

Adopt-A-Soldier



Connecting Kids and Heroes

Supporting the troops is a gift we give ourselves as they serve on our behalf! We support our men and women in uniform asking nothing in return except the honor of letting them know they are appreciated and never forgotten!



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About River Green Outreach

Mission

River Green Outreach works to meet community needs by mobilizing support and making volunteering easy and meaningful in our neighborhood.

Vision

River Green Outreach is designed to

- Join River Green residents who are already volunteering with legitimate and trustworthy organizations within our community with residents who wish to contribute to their community
- Mobilize support through scheduled featured projects the entire neighborhood can rally around
- Identify projects that are family-friendly to enable and encourage participation by all age groups
- Provide a vehicle for organization and coordination for charitable projects brought forth by our neighbors
- Publicize work done by residents in an effort to promote the goodness of people
- Help neighbors in need and keep our neighborhood exceptional
- Develop life-long friendships

History

River Green Outreach was founded in January 2009 by a group of neighbors who wanted to take action and improve the quality of life in River Green and surrounding community. The goal was to respond to the needs of local charities, individuals, and families by mobilizing caring neighbors in volunteer service. River Green Outreach became a non-profit corporation on June 12, 2009.

River Green Outreach Stats

196 participants (65% adults, 35% children & teens)
 28 articles of clothing donated to needy
 250 lunches delivered to children in need
 75 backpacks filled with school supplies delivered to children in need
 106 tubes of toothpaste delivered to children in need
 60 toothbrushes delivered to children in need
 50 packages of dental floss delivered to children in need
 67 pairs of new underwear and 137 pairs of new socks delivered to children in need

To get involved or learn more please visit www.RiverGreenOutreach.com

Contact Us

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Adopt-a-Soldier School Project

The project called “Adopt-a-Soldier” focuses on supporting a deployed U.S. military service member or unit stationed in harm’s way who is referred by a friend or family member in our community. Each homeroom “adopts” a service person, learns about the person and prepares care packages for him/her. **A class may choose to just send letters, care packages, or may select multiple projects.**

Class Project Captain

Each homeroom is assigned an adult Class Project Captain (e.g., room mom, other parent volunteer) to oversee and assist with the Adopt-a-Soldier project. Duties include:

- Works with teacher to select and carry out class assignments
- Serves as liaison between teacher, students/parents, service person, service person’s family, and River Green Outreach
- Sends announcements/ information to students’ parents through flyers, class newsletter, and class website about Adopt-a-Soldier activities, shipping schedules, and list of items to donate
- Collects completed letters and donations in classroom’s River Green Outreach drop box (River Green Outreach will pick-up drop boxes and handle all mailing/shipping – see *Getting Started: Letters and Packages* section)

In Honor of September 11

September 11: National Day of Service and Remembrance

On Tuesday, April 21, 2009 President Barack Obama signed legislation to establish the anniversary of September 11 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance. This day honors the victims and those who rose to service in response to the attacks on America.

In observance of the newly established September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance, River Green Outreach is partnering with your class to honor and say thanks to our soldiers and military families. Thank you for participating in our Adopt-a-Soldier Project.

Supporting the troops is a gift we give ourselves as they serve on our behalf! We support our men and women in uniform asking nothing in return except the honor of letting them know they are appreciated and never forgotten!

Schedule

August 28

Classroom Captain training, review of Adopt-a-Soldier information folder

September 4

Classroom Captains work with classroom teachers to schedule activities throughout year

September 11

Classroom Captains introduce Adopt-a-Soldier to classroom students, send announcements/backpack flyers home to parents, and place donation bins in classrooms

November 11

Classroom Captains collect care packages, donations, letters, and drawn pictures and deliver them to River Green Outreach for shipment to their soldier

December 4

Classroom Captains reports soldier news to students/teachers (any correspondence received from soldier, soldier's family, or River Green Outreach); Classroom Captain sends note home to parents with update on project and reminder to ask for donated goods, letters, or drawn pictures

February 12

Classroom Captains collect care packages, donations, letters, and drawn pictures and deliver them to River Green Outreach for shipment to their soldier

March 5

Classroom Captains reports soldier news to students/teachers (any correspondence received from soldier, soldier's family, or River Green Outreach); Classroom Captain sends note home to parents with update on project and reminder to ask for donated goods, letters, or drawn pictures

May 3

Classroom Captains collect care packages, donations, letters, and drawn pictures and deliver them to River Green Outreach for shipment to their soldier

May 10

Classroom Captains reports soldier news to students/teachers (any correspondence received from soldier, soldier's family, or River Green Outreach); Classroom Captain sends note home to parents with update on project and reminder to ask for donated goods, letters, or drawn pictures

DOs and DON'Ts for Teachers and Class Project Captains

DO prepare an over-all letter of introduction that should accompany your students'/ children's cards and letters. Class Project Captain can include their personal email addresses in the letter of introduction so that the troops can respond to the children through the Class Project Captain.

DO use this as an opportunity to teach the importance of GIVING. Soldiers love hearing the news from home so ask children to write about news items in their areas of the country, information about their school, classes, sports events, their favorite hobbies, interests and discussion regarding their future goals for life. Drawings are a tremendous treat for the troops!

DO NOT send photos of the students unless written parental permission has been acquired. You can send photos of your school in general and photos or newspaper photos of the community.

DO NOT give students/children service member mail or e-mail addresses. You may give students the name and unit name of your assigned Service Member(s), but do not provide the entire mailing address that includes the APO or FPO address zip code number.

DO NOT allow students to have direct contact with the troops. Students for example, can help to prepare the care package boxes and then the boxes left open so that students can drop their cards and letters into the boxes or envelopes should it be a pen pal endeavor. **Students are not to send their personal home mailing addresses, email addresses or phone numbers in their cards and letters to the troops.**

Getting Started: Letters and Packages

1. Your Letter of Introduction (for example)

My name is xxx and I represent a kindergarten class at Knox Elementary in Canton, Georgia. We received your name through River Green Outreach, a local non-profit organization in our community. I am grateful to be free and I consider it a privilege to support the people who help keep me free.

2. How to Address Your Soldier

You can refer to your soldier by his or her given name or by his or her rank and last name. For example, Lt. Col. Brian Wright could be addressed "Dear Lt. Col. Wright" or "Dear Brian."

3. Sending Letters and Packages

Simply put all letters, drawings, packages, and donations in your classroom's River Green Outreach drop box. River Green Outreach will handle all mailing/shipping to your soldier on the following dates:

November 11, 2009

February 12, 2010

May 3, 2010

Donations from students and their families to offset the shipping costs are not required, but appreciated.

4. Package Considerations

- All packages are subject to high heat and much bouncing around; choose items accordingly and pack securely
- No chocolate from March to September (it melts)
- Scented items and liquids should be placed in zip lock bags
- Because of the heat, aerosol cans are not a good idea
- Please note that since 9/11 mail cannot be addressed to "any soldier"
- Your soldier's address is confidential and will not be provided to the classroom

5. Your Soldier Has No Obligation to Contact You

River Green Outreach's goal is for classrooms to receive correspondence from their soldier and updates from the soldier's family. However, there is no guarantee that neither the soldier nor the family will contact the classroom. Soldiers are enduring difficult situations overseas. Even if you never hear back, you are doing something important. Please don't stop writing just because your soldier doesn't write back.

Class Project Ideas

A class may choose to just send letters, care packages, or may select multiple projects.

Students prepare items to send to a military service person with assistance from class project captain.

<p style="text-align: center;">TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Draw pictures Make birthday/holiday cards Make holiday crafts and ornaments Write letters Send vacation postcards Send Girl Scout cookies Throw a welcome home party</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COLLECTION DRIVES</p> <p>Send backpack flyers home with students to collect goods for care packages (include "List of Most Wanted Items")</p> <p>Ask for new or GENTLY used DVDs, video games, paperback books, magazines (current – under 3 months old), board games, etc.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">PATRIOTIC BOOKMARKS</p> <p><i>Materials Needed</i> Poster board Red, white, and blue construction paper Glue</p> <p><i>Steps Involved</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cut poster board into 2" x 8" strips. 2. Use red, white and blue construction paper to decorate the poster board, creating a patriotic bookmark. 3. Younger children can create attractive bookmarks by tearing paper into small pieces and gluing them neatly onto the poster board strip. 4. After bookmarks have dried, turn them over and write a brief message suitable for any member of the armed forces. If your children cannot yet write, have them dictate a message, and write it for them. 	<p style="text-align: center;">TABLECLOTH BANNERS</p> <p><i>Materials Needed</i> Vinyl table cloth Various art supplies (markers, paint, stickers, etc.)</p> <p><i>Steps Involved</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take a vinyl table cloth and have kids write messages of support to the troops and sign their names. They can draw; add smiley faces and hearts too. Let them get creative. 2. Adults will want to help with the banner's title. Some title suggestions: "We Support You" or "We Love Our Troops," etc.

Class Project Ideas (cont'd)

A class may choose to just send letters, care packages, or may select multiple projects.

Students prepare items to send to a military service person with assistance from class project captain.

THEME CARE PACKAGE IDEAS

Movie Night Package:

- DVDs
- Microwave popcorn
- Large box of assorted candy (no chocolate from March through September - it melts!)

Coffee Break Package:

- Coffee (original or flavored, ground or whole bean, name brands like Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts are favorite requests from the troops)
- Coffee makers and grinders (new only)
- Coffee filters and stirrers
- Creamers and sweeteners
- Travel mugs (with lids)
- Assorted teas (regular, decaf or herbal)
- Cocoa or hot chocolate mix
- Girl Scout cookies

SEND GOURMET BIRTHDAY CAKES*

Company:

Bake Me a Wish!

Website:

www.bakemeawish.com/operation-birthday-cakes.php

To Order:

Simple online order process

Cost:

\$55 - \$60 total (includes \$25 S&H)

Operation: Birthday Cake

Bake Me a Wish! bulk ships all Operation: Birthday Cakes twice each week and send via the USPS. It takes approximately 10 to 14 days, for the cake to arrive. S&H of each cake is \$25.00 with refrigerated packaging to ensure freshness.

* In some remote areas this option may not be feasible

List of Most Wanted Items

FOR CLASS CAPTAINS TO SEND AS ATTACHEMENT TO BACKPACK FLYERS

X indicates items most wanted by your solder

- Travel wipes/hand and face wipes
- Baby wipes
- Lysol wipes
- Rice Krispie treats
- Altoids/mints
- Beef jerky
- Snack mixes
- Sunflower seeds
- Chewing gum
- Nuts
- Coffee
- Gatorade (powder)
- Cookies in individual packages (big bags often fill with dust if not eaten right away)
- Pringles chips
- Cereal bars/granola bars
- M&M's (plain or peanut)
- *DVDs
- *Magazines (current – under 3 months old)
- *Paperback books
- AA batteries
- Canned air to blow dust out of electronics
- Razors
- Ink pens (black only)
- Foot powder
- Colgate Wisp toothbrushes
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Disposable shower towels
- Inflatable pillow
- Individually wrapped hard candy (to give to kids)
- Deodorant
- Shower to Shower body powder
- Jelly beans
- Disposable camera
- Long-distance phone cards
- Little Debbie's snacks
- Ziploc bags
- Jaw breakers
- *Music CD's
- Pasta and sauce
- Canned food items

*New or GENTLY used

- Spices, salt, pepper
- Smoked oysters and sardines
- Squeeze butter
- Individually-wrapped licorice
- Microwave popcorn
- Ramen noodles
- Macaroni & cheese
- Olives, pickles, peppers (be sure to add lots of bubble wrap around these items)
- Microwave pasta that doesn't need refrigeration
- Hot cocoa mix
- Soup mix
- *Koozies to keep water bottles and cans cool
- Microwaveable plates, bowls, paper plates
- Newspapers
- D batteries
- Air fresheners (...like stick-ups, F'breeze.)
- *Stress relief squeeze balls
- *Footbag/hacky-sack
- *Poker game
- *Playing cards
- *Dice
- *Dominoes
- *Poker chips
- *Board games
- Word puzzle books
- Sewing kit
- Shoe laces for gym shoes and boots
- Brown t-shirts
- Boot socks
- Underwear
- Hand warmers
- Inflatable seat cushions
- Icy/hot patches
- Air activated heat wraps for sore muscles
- Foot massager
- Vitamins
- Other: _____
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

Example Backpack Flyer #1

TEMPLATE FOR CLASS CAPTAINS

Adopt-a-Soldier project announcement letter to students and parents, Page 1 of 2

Page 1

Adopt-A-Soldier



Connecting Kids and Heroes



Hello, Ms./Mr. _____'s class

My name is _____, and I have been assigned to be your class project captain for the "Adopt-a-Soldier" project. I think this is one of the most worthwhile things that a citizen can do: support our nation's heroes, especially in time of war.

I am here to help you get started.

TO CONTACT ME Email:
 Phone:

ABOUT THE ADOPT-A-SOLDIER PROJECT

On Tuesday, April 21, 2009 President Barack Obama signed legislation to establish the anniversary of 9/11 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance. This day honors the victims and those who rose to service in response to the attacks on America.

In observance of the newly established September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance, River Green Outreach is partnering with your class to honor and say thanks to our soldiers and military families. To learn more about River Green Outreach please visit www.RiverGreenOutreach.com.

The project called "Adopt-a-Soldier" focuses on supporting a deployed U.S. military service member or unit stationed in harm's way who is referred by a friend or family member in our community. Each homeroom "adopts" a service person learns about the person and prepares a care package for him/her. River Green Outreach handles all mailing/shipping



Example Backpack Flyer #1 (cont'd)

TEMPLATE FOR CLASS CAPTAINS

Adopt-a-Soldier project announcement letter to students and parents, Page 2 of 2

Page 2

ABOUT YOUR SOLDIER or UNIT

Your classroom soldier is John A. Soldier and he is a Marine deployed in Afghanistan until October 2010. John is married to Jane and he is a daddy. John's kids are Jenny and Jimmy and they are 5 and 3 years old. Jane and the kids live here in Canton, Georgia and can't wait until he comes home next year. John misses his family very much too.

[picture here if available]

As your class project captain, I will be working with you, your teacher, and the service person's family to help you do some great things to honor your soldier. When soldiers are far from home they love getting mail and packages. We will be sending John some special things like:

- Drawn pictures and letters
- Care packages
- Birthday cake (his birthday is May 30) and/or cards

SHIPMENT SCHEDULE

Nov 11, 2009

Feb 12, 2010

May 3, 2010

WHAT'S NEXT?

Please look for future backpack flyers and letters for more information.

Thank you for participating in our Adopt-a-Soldier project.

Example Backpack Flyer #2

TEMPLATE FOR CLASS CAPTAINS

Send flyer home to students and parents September 2009

Adopt-A-Soldier



Connecting Kids and Heroes



ADOPT-A-SOLDIER CARE PACKAGE #1

November 11, 2009 ship date

Dear Parents:

We will be sending our first package to _____, your classroom's adopted soldier, on November 11, 2009. Your teacher and I have planned some great activities for our class. Also, we now have a drop box set up in our room to collect donated items.

Classroom Activities and Package Contents:

- Letters and pictures drawn by students
- Holiday cards/crafts made by students
- Donated goods

Suggested Donations:

- \$1 per student to help offset postage/shipping costs
- New and GENTLY used goods (see attached "List of Most Wanted Items")

Please clearly label donations "for Adopt-a-Soldier drop box."

Thank you.



Example Backpack Flyer #3

TEMPLATE FOR CLASS CAPTAINS

Send flyer home to students and parents December 2009

Adopt-A-Soldier



Connecting Kids and Heroes



ADOPT-A-SOLDIER SHIPMENT #2

February 12, 2010 ship date

Dear Parents:

We will be sending our next package to _____, your classroom's adopted soldier, on February 20, 2010. Your teacher and I have planned some great activities for our class. We also have a drop box set up in our room to collect donated items.

Classroom Activities and Package

Contents:

- Letters and pictures drawn by students
- Craft project: patriotic bookmarks (inserted in donated paperback books)
- Coffee Break theme box
- Donated goods

Suggested Donations:

- \$1 per student to help offset postage/shipping costs
- New and GENTLY used goods (see attached "List of Most Wanted Items")

For Coffee Break theme box:

- Coffee (Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts are favorite requests from the troops)
- Coffee makers and grinders (new only)
- Coffee filters, stirrers, creamers, and sweeteners
- Travel mugs (with lids)
- Assorted teas (regular, decaf, herbal)
- Cocoa or hot chocolate mix
- Girl Scout Cookies

Please clearly label donations "for Adopt-a-Soldier drop box." Thank you.



Example Backpack Flyer #4

TEMPLATE FOR CLASS CAPTAINS

Send flyer home to students and parents March 2010

Adopt-A-Soldier



Connecting Kids and Heroes



ADOPT-A-SOLDIER SHIPMENT #3

May 3, 2010 ship date

Dear Parents:

We will be sending our next package to _____, your classroom's adopted soldier, on May 3, 2010. Since this is our final package for the school year, we have planned some special things for our soldier. We also have a drop box set up in our room to collect donated items.

Classroom Activities and Package Contents:

- Letters and pictures drawn by students
- Craft project: "We Support You" vinyl table cloth banner
- Sending gourmet birthday cake
- Donated goods

Suggested Donations:

- \$1 per student to help offset postage/shipping costs
- \$3 per student to send gourmet birthday cake to our soldier
- New and GENTLY used goods (see attached "List of Most Wanted Items")

Please clearly label donations "for Adopt-a-Soldier drop box."

We really appreciate all the support from our students and their families this school year to send our soldier such special care packages. Thank you for your generosity and for helping to make this a special experience for our classroom, soldier's family, and most importantly, for _____.

Thank you.



Get to Know Your Soldier (optional classroom activity)

For some soldiers, a family member may be available and interested in being involved in the project. The “Get to Know Your Soldier” activity is recommended to deepen the experience for each student and teacher as well as the service person’s family member.

Steps Involved:

1. A family member introduces the service person with a picture collage from childhood through the present and a biography.
2. The materials are left in the classroom for two weeks while students brainstorm what they could put in their care package.
3. Students invite the family member back to their class to see the “ready to ship” care package before mailing.
4. When lucky enough to have a service person in town, they may visit the classroom.

ATTENTION: TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

Want to Adopt-a-Soldier?

The project called "Adopt-a-Soldier" focuses on supporting a deployed U.S. military service member or unit stationed in harm's way who is referred by a friend or family member in our community. Each homeroom "adopts" a service person, learns about the person and prepares care packages for him/her.

Complete form below to sign-up

A class may choose to just send letters, care packages, or may select multiple projects

River Green Outreach handles all mailing/shipping

Class Project Captain

Each homeroom is assigned a Class Project Captain* (e.g., student volunteer) to oversee and assist with the Adopt-a-Soldier project. Duties include:

- Works with teacher to select and carry out class assignments
- Serves as liaison between teacher, students/parents, service person, service person's family, and River Green Outreach
- Sends announcements/ information to students and parents through flyers, class newsletter, and class website about Adopt-a-Soldier activities, shipping schedules, and list of items to donate
- Collects letters and donations in classroom's drop box

* **Elementary schools: must be an adult class parent or room mom**

River Green Outreach

Mission

River Green Outreach works to meet community needs by mobilizing support and making volunteering easy and meaningful in our neighborhood.

History

River Green Outreach was founded in January 2009 by a group of neighbors who wanted to take action and improve the quality of life in River Green and surrounding community. The goal was to respond to the needs of local charities, individuals, and families by mobilizing caring neighbors in volunteer service. River Green Outreach became a non-profit corporation on June 12, 2009.

To learn more please visit www.RiverGreenOutreach.com

Contact Us

Cristina De Martini

Founder

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Adopt-A-Soldier



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RIVER GREEN



OUTREACH

Together We're Better

Yes, I'd like for my students to participate in the Adopt-a-Soldier project.

School: _____

**Grade/
Room #:** _____

Teacher: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

RETURN FORM to River Green Outreach mailbox in your school's office

ATTENTION: STUDENT AND PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Want To Be a Class Captain?

Complete form below to sign-up

Each homeroom needs a Class Project Captain* (e.g., student volunteer) to oversee and assist with the Adopt-a-Soldier project. Duties include:

- Works with teacher to select and carry out class assignments
- Serves as liaison between teacher, students/parents, service person, service person's family, and River Green Outreach
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Contact Us

Cristina De Martini

Founder

Email: CristinasTrail@yahoo.com

Amy Wright

Adopt-a-Soldier Project Manager

Email: amywrightathome@comcast.net

Yes, I'd like to serve as Class Project Captain.

Name: _____ School: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Teacher: _____ Grade/
Room #: _____

Adopt-A-Soldier



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RIVER GREEN



OUTREACH

Together We're Better

RETURN FORM to River Green Outreach mailbox in your school's office

SOLDIER SIGN-UP

Do you know an active duty service member?

River Green Outreach wants to honor those who protect our country. Use the form below to sign-up your military service family member or friend for adoption by a classroom in our community.

For more information or to sign-up online visit www.RiverGreenOutreach.com.

Your Name (required)	
Your Phone	
Your Email (required)	
Service Member	
Name: (required)	
Birthday	
Hometown	
Rank	
Branch	
Current Duty Station	
Dates of Deployment	
AFO/APO Complete Address	
Email	
List of Things Most Wanted	

Tell Us About Them

--

Adopt-A-Soldier



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