



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

Senator Amedore and AT&T Help 'Cell Phones For Soldiers' to Provide Troops with Free Calls Home for the Holidays

GEORGE AMEDORE December 22, 2015

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In time for the holidays, more than 1,800 donated cellphones will be used to provide calling cards for our deployed troops and veterans to call home

Albany, NY – December 21, 2015 – Just in time for the holidays, State Senator George Amedore and AT&T are proud to announce that the community has helped collect more than 1,800

gently-used mobile devices over the past month that will now be donated to Cell Phones For Soldiers.

By donating these cell phones and mobile devices to Cell Phones For Soldiers, this joint effort by Senator Amedore, AT&T and the community will be able to provide our troops and injured veterans with more than 81,000 minutes of free calls to their loved ones back home. Proceeds from the recycled devices will be used to buy long distance calling cards for troops abroad and veterans at home.

The collection drive – which began Nov 20 and lasted until Dec. 20 – spanned Senator Amedore’s district, where the public was able to drop off any used mobile devices at collection bins in AT&T stores throughout the region, as well as more than 15 public locations.

For every donated phone valued at just \$5, Cell Phones For Soldiers is able to provide 2 ½ hours of free talk time to deployed troops through calling cards.

“I want to thank the residents of the 46th Senate district who contributed to the Cell Phones for Soldiers drive, and our community partners who offered their facilities as drop off locations,” said Senator George Amedore. “I can think of no better gift this holiday season than to help the brave men and women who are serving our nation stay connected to their loved ones back home. Their holidays will be a bit brighter thanks the generosity of residents from all over the district who donated an old or unwanted cell phone.”

Cell Phones For Soldiers was founded in 2004 by teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist at the ages of 12 and 13 after they heard the story of a local soldier with a cell phone bill that totaled nearly \$8,000. They decided to help this one man with just \$21 of their own money and Cell Phones For Soldiers was born from there.

The charity has since provided more than 216 million minutes of free talk time to servicemen and women stationed around the world through its calling card program, Minutes That Matter. Funds raised from the recycling of cellular phones are used to purchase prepaid international calling cards. On average, Cell Phones For Soldiers distributes 1,500 calling cards each week to bases around the world, care package programs, deployment ceremonies and VA hospitals.

Marissa Shorenstein, New York President, AT&T, said: "At AT&T we provide solutions to better connect the world, but nothing brings us more pride and joy than being able to connect our active military and veterans with their loved ones, especially during the holidays," said "I applaud Senator Amedore for leading this community collection drive with AT&T and I thank everyone that donated a mobile device. Their generosity will make the holidays more enjoyable for some of America's bravest men and women and their families."

Since 2004, more than 11.7 million phones have been recycled or repurposed. Approximately half of the phones processed are reconditioned and reused. Phones and components that cannot be refurbished are dismantled and responsibly recycled to reclaim materials, including:

Gold, silver and platinum from circuit boards

Copper wiring from phone chargers

Nickel, iron, cadmium and lead from battery packs

AT&T's ongoing support of Cell Phones For Soldiers stems from the company's longstanding mission to connect members of the nation's military and veterans with their loved ones back home. AT&T has proudly supported Cell Phones For Soldiers' "Helping Heroes Home" initiative, a program designed to provide emergency funds for returning veterans to alleviate communication challenges as well as physical, emotional and assimilation hardships. Additionally, AT&T and its customers have donated more than \$4.6 million and distributed more than 600,000 AT&T prepaid calling cards to service men and women overseas since 2007.

For more information, please visit www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com.

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