



# Operation Gratitude Expands to Nationwide Community-Powered Movement

*After Two Decades of Care Package Distribution, Organization Launches Next Chapter to Empower Local Acts of Appreciation Nationwide*

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, September 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Operation Gratitude, the nonprofit that has connected Americans with service members and first responders for over 20 years, announced earlier this month a new chapter in how it fulfills its mission. Over the next year, the organization is expanding from a single, centralized warehouse into a nationwide, community-centered movement. This new direction will focus on grassroots grantmaking, local engagement, and storytelling—empowering Americans in every zip code to express their gratitude in meaningful, lasting ways.

Since its founding, Operation Gratitude has fulfilled its mission to say “thank you” to all who serve by delivering more than four million care packages filled with donated products, handmade items, and heartfelt letters. As the circumstances and needs of Military and First Responder communities evolve—and as Americans increasingly seek local ways to show their appreciation—the organization is expanding how it delivers on its mission of gratitude. Building on its two plus decades of experience, Operation Gratitude will now support sustainable, community-led efforts that can provide a more positive and personalized impact on local Military and First Responders. At the same time, the organization is expanding opportunities for Americans across the country to engage in meaningful appreciation initiatives in their own neighborhoods.

“This is the natural evolution of the grassroots movement built by our extraordinary volunteers to express their appreciation to all who serve,” said Carolyn Blashek, Founder and Board Chair of Operation Gratitude. “My vision and hope twenty years ago was to enable Americans in every community of the country to say “Thank You” and feel connected to those who defend and protect them. Today that dream starts to take shape.”

Operation Gratitude’s new strategy focuses on three core pillars:

**Supporting Local Gratitude Projects:** Grants and resources for community-centered events, youth programs, and volunteer efforts honoring Service Members, Veterans, and First Responders.

**Sharing Tools and Know-How:** Step-by-step guides, templates, and digital resources to help

anyone plan impactful projects.

Preserving Stories of Gratitude: Capturing and sharing two decades of impact to inspire the next generation to act.

"Operation Gratitude has always been about empowering Americans to say thank you," said Emily Rich Schwartz, Consulting Executive Director and Operation Gratitude Board Member. "This evolution allows us to shift away from operating out of one location in California to a grassroots model that reaches every hometown across the country - enabling communities to create their own lasting impacts of appreciation. It's a model that honors our legacy while meeting the realities of the moment."

This shift builds on the success of community-based programs like Operation Gratitude's Halloween Candy Giveback, which sparked nationwide participation and inspired thousands of local acts of appreciation. That same grassroots momentum now powers the organization's new community-driven model.

"It has been a privilege to watch Operation Gratitude grow and evolve over the years, and this chapter is an exciting next step," said Katie Haney, Associate Executive Director of Operation Gratitude. "Instead of asking communities to support a centralized effort in California, we're now asking how we can support them in their volunteer efforts, with resources, guidance, and encouragement to lead their own projects."

Corporate partners can now play an even greater role in Operation Gratitude's mission—by supporting the new Grants Program that brings gratitude to life in hometowns across the country. In addition, Operation Gratitude will facilitate companies hosting their own employee-led events honoring service members and first responders, with the organization serving as a trusted advisor through detailed toolkits, resources, and guidance. It's a model that deepens the corporate partners' local impact while expanding their presence on a national scale.

#### About Operation Gratitude

Founded in 2003, Operation Gratitude connects Americans with those who serve by saying "Thank You" to the Military and First Responder communities. Through grassroots grantmaking, community resources, and storytelling initiatives, Operation Gratitude empowers Americans in every zip code to create their own meaningful expressions of appreciation to all who serve. For more information about Operation Gratitude, visit [www.OperationGratitude.com](http://www.OperationGratitude.com).

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Operation Gratitude

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