



Altrusa SUPPORT OUR SOLDIERS International Service Project



Category 2 Assistance to Wounded Troops returning home

Disabled veterans deserve our utmost respect and assistance. Each one is unique and faces unique challenges. For this reason, Project SOS (Support Our Soldiers) has expanded its mandate from its original pilot program to include disabled veterans.

Many cities have organizations and foundations who help returning service men and women in need of assistance adapting to living with seen and unseen wounds. There are different ways we, as Altrusans, can be of assistance either as an organization or individually.

If you live near a military installation, contact the military chaplain or Family Resources Coordinator for more information on how to help our disabled heroes. If you do not live near an installation, contact your local Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, AmVets, or DAV. In New Zealand, the RSA has 190 local organizations. In Canada contact your local MFRC.

How can an Altrusans help veterans in need?

Honorable Ways You Can Help Veterans as a random act of kindness:

1. Pick up the tab for their coffee or meal
2. Drive a veteran to a doctor's appointment.
3. Listen to a veteran's stories. This is quite a gift to them.
4. Support an organization which trains service dogs
5. Replace one clear light bulb with a green one.
6. Help sponsor an honor flight.
7. Write a letter
8. Volunteer at a VA hospital
9. Get involved with the Veterans Assistance Program.

The New Zealand RSA (Returned and Service Association) and New Zealand Veterans Affairs are available to support service personnel and their families. Their website is www.rsa.org.nz

In Canada is MFRCs (Military Family Resource Centres) across Canada and Royal Canadian Legion are available to offer support.

In the US, the following organizations, as well as others, offer support:

WOUNDED WARRIOR FAMILY SUPPORT www.wwfs.org

Holidays are especially hard for disabled veterans and their families. Consider inviting a veteran and their family into your festivities during the Holidays. A home cooked meal and sharing stories can be meaningful to all participating. Your club can make disabled veterans feel respected and treasured during a time when we all have something for which to be thankful.

OPERATION GIVING BACK www.facs.org/ogb

After giving so much to our country, Operation Giving Back is the opportunity to give back. Providing a meal, preparing gift bags or baskets, writing notes of appreciation, or giving cards can go a long way towards giving back. Sending cards to our soldiers who are hospital bound not only offers support to the veteran, but reaches out to show appreciation for the service they have provided for us.

PROJECT LIFTING SPIRITS www.projectliftingspirits.org

Re-adjusting to life after being wounded is difficult. It may take weeks, months or even years before the soldier can heal from these wounds. This project would have gifts available to give the veteran so that he or she may have a present to give to their child when he or she comes to visit the hospital for the first time; or when the child comes to visit their parent in the hospital on their birthday or during Thanksgiving or Christmas.

HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS (HFOT) www.hfotusa.org

Most states now have access to a privately funded 501(c) (3) non-profit organization which builds handicapped accessible homes for veterans at no cost. There are many opportunities available which might peak the interest of an Altrusa club member, including but not limited to, cash donation or volunteering with the building of the home.

FISHER HOUSE www.fisherhouse.org

Many military communities have a local Fisher House. Its main purpose is to assist the family of a disabled or sick/injured veteran while he or she is in the hospital. They are normally located close to a V.A. Hospital and are helpful to the family of the veteran so that they can spend more time with their loved one and less time traveling between home and the hospital.

OPERATION HOMEFRONT www.operationhomefront.org

A national non-profit organization whose mission is to "build strong, stable, and secure military families" so they can thrive in the communities they have worked so hard to protect.

