



BACK-TO-SCHOOL BRIGADE

Every parent knows that **rearing children for the school year gets more expensive each year.** With the support of our generous donors, Operation Homefront's Back-to-School Brigade (BTBS) provides military children with backpacks filled with school supplies, helping to relieve families of this cost and enabling them to use their income for other household expenses.

In 2017, on average, families spent \$500 per student for school supplies, a significant increase from \$488 per student in 2016. In addition to the rising costs of school supplies for families, schools also asked parents to contribute up to \$100 per family more for general-use classroom materials.

When combined with other childcare costs, many military families face difficult choices about whether to ensure their children are well supplied for school or whether to purchase other essential items for their family, including clothing and food.

The BTBS program is important because it helps to alleviate some of these financial costs for military families by providing backpacks with a variety of needed supplies, including pens, pencils, paper, scissors, and binders.



The Cisneros Family

Janel Cisneros, a medically retired Navy veteran, her active-duty husband, Albert, and their four children had just moved to San Diego. One priority was preparing the three older kids for school.

Enter Operation Homefront: Janel was grateful for its Back-to-School Brigade program because she was struggling then with symptoms of her autoimmune disease that can make daily activities difficult, sometimes even breathing and speaking. Picking up backpacks filled with everything the kids needed was such a relief, she said, compared to store hopping while sick, with a toddler in tow. The program also alleviated financial strain compounded by medical bills.

"It was a huge help," said Janel, who served 12 years including two Persian Gulf deployments. While still in the Navy, she met Albert, a hospital corpsman who has deployed twice to Iraq and twice to Afghanistan. Operation Homefront donors contributed supplies specifically required by their area's school districts. "It wasn't like we got a bunch of stuff that wasn't useful," she said. "This was a handicapped-accessible, family-friendly event, and it was just so easy."

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Janel also recommends the supportive community Operation Homefront fosters. "It's such a nice welcome. I've really been so impressed by the volunteers," she said. "We all hit hard times regardless of where we are in life."

AT A GLANCE...

Average school supply cost per U.S. family Between \$500 to \$1,000 for 2 students

Total value of BTBS supplies collected by Operation Homefront in 2017 \$4.5 million



Number of backpacks distributed in 2017



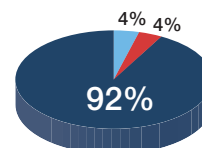
Total backpacks distributed since program inception

WITH YOUR SUPPORT

The Back-to-School Brigade program is made possible through the generosity of Dollar Tree, SAIC, and other partners. The need continues. Find out how you can help us serve more at www.OperationHomefront.org.

WHO WE ARE

Operation Homefront builds strong, stable, and secure military families so they can thrive in the communities they have worked so hard to protect.



Expenses

- Program Services
- Fundraising
- Management and General