



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo, AT&T announce results for Cell Phones for Soldiers Collection Drive

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO December 22, 2021

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**UTICA** – New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome and AT&T proudly announced on Wednesday that **more than 910** gently-used mobile devices have been collected over the past month and have been donated to [Cell Phones for Soldiers](#). The Central New York Veterans Outreach Center and the Utica Comets partnered with Sen. Griffo and AT&T for this year’s effort.

This year’s collection drive ran from Nov. 11 to Dec 11 and spanned Sen. Griffo’s district. The public was able to drop off any used mobile devices at 17 collection bins and AT&T stores throughout the district, which includes parts of Oneida and St. Lawrence counties and all of

Lewis County.

As a result of this tremendous community support, **approximately 136,500 minutes** of free calls will be provided to men and women serving in the military. According to Cell Phones for Soldiers this is a remarkable accomplishment based on the limitations the pandemic has placed on collection drives across the nation.

For every donated phone valued at \$5, Cell Phones for Soldiers is able to provide 2 ½ hours of free talk time to deployed troops via calling cards. All proceeds from the recycled devices will be used to buy long distance calling cards for troops at home and abroad.

“Year after year, the residents of the 47th Senate District always shows their generosity and willingness to help those in need,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “This year was no different, and, despite significant challenges related to COVID-19, everyone really stepped up once again. I would like to thank AT&T, Cell Phones For Soldiers, the Central New York Veterans Outreach Center, the Utica Comets and especially our caring and compassionate community for taking part in this collection drive and helping those who sacrifice for our greater good.”

“I sincerely thank Senator Griffo for once again leading this annual community Cell Phones for Soldiers drive with AT&T and am extremely grateful to everyone that donated a device. The generosity of this community and its level of commitment to supporting active military, veterans and their families is overwhelming,” **said Amy Kramer, AT&T New York President.** “AT&T is again honored to take part in this meaningful charitable campaign because as a communications company there is nothing that brings us more joy and pride than being able to help connect our active military and veterans with their loved ones, especially during the holidays.”

Cell Phones For Soldiers was founded in 2004 by teenagers **Robbie and Brittany Bergquist** at the ages of 12 and 13 and is dedicated to providing cost-free communication services, devices, and emergency funding to active-duty military members and veterans. The charity has provided more than 400 million minutes of free talk time to servicemen and women stationed around the world, and counting, through its calling card and communications services program, Minutes That Matter. Funds raised from the recycling of unwanted, outdated, or broken cellular and smartphones, mp3 players, tablets, digital cameras, and accessories including chargers, cases, and cables 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.

“We are so grateful to AT&T and Senator Griffo for their continued support, and to all the people in Senator Griffo’s district who donated phones and devices to support our troops and veterans,” **said Rob Bergquist, founder and president of Cell Phones For Soldiers.** “Their generosity helps us keep America’s heroes connected with their friends and loved ones, and it helps us serve our veterans in need.”

For more than a century, AT&T has been proudly supporting veterans, active military personnel and their families through numerous company initiatives. Since 2007, AT&T and its customers have donated more than \$65 million and distributed more than 800,000 pre-paid calling cards and other communications services to servicemen and women. AT&T’s continued support of active military, veterans and their families closely align with the company’s undying commitment to FirstNet built with AT&T, America’s safety communications platform providing first responders with a reliable, highly secure, interoperable, and innovative wireless communications and broadband network dedicated to public safety.

For more information on Cell Phones for Soldiers, please visit [www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com](http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com).

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