's very easy to do:

1. Pick a week or a two week time frame to hold your collection.
2. Pick your collection venue (church, work, school, community groups, scouts, social groups, etc) and plan to put a few collection boxes at the site for items to be dropped off.
3. Contact us at [collections@osotil.com](mailto:collections@osotil.com) to schedule (so we know what we have coming in!).
4. Print up flyers or prepare an email to send out to your contacts with the "Top Ten" items and ask everyone you know to participate by purchasing one or more items off the list and drop off in your collection box during the scheduled collection.
5. Coordinate with OSOTIL to bring the items to our warehouse.
6. Relax and know that you have helped to put a smile on the face of our troops.

OSOTIL will handle the rest and see that your collected goods get into the hands of our troops. You do not have to worry about the postage or boxes to ship - we will take care of it all!

Our troops need to know that we care about them - please help us to show that our commitment to them equals their commitment to us - regardless of the economy we are here for them because they are there for us!

For more information, please visit our website at [www.osotil.org](http://www.osotil.org) or email [info@osotil.org](mailto:info@osotil.org).

Thank you for caring for our troops.

### Calling all coupon clippers!

With our inventory as low as it is we are applying many strategies to continue to send the great boxes that we do. We know that we will need to purchase items to help us through the slow times but one way to minimize the impact of this is through coupons. If you are interested in being a part of "Operation Coupon Clip" please email back to [d\\_rickert@msn.com](mailto:d_rickert@msn.com). Jimmy Teufel, coupon clipper extraordinaire, will meet with us as a group to tell his secrets to getting huge discounts on inventory purchased with coupons for the troops.

The Woodridge Jaycees will be hosting a Karaoke event on Sat Feb 28 from 6-10 at Shanahans in Woodridge (1999 W. 75th St). There will be a \$15 donation to get in as well as donations to either sing or not sing. There will be a few drawings as well. Proceeds benefit Operation Support Our Troops-IL.

## Save the Date for the West Suburban St. Patrick's Day Parade!

We need walkers to represent OSOT-IL while passing out flyers and candy.

Date: Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>

Time: We will be meeting at the parade start-point at 9:30 am.

Parade starts at 10:00 am sharp!

Place: Naperville

**Note: We are in need of uniformed military personnel to walk with us. If you know of anyone interested, please contact Meghan Keener at [m.keener@my.interiordesign.edu](mailto:m.keener@my.interiordesign.edu)**

More details will be posted as they become available.

### **FRST (Family Resource and Support Team):**

*(Where military families can come to learn more about military life; while sharing the support and comradery of other military families).*

1) [Our next monthly meeting](#) will be held Tuesday, March 24 at 7PM at the Grant & Power Warehouse (1989 University Drive, Lisle, IL). A group activity is currently in the planning stages. In addition, Vet Center counselor, Jim Gilligan, will be available to provide group or individual counseling, if desired.

2) [The planning for the \*Fallen Heroes Family Prayer Service\*](#) is still taking place. This multi denominational service will honor Illinois' fallen heroes since the onset of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. It is to take place on Sunday, March 22 from 2-5pm at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Naperville. We will get a better idea of the number attending as the rsvp's arrive. There may be a need for additional food (sweets and pastries), depending on the response. – We'll keep you posted on the possible need additional bakers to fulfill the need on the Food Committee. At this point, all committees are set with volunteers but any additional ideas are welcome. Please email Maureen Keener ([cochmo@wideopenwest.com](mailto:cochmo@wideopenwest.com)) with additional ideas/suggestions. All OSOTIL Members are welcome to attend and honor our fallen Illinois heroes.

3) [Returning Military Family Members](#): Please remember to contact our OSOTIL email address [osotil\\_member@mchsi.com](mailto:osotil_member@mchsi.com) if you know when your family member will be returning from Deployment (due to R&R, injury or end of tour of duty). FRST would like to welcome them home (whether or not he/she can visit us in the warehouse.) -- Also, ask an OSOTIL Officer or FRST Team member for a roll of yellow ribbon to tie around the trees on your street to welcome that young man or woman home!! (FRST Team: Maureen Keener, Sharon King, Jackie Gieser, Andrea Arnold, Diane Beck, Megan Allen, Debbie Wolfe, Carol May, LeEllyn Mendez-Tovar.— Officer Liaison: Betty Krupp)

4) [Become a Member of the FRST Team](#): Talk to (or email) any of the team members above to see how you can be a part of this team. There are so many ways that we can all help support one another throughout our loved one's service. Even if you can't commit your time, your ideas are always welcome.

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