



2011 Awards Snapshot



“As families across our country head home for the holidays, it is often the military family that spends it alone. We miss out on births, birthdays, graduations and sadly, saying ‘goodbye’ to our loved ones. Holidays remind the military family just how alone we often feel, because we aren’t there to share a feast at Thanksgiving, or the joys of seeing our families open presents on Christmas. We miss these extremely important events because we choose to serve our country first.”

Susan, mother of a Home for the Holidays 2011 Award Recipient
Please note all names are changed for confidentiality purposes

More than half the families we are supporting in 2011 experienced illness or loss in the past year:

“My family and I are stationed clear across the country from the rest of our loved ones. We have not been with our families for over 5 years for a Christmas, due to deployment and finances. My grandmother recently passed away from cancer and we have not been able to see my grieving grandfather. My sister-in-law has recently been diagnosed with cancer and we ache to be there for her. We have been saving for over a year to make it home this holiday, but our four-year old son has been diagnosed with autism and the care he needs has depleted our entire trip fund. Skype and phone calls are one thing, but nothing would change the hurt in our hearts like being able to see them for Christmas.”

A third of our awardees will deploy after the holidays, and half have gone three years since seeing their families. Three service members simply wanted to reunite with their own wives and children:

“Last year, during the Christmas holiday, I was deployed to Afghanistan. Although I was able to use Skype on Christmas day to see my wife and watch my daughter unwrap her presents, it’s not the same as being physically together. All of our money is going towards getting ready for our new baby’s arrival and helping my in-laws get by during difficult times. Without help from Home for the Holidays, we’ll go another year without seeing our families.”

Home for the Holidays is a nonprofit organization with a simple heartfelt mission to unite active duty military families who cannot afford to be together for important occasions. In 2011, we tripled our number of awards so service members could visit relatives they have not seen in years during not only the November-December holiday season, but important occasions and times of need throughout the year. **Southwest Airlines** became our leading travel partner, supporting approximately half of our awardees with flight vouchers. Key corporate partners whose support enabled us to bring so many families together this holiday season including our **Founding Partner, Human Capital Specialists; Tri-West Healthcare Alliance;** and **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois**. Collaborations with local military service organizations— such as **Armed Services YMCA, Operation Homefront** and **U.S. Navy’s Fleet & Family Services** – enabled the military community to most comprehensively support our award recipients.

To help us give thanks to the military by supporting our efforts, please visit our website: www.homefortheholidays.org and click on **Donate** or email us at info@homefortheholidays.org.



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