



USO Puget Sound Area and Walgreens Launch 'Operation Backpack' to Provide New Backpacks and School Supplies to Local Military Families in Need

USOPSA anticipates distributing donated backpacks and school supplies to more than 2,000 local military families throughout August

SEATTLE – August 8, 2011 – The USO Puget Sound Area (USOPSA) and Walgreens today announced 'Operation Backpack,' a new back to school partnership and program that will collect donations of new backpacks and school supplies throughout August, and distribute them to children of deployed and financially burdened local military members.

"For some local military families, back to school shopping adds a financial burden to an already stressful time of year," said Don Leingang, executive director of USOPSA and Commander, USN (Ret.) "We consider it our civic duty to take care of as many of our military families as we can, especially during times such as now when many families are dealing with long overseas deployments."

Donations of new backpacks and school supplies can be made at any Puget Sound-area Walgreens location throughout the end of the month. Requested school supplies include new backpacks, spiral notebooks, markers, construction paper, notebook paper, crayons, white glue, pencils, scissors, watercolor paints, computer paper, erasers, index cards, binders, colored map pencils, zippered pencil bags and school boxes.

Monetary donations can also be made directly to USO Puget Sound Area via phone (206) 246-1908, or via the USO website at: <http://www.usopsa.org/donate>. For a \$100 donation, USO can provide a military child with a new backpack, grade-level appropriate school supplies, and a \$30 Walgreens gift card to purchase any remaining supplies. Anyone who sponsors a child will also be able to include a note of encouragement, which USO will pass along to the child with the donated school supplies.

In celebration of 'Operation Backpack,' and the 45th anniversary of USO Puget Sound Area this year (1966 – 2011), the USO Mobile Canteen, our 'Army of Gratitude' volunteers and Walgreens are hosting three free BBQs for active-duty military and dependents this month (BBQ is \$5 for the general public). The BBQs will be held from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM at the East Bremerton Walgreens location at 3333 Wheaton Way on Saturday, August 13; at the Tacoma Walgreens location at 15225

Pacific Avenue South on Saturday, August 20; and at the Des Moines, WA Walgreens location at 23003 Pacific Highway South on Saturday, August 27.

The USO Puget Sound Area now serves more than 500,000 local and traveling active-duty military, dependents, veterans and reservists annually across all five service branches and more than 4,000 square miles of Puget Sound.

For more information on USO Puget Sound Area and how we help enrich the lives of our local military families, please visit us online at: <http://www.usopsa.org>.

To schedule interviews (press only), please contact:

- Nate Murphy, Kitsap Public Relations, (206) 618-2790, nate@kitsap-pr.com

About USO Puget Sound Area

For 45 years, the USO Puget Sound Area has provided 'all the comforts of home' to our brave military personnel and their families, via the USOPSA centers at Sea-Tac Airport and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the USO Mobile Canteen, special events, and deployments and homecomings at military installations throughout the Puget Sound region. The USO Puget Sound Area is a private, non-profit organization, and a chartered center of USO Headquarters in Washington, D.C., not a government agency. We rely on the generosity of our volunteers and donors. We are also supported through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC-15348).

For more information on how to volunteer, or to make a one-time or recurring tax-deductible donation to the USO Puget Sound Area, visit us online at: <http://www.usopsa.org>. Show your support for our military and follow @USOPSA on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/USOPSA>), Twitter (<http://www.facebook.com/USOPSA>), and YouTube (<http://www.facebook.com/USOPSA>).