



**America Honors the Service of Military Members, Families and Veterans
with more than
21 Million Pledged Hours of Community Service**

6 Million Hours pledged by the American Legion Auxiliary pushes the envelope

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Washington, D.C. — [Blue Star Families](#)' [Operation Honor Card](#) volunteer movement exceeded all expectations today with a pledge of six million hours by the [American Legion Auxiliary](#). Since its creation in 2011, [Operation Honor Cards](#) has engaged thousands of individuals, families, groups, schools, colleges and major national organizations to pledge more than twenty-one million hours of community service in honor of our nation's military families, veterans and service members. Of the twenty-one million hours pledged, thirteen million hours have already been served.

“The American Legion Auxiliary is pleased and honored to add the service hours of its almost 800,000 members to [Operation Honor Cards](#)' total,” said [American Legion Auxiliary](#) National President Kris Nelson. “Our pledge of 6 million service hours in 2012 might seem ambitious, but that's actually how many hours our members recorded in the last impact-reporting period. I'm confident that we can meet the challenge again this year, and I hope we will exceed it!”



JOINING FORCES

[Operation Honor Cards](#) encourages individuals and organizations across the country to honor the service of the nation's military by pledging community service hours, as part of [Joining Forces](#). In 2011, First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden launched the [Joining Forces](#) initiative to support and honor our nation's military families with the goal of 3 million total pledged service hours. The country's commitment has been overwhelming and continues to exceed expectations, a solid indication of support and recognition.

“With its pledge, the American Legion Auxiliary stands as a role model and example of how citizens across the country - united in community service - can send a powerful message of their steadfast and sustained support of our active duty service members, guard, reserves, veterans and their families,” said Mark Smith, executive director of [Blue Star Families](#). “Our military serves us by protecting our country and our freedom; in return we, the citizens of our great nation, serve our communities.”

With [Operation Honor Cards](#), Blue Star Families, in partnership with the American Red Cross, Service Nation, Points of Light Institute, and the Corporation for National & Community Service is the driving force behind this initiative to encourage Americans to perform service in honor of military families, veterans and service members.

“15 million hours pledged, announced not yet two weeks ago was an amazing milestone,” said Captain Brad Cooper (USN, ret.), executive director of [Joining Forces](#), White House Office of the First Lady. “With this new accomplishment, we join forces and come together to say ‘we honor your service with ours.’”

In the coming weeks, Blue Star Families will highlight a series of organizations whose service pledges and active community service activities are examples of the exemplary commitment to local and military family communities, including organizations like the Girl Scouts of the United States and Boy Scouts of America; the Corporation for National & Community Service, the USO, and KaBOOM; Hands on Network, Operation Gratitude, and Mission Continues.

About Operation Honor Cards

Operation Honor Cards is run cooperatively with the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has also agreed to support this initiative by sharing information related to honor cards with their Veterans Service Organizations whose members volunteer at VA's medical centers. Inspired by the First Lady's campaign for military families, the program aims to create an atmosphere of 'shared service' and a sense of 'all give some' by encouraging Americans to perform service in honor of military families and veterans.

Operation Honor Cards features a website allowing people to pledge hours of community service and track their participation at www.honorcards.org. The website maintains a running tally of hours of community service hours committed and fulfilled in honor of military families, service members and veterans. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to join the program and may also fill out physical honor cards pledging service and download an online Operation Honor Cards kit. The American Red Cross and Blue Star Families distribute Honor Cards to deployed service members, military families, wounded veterans and caregivers, who can then see tangible evidence of the community service performed in their honor.

Visit www.honorcards.org for more information.

About Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families (www.bluestarfam.org) is a national, nonprofit network of military families from all ranks and services, including guard and reserve, with a mission to support, connect and empower military families. In addition to morale and empowerment programs, Blue Star Families raises awareness of the challenges and strengths of military family life and works to make military life more sustainable. Membership includes military spouses, children and parents as well as service members, veterans and civilians.

About Joining Forces

Joining Forces is a national initiative created by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr Jill Biden to energize action from every sector of our society – individuals, businesses, non-profits, philanthropy and faith-based institutions – to give service members, veterans and military families the support they have earned. See www.joiningforces.gov for more information.

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