

Adopt a Military Family Program 2009

For the fifth year, Operation: Care and Comfort (OCC) is conducting its “Adopt a Military Family” campaign to assist local military families through the holiday season.

We have found that military families are not eager to come forward to ask for assistance, even during the holidays. Often, a military Family Readiness Group (FRG) leader will learn of a military family in their unit who could use some support, but restrictive solicitation guidelines prevent them from asking for help. Through this grassroots program, this military liaison can contact our program to request help for this family.

In 2008, with the help of the San Jose Police Chaplaincy program, civilian families, companies, and organizations, over 250 military families were adopted and supported in their time of need. This effort was coordinated by military FRG leaders, who serve as the liaison between the military and civilian family. To protect the dignity of the military family, the families do not meet.

These military families do not like to ask for help. It is often through a fellow service member that the FRG leader will hear of a family that may be struggling. Many are single parents, or have a loved one serving overseas. Others have recently returned from deployment and are seeking work. Some need assistance with an unpaid bill or two, while others need a tree and all the trimmings. The civilian family or organization, paired with the military liaison, work together to see that their needs are met. Once in a while, when needs are great, more than one civilian family may be asked to help the military family. Again, all of these efforts are coordinated. Here’s how this works:

A Family Readiness Group Leader or military liaison contacts me about a military family in need. I ask a civilian family, company or organization on the “Adopt a Military Family” stand by list to help, by giving a few details about the family in need. It is their job to make sure that this family truly needs assistance. **At no time are names, addresses, and other personal information given about the military family to the civilian family.** Once the civilian family decides to adopt this military family, the family readiness group leader and civilian families are introduced via email. They will then work together to meet the families needs, determine whether or not additional support is needed, etc. The FRG leader will meet the civilian family to gather all purchased items, etc. and they will then arrange delivery to the military family. Again, the military and civilian families will never meet. Operation: Care and Comfort will check back with the FRG leader to “close the case.”

Once a civilian family is teamed with a FRG leader or other military liaison, that liaison owns the case. It is their job to follow through and notify Operation: Care and Comfort if the civilian family is not following through, or if additional assistance is needed.

We are now raising funds to purchase commissary gift certificates, bags of groceries, and other items to assist families. We already have groups and civilian families waiting to help. Please find ways to get the word out to your families. We are here to help, even at the last minute.

For those who wish to adopt a family or donate towards this worth cause, please contact me directly via email or phone. Happy Holidays.

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