



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 13, 2017



As we prepare to celebrate the holiday season, 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

wounded veterans with more than 85,000 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. 6 and lasted until Dec. 6 – 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.

“The men and women who serve our country shouldn’t have to consider the financial burden of calling home this holiday season,” said Senator George Amedore. “I want to thank residents throughout 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. With all of your donations, we will help our veterans stay connected to family and friends wherever they may be stationed this holiday season.”

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 300 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.

Robbie Bergquist, Cell Phones For Soldiers Co-Founder, said: "Cell Phones for Soldiers would like to express our sincere appreciation of Senator Amedore, AT&T and the entire community for taking on our mission to connect military members serving around the world with their loved ones back home, especially during the holidays."

Marissa Shorenstein, President, Northeast Region, AT&T, said: "At AT&T we 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 holiday season. I applaud Senator Amedore for leading another remarkable community collection drive with AT&T and I thank everyone that donated an old mobile device. The remarkable generosity of this community will make the holidays more enjoyable for 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 700,000 AT&T prepaid calling cards to service men and women overseas since 2007. In addition, AT&T set a goal to hire 20,000 veterans by 2020 and over the past five years has contributed approximately \$21 million to organizations and projects that support the military, veterans and their families through corporate, social investment and AT&T Foundation giving programs.

For more information, please visit [www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com](http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com).