

**OPERATION:**

**Military**

**VERMONT**



Hi All,

Thank you very, very much for choosing Hero Packs for Operation: Military Kids Vermont as your community service project. You're doing a great service!

I want to fill you in on how to proceed to make Hero Packs to deliver to children of deploying service men and women. I am attaching a flier that explains a bit about them. Essentially, we are trying to make enough packs to deliver one to every child of a deploying service member (we're aiming for 3,000). The packs are delivered from young people, like you, to children of the deploying. The goal of the project is to keep the children connected (to their community and to their loved one) throughout the whole deployment cycle (before, during, upon their return). The Hero Pack project is considered a youth-to-youth project.

There are some basic items that we will put in the pack for you -- a writing kit, book, blinking pins, a camera. Some items that would be great are local coupons for mini golf, pizza, or movies. A new stuffed animal or toy. A frisbee or outdoor toy. A journal, photo album, scrapbook, or frame (for keeping memories or a photo of their loved one). A phone card is great so that they can make their own call to the deployed parent or loved one.

I would suggest that you target how many packs you can complete -- Maybe 5 or 10. You should draft a letter explaining your project. These packs will be given directly to local children of deploying soldiers so it's important that local items be inside (bowling coupons, movie tickets, pizza coupons, video rental coupons -- but no food). You can explain to the businesses that it's the local support and connection that matters most because it shows that their home town thanks these military kids for their sacrifice in sending a loved one to serve overseas (the motto is: "Operation: Military Kids Vermont, because kids serve too"). A soft, snuggly thing is very nice, too, especially for the littlest military kids -- maybe a Webkinz, bear, or a small fleece blanket you could make (I have some fabric that could be

used if there are kids or teachers who would like to stitch the edges).

There needs to be a personal, hand-written letter in each pack from you to the child receiving the pack, thanking him or her for her service, recognizing that it is hard but that he or she must be very proud. Maybe you can explain the items and how they will help the child to stay in contact, connected, through letters, photos, scrapbook activities that they can show later. I'm happy to help you with anything. I can read letters if you'd like.

So, I see a couple of different steps for you:

- 1) target your items
- 2) Write a letter of explanation to the merchants (they will need this for their files - - use my name, UVM address, and [www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org)) -- this is a national program, a partnership between the military and 4-H, in support of military youth, new to Vermont in the last 4 months. \*\* You can point out that this upcoming deployment is likely to impact 3,000 youth. The packs will go to local kids.
- 3) call merchants or visit to ask for donations for the packs (know what you are asking for -- 2 rounds of mini golf X 5; 5 bears; 5 photo albums, etc...)
- 4) write a letter for each pack
- 5) fill pack \*\* If they are not complete, please list what is in each pack so that we can help you complete them.

This is terrific! Thank you so much for your time and support. You are part of a very important program for kids in Vermont. I am really grateful for your help and commitment. Please take lots of pictures as you work to make these packs happen!

Call or email with any questions.

Sincerely,

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