



Holiday Mail for Heroes Card Making Party

What it is Holiday Mail for Heroes is an annual campaign where the American Red Cross affords Americans the opportunity to send messages of thanks and holiday cheer to military members, veterans, and their families.

During this party, gather Red Cross Club members and friends and family to make cards with kind messages to show your gratitude for their service.

How it helps Sending holiday mail to American military members, veterans, and their families not only allows communities to express messages of gratitude, but also provides an opportunity to share holiday cheer to those serving far from home.

Get started Before beginning, contact your local Red Cross unit or Service to Armed Forces (SAF) station and ask if they are participating in the Holiday Mail program. You can search for your local chapter by zip code on redcross.org – when you call the chapter, ask to speak to someone who works with youth volunteers. They will be able to guide you to available resources that can make this an impactful and successful event. Once you have established contact with your unit, there are three steps you should complete:

- 1.** Decide on a date, time, and location. Community centers and school auditoriums make for good locations. Every year, cards are collected between the first week of October and the first week of December, and distributed in time for the holidays—plan your party accordingly.
- 2.** Spread the word! Invite people to attend the party by creating flyers and sharing the invitation on social networking sites. Encourage people to bring friends and family to participate.
- 3.** Gather the necessary materials. Budget the cost of supplies (postage, cards, construction paper, markers, etc., but no glitter) and encourage participants or fellow Red Cross Club members to bring their own creative decorations. Be sure to review the “Checklist” resource for card making guidelines. Provide food, beverages, and fun background music. Ask local restaurants if they will donate food for the party.

Want more information?
Contact us!

youthinvolvement@redcross.org

DID YOU KNOW?

Over the last six years, the Holiday Mail for Heroes program has collected more than 6.5 million cards for our veterans, servicemen, and military families.

What's Next?

- Recruit volunteers to help on the day of the party. They can help set up card making areas and distribute card making materials.
- Create a schedule to help maintain order, especially if the party involves a large group of people. Make sure to schedule plenty of time to set up and clean up.
- This is a great time to encourage participants to donate to the Red Cross. Set up a donation station with a laptop so people can make online donations or use an envelope to collect cash donations. Tell participants the money goes to where the need is greatest, including funds for responding to local disasters like home and apartment fires.
- Ask the local chapter to provide materials with information about the Red Cross to distribute. Set up a "Learn More" station where participants can learn about other Red Cross volunteer opportunities and how to support the mission. Remember to invite staff and volunteers from your local chapter to attend.

Your party is not complete until you give your cards to your local Red Cross unit. Work with the unit to determine the best way to transfer the cards. You can also ask the local Red Cross unit if there is an opportunity for your group to help sort or distribute the cards when they are all collected.

Remember to thank all participants for their help! Through this party, participants are able to thank our troops, socialize with fellow peers, and help the American Red Cross fulfill part of its mission to serve the Armed Forces. If you are interested in further involvement with Red Cross events, please check out the variety of other activity guides on redcrossyouth.org and feel free to contact your local chapter for more upcoming opportunities.

This guide was inspired by a guide developed by the Dougherty Valley Red Cross Club in San Ramon, California.

Before beginning, contact your local Red Cross chapter for assistance. You can find contact information at redcross.org.

Shake it up!

- » Incorporate card making into other Red Cross events. For example, at a community fair, have a section of the booth devoted to making cards.
- » Host a contest and allow participants to vote on different categories for cards. Most creatively decorated card, most thoughtful message, most colorful card, etc. Give small rewards like \$5 gift cards to winners, as an incentive.

Show and tell

- » Share pictures and videos of your Holiday Mail for Heroes card making party by sending them to youthinvolvement@redcross.org.
- » Share pictures and videos on social media accounts. Remember to use hashtag #HolidayMail.

Resources

- » [Holiday Mail for Heroes Card Making Party Checklist](#)
- » [Holiday Mail for Heroes Card Making Party Flyer](#)