



BACK-TO-SCHOOL BRIGADE

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

Backpacks for military children contain an impressive inventory of supplies, including:

- Pens and pencils
- Crayons
- Paper
- Scissors
- 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."

In 2016, the National Education Association estimated that families would spend \$200 on average, per elementary student or \$330 and \$375 per middle and high school student, respectively on spiral notebooks, scissors, glue sticks, and more.

As more and more schools ask parents to chip in for classroom materials, parents planned to spend 12 percent more on school supplies from the year before, over \$100 per family.

When combined with other childcare costs, military families face difficult choices about whether to ensure their children are well supplied for school or to put food on the table.

AT A GLANCE...

Average school supply cost per U.S. family Between \$530 to \$575

Total value of BTSB supplies collected by Operation Homefront in 2016 \$4.5 million



Number of backpacks distributed in 2016



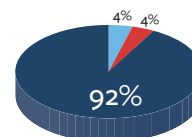
Total backpacks distributed since program inception

WITH YOUR SUPPORT

The Back-to-School Brigade program is made possible through the generosity of Dollar Tree, SAIC, and other donors and partners. The need is great. 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