Guide Book
For
Veteran Outreach
In Jewish Congregations
Dear Congregational Leader,

It is with great pleasure that we present this Care For The Troops Guidebook that the Reform Movement has specifically adapted to inspire and support our congregations interested in implementing programs for active duty and returning military.

Over the past decades, our Movement has passed resolutions that call on our congregations to support service members (including chaplains) and their families. This guidebook is an extension of that call to action, and is deeply rooted in our work to make our synagogues and our communities welcoming and inclusive to the unique needs of the military community.

In a 2005 Resolution entitled “Support for Jewish Military Chaplains and Jewish Military Personnel and Their Families,” we affirmed our commitment to serve this “vulnerable and often isolated population.” We remember the teaching from Pirkei Avot 2:4, “Do not separate yourself from the community.” As Reform Jews, we are reminded of this call to connect with the Jewish servicemen and women and their families for we are their community, just as they are ours.

In this Care For The Troops guidebook, you will find a step-by-step process to becoming a “Veteran Friendly Congregation” and a “Lead Congregation” (a higher level of engagement). This guide also includes program ideas and examples, prayer inserts and additional resources and tips for success in this work.

The completion of this guidebook is the product of hard work by staff at the Religious Action Center. We extend a huge todah rabbah to the RAC’s Summer 2014 Rabbinic Legislative Assistant Leah Citrin who did an incredible amount of work on this guidebook, especially her invaluable help in crafting the section on t’filah.
TO: Congregation Leaders  
Military Support Team Leaders  

FROM: CareForTheTroops, Inc  

SUBJECT: Military Ministry Programs  

This Guide Book is provided to assist congregations designated as Veteran Friendly Congregations (VFC) with the implementation of a Military Support Team and related programming. Additionally, it applies to those congregations who have chosen to be designated as Lead Congregations (LC) within their community. VFC and LC detailed descriptions are provided in Part 3 of this document. This document is designed and intended for use as a worksheet as well as an information guide. We want your military support to be a huge success!

The purposes of the Military Support Programs are:

- Help the congregation maintain an awareness of the existence and needs of those sacrificing their time and effort to support our country, including those in their very congregations who are Veterans and sacrificed in the past.
- Create an environment of acceptance for extended family members who worship at, or visit the congregation.
- Accept the physical, material, and spiritual needs of military members, veterans, and their families.
- Provide an open hand to assist in their struggles.

The Military Support Programs are intended to be:

- simple and straight-forward
- low cost
- adaptable within any faith-context
- customizable to fit the profile and demographics of any congregation within any faith

Thank you for your consideration to implement a Military Support Team and earn for your congregation the designation as a VFC. Please refer regularly to www.CareForTheTroops.org/about_programs.php where updates to this document can be found. Additional information can be found on the site’s web pages by clicking on the Red Menu item titled “Congregation Programs”.

The use of names in this document are intended to be interfaith terms and terminology and not partial to any single denomination. Should any instance occur where you feel that is not the case, please contact us.

Signed,
Executive Director
CareForTheTroops, Inc.
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Part 1 – Step by Step Implementation Guide
**Becoming a Veteran Friendly Congregation:** In congregations developing veteran outreach programs, congregation leaders are expected to be instrumental in obtaining a CareForTheTroops (CFTT) Veteran Friendly Congregation (VFC) designation for their congregation.

The Veteran Friendly Congregation Program's purpose is twofold. First, it provides a **visible sign**, demonstrated through the congregation’s activities and communications, to members and visitors that the congregation is sympathetic to the needs of veterans and their families. Second, it acknowledges **sincere and earnest efforts to support veterans** and their families. Combined, these create an “intentional” framework of support by the congregation.

**As part of the Program, Veteran Friendly Congregations annually renew their participation with CFTT based on the following criteria:**

- Adopt one or more of the Veteran Outreach Programs suggested by CareForTheTroops, or approved and agreed to in discussions with the CareForTheTroops organization. Both CFTT VFC Board and Committee Members and Lead Congregations can provide this approval.

- Advertise the existence of the Veteran Outreach Program(s) in one or more of the congregation publications (service bulletins, newsletters, etc.) at least twice a month throughout the year, so that their existence is easily visible to visitors, members, and leadership of the congregation.

- Grant permission to CFTT to list the congregation as either a VFC or a Lead Congregation on the CFTT website.

- Annually renew your commitment to three items above. CFTT will send you a renewal letter and we ask that you try to return it within 30 days.

- Renewal letters should be sent by November 15th to provide time to process them and send out certificates before the end of the year. If you sign up during the middle of the year, then the certificate will be issued within 4 weeks for the remainder of that year.

*It is important to recognize that each congregation can act on their own. The way CFTT has set this up:*

- No faith has to act in any way like another faith and no congregation has to act like another congregation

- No congregation has to have Veteran Outreach like any other congregation
Every outreach opportunity is completely customizable to each congregation’s culture and desire to act.

Complete the following to do list of steps to obtain approval within the congregation and community.

To Do List for Congregations Interested in Veteran Friendly Congregations

List the key persons, committees, etc., with which to discuss this outreach, i.e., clergy (rabbi, cantor, etc.), lay leadership committee (e.g. – Social Action Committee), Temple Board/Executive Committee, etc.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

(Expand list as necessary)

Form a Military Support Team:

List those that would be good candidates for the team. Consider a diverse group that would include: teachers/educators, business persons, retired, former or current military personnel, etc.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________

List programmatic goals (or program titles) for coming year:
A list of programs to consider can be found in Parts 2 of this document. Part 2 has suggested programs that are more fully documented, and a list of suggested programs as well as “considerations” made by other congregations to help you not make pitfalls they experienced. You are also welcome to implement other programs that your congregation creates on their own or has in operation already. Develop a strategy to implement each program:

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Determine a communications strategy.

How will you engage your veteran congregants? Active duty? Non-veteran congregants? Are there nearby military bases that can help with outreach? What is the approach to communicate and advertise the CFTT veteran outreach throughout the congregation, e.g. monthly newsletters, weekly service bulletins, emails, lawn signage, web sites, etc. Consider the following communications about the recent decisions and the background behind the decisions. Examples of these letters are provided at the end of this section.

- Letter from the leadership to the congregation
- Letter to congregation members who have identified themselves as being directly or indirectly involved with someone serving in the military.
- An article in the congregation newsletter, website, and/or an email to the congregation
C. Submit the VFC letter to CFTT. The letter format is shown at the back of this guidebook.

Date VFC Letter sent to CFTT or Lead Congregation: ________________
**Lead Congregations:** Once a congregation chooses to begin a “Veteran Outreach Community,” they may also choose to become a Lead Congregation and, in doing so, begin to encourage other congregations in their own faith and/or in all faiths in their geographic proximity to implement these programs.

Lead Congregations are essential to CFTT’s ability to expand this outreach and share the information needed both by military families and referral sources. Lead Congregations are the LEADERS in their geographic area and become the organization responsible for raising awareness about this help.

The responsibilities of Lead Congregations are not fixed, but encompass the following types of activities:

- Act as an overall advocate and emissary of the CareForTheTroops initiative.

- Recruit congregations of all faiths on the merits of developing a veteran outreach initiative either with the program suggestions supplied by CFTT, or others of their own creation (and we would like to consider including those ideas as part of the CFTT list of suggested programs)

- Provide feedback to CFTT on how the programs are being used and any improvements that are needed to the documentation.

- Feedback on new ideas and programs discovered while speaking with other congregations that they have already implemented.

- Assist the Regional Trainers with scheduling presentations and events.

- Assist CFTT in the collection of the annual VFC renewal letters.

- Assist with fundraising if local foundations or private benefactors are involved. They would not be asked to participate in other places where other Lead Congregations exist.

- With the above guidelines in mind, on the next page is a suggested to do list of steps to expand your work as a VFC to an LC.
To Do List for Veteran Friendly Congregations Interested in Becoming Lead Congregations

Contact other community congregations. First, talk about CFTT with the rabbi, pastor, priest, lay leaders, and congregation administrators or boards. If needed, help to identify key groups within the congregation that seem to be the most active or influential. These are often Sisterhoods or Men’s Clubs, Sunday school or Hebrew school classes, etc.

(List the congregations within your community that would be good candidates for this outreach.)

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<th>Congregation</th>
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(Expand list as necessary)

Contact other community organizations that interact with veterans. Consider the local National Guard units, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Jewish War Veterans, the National Museum of American Jewish Military History, men’s or women’s clubs, other faith-based organizations, etc.

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(Expand list as necessary)
Contact community organizations involved in job training, employment aid, health care, schools, and counseling groups and individual therapists. Consider sponsoring at least one annual event with local counselors interested in working with military-related issues and families and leaders of the local VFCs; encourage both the counselors to enroll in the CFTT database (http://careforthetroops.org/clinician_cftt_enroll.php), and the congregations to receive training from CFTT.

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(Expand list as necessary)

Advertise CFTT and the activities being done by the local congregations. Consider articles in the local newspaper(s), local radio, speakers for civic groups such as Lions Club, Rotary, etc.

(List media that could be used to advertise CFTT)

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(Expand list as necessary)
## Comparing Lead Congregation and Veteran Friendly Congregation Responsibilities

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<th>Veteran Friendly Congregation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a veteran outreach initiative within the congregation</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish at least one program approved by CFTT or LC (more desired)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertise the programs in your congregation all year</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide an annually signed VFC commitment letter to CFTT</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree that we can list congregation information on the CFTT website</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be an advocate and emissary of CFTT in an agreed-to geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruit congregations of all faiths in the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advise VFCs on how to get started</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate with established VFCs and CFTT quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assist Regional Trainers in scheduling training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help with fundraising within the geography agreed to with CFTT</td>
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Additional Notes

The following are additional notes and comments regarding developing either the VFC Congregation or Lead Congregation activities:

- Seek help and guidance from the CFTT leadership and other Lead Congregations at any point in time. **You are not in this alone.** The CFTT organization and other Lead Congregations are available to assist with presentations, meetings, speaking engagements, etc.

- Funding is important. The veteran outreach programs are fairly low budget programs, but funding is still critical to their success. Consider various fund raising events for your congregation and community.

- Utilize the resources available in this Guidebook and at [www.careforthetroops.org](http://www.careforthetroops.org). You will find form letters; templates and other guidelines that will help you develop your ministry. These resources are constantly evolving. Also, contact information for key people is available.

- Networking is important. Whenever possible make contact and discuss your activities with your peers in other congregations. Share experiences, both good and bad, and discuss future planned activities. (Over time, in the future), CFTT will organize regular round-table sessions with Lead Congregation leaders. Again, the comments provided from the San Diego VA listing in Section 4 of this document can be very helpful.

Example letters:

Veteran Friendly Congregation (VFC) Approval / Renewal Letter Example
Letter from Congregation Leadership to Congregation, Example 1
Letter from Congregation Leadership to Congregation, Example 2
Letter to a Congregation Member in the Military or Relative – Example
Article in Congregation Newsletter or Email to the Congregation – Example
Military Service Survey - Example
Veteran Friendly Congregation (VFC) Approval / Renewal Letter Example

DATE: ______________

CareForTheTroops, Inc.
ATTN: Veteran Friendly Congregation Program
1795 Johnson Ferry Road
Marietta, GA 30062

This letter is to certify that the Congregation: ___________________________, located at address: ________________________________________________________, makes to the following three commitments through the year ending 12/31/______.

- We agree to adopt or implement one or more Veteran Outreach Programs.
- We agree to advertise the existence of the Veteran Outreach Program(s) in one or more of our congregation publications (service bulletins, newsletters, etc) at least twice a month, all year long so that their existence is easily visible to visitors, members, and leadership of the congregation.
- We provide permission to the CareForTheTroops organization to list our congregation information on their web site.

We would also like to be a Lead Congregation and help establish Veteran Outreach initiatives in our vicinity. [if this does not apply, then erase or cross out this sentence]

Signed: ______________________________

Title: ______________________________

Clergy Contact Info:
name:____________________ email: ___________ phone no: _________

Lay Leader Contact Info
name:____________________ email: ___________ phone no: _________

To be Signed by the Rector, Pastor, Minister, Rabbi, Imam or designated Congregation Leader.
Letter from Congregation Leadership to Congregation, Example 1

TO: Members of the Congregation

FROM: [Congregation Leader Name]

SUBJECT: Veteran Outreach Programs

This congregation has decided to make intentional steps to support active military, their families, and veterans of the current and past conflicts as well as civilian contractors who have served in combat zones.

The programs we are implementing have the following goals:

- Raise and maintain an awareness of the needs of our military who are sacrificing their time and efforts to defend our country. [Help the congregation maintain an awareness of the existence and needs of those sacrificing their time and effort to support our country]
- Create a welcoming environment for any family members who worship with us or visit our congregation.
- (Accept (?)) Acknowledge the physical, material and spiritual needs of military members, veterans and their families.
- Extend an open hand to assist them in their challenges.

We plan to implement the following programs: [list them]. More information and updates regarding these programs can be found in our [list your congregation specific media, e.g newsletters, website, etc.]. Additional information on the overall program can be found on the CareForTheTroops website at http://www.careforthetroops.org/about_programs.php

The person(s) in our congregation responsible for the overall implementation of this initiative are shown below. We encourage you to contact them with any questions or new ideas for inclusion in our veteran outreach programs.

- [Name, phone, email]
- [Name, phone, email]

Signed

Veteran Outreach Leader and Congregation Leader
Letter from Congregation Leadership to Congregation, Example 2

Date

TO: Members of the _________________ [Name of Congregation]

FROM: [Name of Veteran Outreach Leader]

SUBJECT: Veteran Outreach Programs

The leadership of [name of congregation] has decided to make intentional steps toward supporting active military and veterans of the current and past conflicts. The set of support programs is intended to help support the entire extended family members associated with the person that is or has been in the military.

The programs outlined in this document have the following goals:

1. Help the congregation maintain an awareness of the existence and needs of those sacrificing their time and effort to support our country
2. Create an environment of acceptance for any extended family member who worship or visits our congregation.
3. Accept the physical, material and spiritual needs of military members, veterans and their families.
4. Provide an open hand to assist in their struggles.

More information and updates regarding these programs can be found on the CareForTheTroops web site, http://www.careforthetroops.org/about_programs.php

The veteran outreach task force at [name of congregation] seeks anyone who is willing to help to join with us. The person(s) in our congregation responsible for the overall implementation of this initiative are shown below. Feel free to contact them with any questions or new ideas for inclusion in our veteran outreach programs.

- [name, phone number, and email of military ministry leader(s)]
- ...additional names as desired

Thank you for your attention to this announcement. Please feel free to make any request or provide any solutions.
Letter to a Congregation Member in the Military or Relative - Example

Date

Dear [name of service member],

[NOTE: the service member may or may not be a member of the congregation; if they are not a member, they would be related to a person in the congregation]

My name is [name of Veteran Outreach leader] and I am writing this letter to express my fullest gratitude to you for the service you have rendered our community and our country by your service.

I am also writing to extend an open and supportive hand to you and your family from the leadership of [name of congregation]. At [name of congregation] we are committed to assisting active duty, reserve, National Guard, retired service members, civilian contractors, and their families. In committing ourselves to veteran outreach, we have many resources to draw upon, both within our congregation and in connection with community organizations, and all for the long-term well-being of service members.

Your service and the support of your family benefit us all. Rooted in a deep sense of Jewish peoplehood and the sacred values of our tradition, we wish to offer our service to you and your fellow servicemen and women. I would like to arrange a meeting with you and your family so we can become acquainted with you and identify how we may be of assistance to you. We recognize the military has many services and significant resources to take care of your immediate needs; however we stand ready to meet your long term, spiritual needs. We are a community congregation and are your neighbors in your time of need. We also wish to encourage you to make [name of congregation] your home congregation and join our community.

We hope you will consider this request and allow us to get to know you and serve you, as you have served us. Please consider us a caring resource, here to develop solutions to meet your needs. Where appropriate, we will act as a supportive conduit to professional help; otherwise, we are here to offer broad personal support teams in the community. Please let me know if you would be interested in our services. If you wish to simply correspond with me, please feel free to do so.

Sincerely,

[Name of Veteran Outreach Leader]
[contact info]
Article in Congregation Newsletter or Email to the Congregation - Example

The following example was used at St Peter and St Paul Episcopal Church in Marietta, Georgia, and included in their monthly newsletter “Breaking Bread” that is distributed via email to the congregation with some printed copies made available at their church. This type of communication would be customized to fit the decisions made by the congregation’s Military Ministry team.

EXAMPLE:

Used by Saint Peter and Saint Paul’s Military Ministry

The Military Ministry at Saint Peter and Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church has begun its work honoring those serving in the Armed Forces. As well, the Military Ministry recognizes the contributions made by the families of those in the military. This ministry seeks to express our clergy’s and congregation’s gratitude toward those serving in the ranks and going into harm’s way for the benefit of our country. And we wish to be ready to help those troops and their families within our community as they prepare themselves for civilian life.

[THE NEXT 2 PARAGRAPHS WOULD BE CUSTOMIZED TO YOUR SPECIFIC CONGREGATION]

St. Peter and St. Paul’s Military Ministry began with a presentation by Peter McCall to the Brotherhood of St. Andrews. Peter is a Vietnam veteran who heads an organization, CareForTheTroops.org. This organization envisions a program whereby community churches organize such ministries for helping troops and their families face the challenges of civilian life. Such challenges include the impact that trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) upon returning warriors and their families. Just as importantly, the returning service member often needs the support of a spiritual home as they adjust to civilian life.

Encouraged by Father Robert and working with members of the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew, the Saint Peter and Saint Paul Military Ministry has been created with a dual purpose. Our ministry will focus both on outreach activities such as serving as a liaison for service members returning from combat, and on activities to honor the military and those within our church whose have served the military. With regard to outreach activities, we intend to be a source of direct assistance to service members and their families, providing them a spiritual home and support in their new lives. We will also establish contacts with such organizations as CareForTheTroops.org, Operation Homefront, CinCHouse.com, and the USO, so that we may direct service members and their families to these and other appropriate organizations for providing assistance for more intensive needs. We will seek to post information regarding our Ministry at local military installations, such as Dobbins Air Force Base, and work closely with the Newcomer’s Ministry to welcome those who visit our church. The St. Peter and St. Paul Military Ministry will seek ways to enhance the military’s identity within our church rites and activities, as a long-term source of comfort and honor for veterans and their families. The Military
Ministry will be communicating with military members affiliated with our church and for whom we pray each Sunday. And we will generate ideas to properly commemorate the contributions of veterans to our church and community.

As an affiliate of CareForTheTroops.org, St. Peter and St. Paul will serve as a model for other Military Ministries. As such, the implementation and activities of our ministry will be documented for presentations to various churches in the immediate area and throughout the state.

[CUSTOMIZE THE NEXT PARAGRAPH TO YOUR SPECIFIC CONGREGATION]

Our core group consists of John Patton (USAF retired), Chuck Duncanson (US Army retired, with two children in the Armed Forces), Rudy Lind, Pete Williams and I. Our first organizational meeting took place earlier in March and we will continue meeting each two weeks. The Military Ministry will also sponsor coffee hours once a month to honor our veterans. Our organization seeks additional core members, especially those who have served in combat. Please contact me at rmills@smithcarter.com, or Pete Williams at petelngridw@aol.com for further information.

Thank you for your support of this ministry.

[Signed by the Military Ministry Leader]
Military Service Survey

This brief survey is to help us, as your faith community, identify persons who have or are serving in the military service in order that we may serve them better.

1. I am serving in the military service □ Yes □ No
2. I have served in the military service □ Yes □ No
3. I know members of our faith community who are in active military service □ Yes □ No
4. I know members of our faith community who have served in the military □ Yes □ No
5. I would like information on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder □ Yes □ No
6. I would like information on Traumatic Brain Injury □ Yes □ No
7. I would like information on resources for families of active military personnel □ Yes □ No
8. I would like information on resources for families of veteran service members □ Yes □ No
9. I would like to be of service to our veterans, Active military or their families □ Yes □ No

My name________________________________________
My phone________________________________________
My Email________________________________________

See the other side for a description of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury and Family Needs.
Needs of Military Personnel, Veterans and Families

1. To be understood and respected. Often in an unpopular war, those in military service and their families are stigmatized.
2. To deal with loneliness. Separation brings deep feelings of loss and loneliness.
3. Spiritual healing. War and separation can raise profound questions of faith and God's faithfulness.
4. How to deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, including flash backs, inability to sleep, angry outbursts, shame and guilt, nightmares, memory problems, hearing or seeing things that are not there, being easily started or frightened, drinking, using drugs, risky behaviors, loss of hope.
5. How to deal with Traumatic Brain Injury, including headaches, confusion, loss of memory, mood changes, blurred vision, ringing in the ears, and in more severe cases difficulty waking, vomiting, convulsions, slurred speech, severe confusion, etc.
6. How to deal with the financial strain when a person leaves for the military service and may return without a job.
7. How to deal with strained or abusive marital relationships.

Anyone experiencing a blow to the head or close to an explosion, or anyone who shows signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder should be referred to a doctor for evaluation of their symptoms.

Temple Sinai of Sandy Springs, GA created this online form so that congregants can provide the synagogue with information related to their service or an immediate family member’s service.

If you create your own form, some key data to collect includes:

- Military status
- Enlisted dates
- Rank
- Additional information (Awards/Medal, Tour of Duty, etc.)
Part 2 - Program Ideas
Introduction

This section contains the templates of suggested programs you can consider as part of the overall veteran outreach initiative in your congregation. You may implement as many of the programs as you feel compelled to implement in addition to others you may already be doing or have an idea to do. We request that you consider at least two so that there is enough to “advertise” and communicate to the congregation. Letting people in the congregation know that this exists and what you are doing is very important toward the goal of building awareness within the congregation.
Congregations Already Doing Veteran Outreach

The congregations listed on this page are all winners of the Fain Award – an honor for Reform congregations that have done outstanding social action programs. These programs are models for your own work on these issues, and the congregational leaders who helped shape and run these programs can serve as mentors or sounding boards for you getting started (in addition to CFTT and the staff at the RAC).

**Temple Israel, Columbus, GA (2011 Fain Award Winner)**

Jewish Troops Program

For 10 years, Temple Israel volunteers have visited a local Army training base to lead services, host Jewish education classes and provide an oneg to soldiers stationed there. Volunteers have also coordinated Jewish holiday celebrations at the base and invited soldiers and their families to participate in synagogue activities free of charge. The program has helped the congregation build new relationships and engage our men and women in uniform.

**Congregation Emanu El, Houston, TX (2005 Fain Award Winner)**

Military Packages for Operation Iraqi Freedom

Congregation Emanu El “adopted” a military unit comprised of 1,000 soldiers serving abroad in Iraq and Afghanistan. Members of the congregation donated $6,000 and procured donations of various goods for over 600 care packages. Congregation Emanu El also sent food, coffee, and magazines to Military Headquarters, Rosh HaShana cards and CDs from a synagogue concert to Jewish troops for the New Year, and special care packages for female military personnel.

**Temple Sinai, Sandy Springs, GA (2013 Fain Award Winner)**

Honoring our Veterans

Temple Sinai is deeply appreciative of the sacrifice our soldiers have made and continue to make for our country. We know it can be challenging for them to engage their Judaism while serving. Our USO presence, streaming of services and Military Shabbat service is a small way in which we, their Jewish brothers and sisters in Atlanta, can say thank you.
Bulletin and/or Newsletter Article - Example

PASTORAL CARE NEWS -

Military Personnel Outreach

Our congregation strives to include our military personnel in harm’s way or who are in transition to or from deployment. If there is someone you would like to add to the MiShebeirach list who is currently serving in our military in harm's way, please email or phone the congregation office with the name and military address of the person. We will send a special card, created by [name of person] and the person’s name will be read in our prayer for healing.

Additional bulletin content may include:
- ...a description of the card that will be sent
- ...what the words and the prayer that will be put on the card
- ...who will be responsible for sending the cards in case someone wishes to contact them
- ...the name and number at the congregation office who should receive the information

We suggest running this announcement once a month.

Also, you can ask your rabbi about names shared on the Central Conference of American Rabbis list-serv by Rabbi Admiral Harold Robinson of the Jewish welfare Board Chaplain’s Council of servicemen and women who have died in the past week.
Jewish War Veterans’ Support Our Soldiers program
http://www.jwv.org/programs/service/sos_program/sos_overview

Secular Program Opportunities:
http://rac.org/advocacy/issues/sos/

- **Adopt-A-US-Soldier** allows individuals and groups to adopt soldiers for short or long-term periods by sending them care packages. Visit our project page for Adopt a US Soldier for tips on how to get involved.

- **Operation USO Care Package** compiles care packages to be distributed at “send-off celebrations” and to troops returning to overseas locations after periods of rest and recuperation.

- **Books for Soldiers**: Help fill serviceperson personalized requests for specific books, cds, movies and more.

- **Any Soldier** shows support for all branches of the armed services serving abroad by sending care packages.

- **Operation Helmet** provides helmet upgrade kits free of charge to troops abroad and to those ordered to deploy in the near future.

- **Jewish War Veterans of the USA**
  Show solidarity with Israel by sending $18 “IDF Convenience Kits” to Israeli soldiers.
  
  http://www.jwv.org/programs/jewish/days_of_remembrance_in_the_military

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Programs to Support Israeli Troops

**Support Israeli Defense ForcesTroops**
- **A Package from Home**
  Show appreciation for Israeli soldiers by bringing donations with you when visiting Israel.
Care Packages to Deployed Service Members

GOAL: Collect and ship items suitable for use by those serving overseas. Helping the deployed military member know that the people back home have their needs in mind as well as help those in the congregation feel connected to the military members serving overseas.

COORDINATOR(S): [names, phone numbers, emails of those responsible for the program]

ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET: $200 to $500 (depends on how large a display and how many displays used around the facilities; also depends on postage from how many packages and how often sent)

EXECUTION STEPS:

1. Identify a visible location in the synagogue where a well-marked collection box or container (at least a 24-inch cube, and larger is better) can be placed.
   a. Wrap or decorate the container with bright colors (red, white, and blue are suggested), or a Stars and Stripes covering, to draw attention to the collection point for the items. B.) Make a poster advertising the collection and post it near the box.
2. Create a leaflet or brochure describing the items that are best suited for sending, as well as the donation destination or unit for which the collection is being made. See example at the end of this section.
3. The best choice for the destination unit is one that is associated with one of the congregation members. If appropriate, a small write up and picture could be included in the bulletin and in your Shabbat announcements or posters. If you do not have a unit with a congregation member, or relative, three options are:
   a. Choose a unit with someone assigned to it from the local community.
   b. Contact the nearest National Guard Armory or Reserve unit and ask their assistance in locating a deployed service member from your community.
   c. Contact www.OperationHomefront.net/Georgia/ and ask them to suggest a deployed unit from within the state, preferably one that is nearest your location.
4. At least once every two months provide an update to the congregation from the unit receiving the articles. The updates can appear in the bulletin, newsletters, and/or in an area frequented by the congregation members.
5. The box should be checked frequently so as not to let it overflow. Once sufficient quantities are collected they should be packaged and dispatched to the identified unit. There is a mailing cost associated with this step which should be acknowledged before beginning this program.
6. By working with a local Guard or Reserve unit, they may ship the package at no cost.
The suggested list of items is to be packaged and sent to service members in Afghanistan or Iraq is:

1. Black or Green Wool Socks
2. Pre-paid telephone cards
3. Blank Computer CD’s
4. Stationary Items, e.g. envelopes, paper (Pens not needed as they are already issued)
5. Stamps
6. Moist (Baby) Wipes
7. Toothbrushes
8. Crest Pro-Health Toothpaste – best for use in non-fluoride environments
9. Dental floss
10. Listerine Purple Mouthwash with fluoride
11. Deodorant
12. Shave cream
13. Hand cream
14. Q-Tips
15. Feminine hygiene items
16. Acne face wash
17. AA battery-powered electric razors – no disposable razors
18. Sunscreen/aftershave hybrid lotions
19. Eye drops/nasal saline
20. Vitamins
21. Crystal Lite – individual packets
22. Shoe Inserts (Gel or other durable types as low-end foam will not last)
23. DVD Movies (comedy or action)
24. Hard Candy
25. Paperback Books/General Interest Magazines
26. Gum
27. CDs
Some final suggestions:

- Visit the following web site which provides a tremendous amount of valuable information regarding sending care packages. We suggest:
  [http://www.operationmilitarypride.org/packages.html](http://www.operationmilitarypride.org/packages.html)

- The size of the box should err on the side of LARGE; we suggest at least a 24” cube. The boxes are easily available at Lowe’s, Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and other big-box stores.

- The box should have the leaflets mentioned earlier placed in a “pocket” attached to the box so that people interested in supporting this program can take it home and easily know what the items are they can bring back and deposit in the box provided.

- A poster, like those used in many school projects and easily found in a supermarket, should accompany the box placement.

- The poster should briefly describe the program’s purpose, include the list of items, the name of the unit that will get the items, and a picture and short description of the individual(s) connected to the congregation that will receive the items.

ANNOUNCEMENT: A bulletin announcement or announcement from the bimah during services should be included that points out the existence of the box, its purpose, and meaning. Run the announcement at least once a month.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE: If the congregation has a newsletter, include a short article announcing the program, its purpose, and info on the unit that will receive the goods. We suggest running the article each year around Memorial Day, the 4th of July, and Veteran’s Day.
Example of Care Package Leaflet:

**Collection of items to send to military units serving in Iraq or Afghanistan**

**PURPOSE:** Support those deployed in the same unit as [name of service member in the congregation if known] who is the [describe their relationship with a member of the congregation, e.g., son of David and Sarah Schwartz in our congregation]

The following list of suggested items will be packaged and sent to service members in Afghanistan or Iraq. Periodic updates from the units will be given in the [locally used named] newsletter:

1. Black or Green Wool Socks
2. Pre-aid telephone cards
3. Blank Computer CD’s
4. Stationary Items, e.g. envelopes, paper (Pens not needed as they are already issued)
5. Stamps
6. Moist (Baby) Wipes
7. Toothbrushes
8. Crest Pro-Health Toothpaste – best for use in non-fluoride environments
9. Dental floss
10. Listerine Purple Mouthwash with fluoride
11. Deodorant
12. Shave cream
13. Hand cream
14. Q-Tips
15. Feminine hygiene items
16. Acne face wash
17. AA battery=powered electric razors – **no disposable razors**
18. Sunscreen/aftershave hybrid lotions
19. Eye drops/nasal saline
20. Vitamins
21. Crystal Lite – individual packets
22. Shoe Inserts (Gel or other durable types as low-end foam will not last)
23. DVD Movies (comedy or action)
24. Hard Candy
25. Paperback Books/General Interest Magazines
26. Gum
27. CDs

If you know of anyone who is serving from the congregation, or related to someone from the congregation, or from the local community, please make this known to [name of program leader, xxx-xxxx-xxxx, or email@xxx.com] so we can identify the appropriate contacts to receive the packages.

We keep all of our troops in our thoughts and prayers each day.
Assistance and Practical Help Outside the Synagogue

GOAL: Provide material and physical assistance to military family members stateside for those soldiers currently deployed. This program can go far in developing an ongoing awareness of the needs of the military and greatly expand the atmosphere of acceptance by those in or near the congregation that the congregation cares about helping military families.

COORDINATOR(S): [names, phone numbers, emails of those responsible for the program]

ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET: >$200 (this is very dependent on what is done and the cost of the materials required; this can be a much larger dollar figure if extensive work is done)

EXECUTION STEPS:
1) Make contact with the established national organization Operation Home Front which has many state chapters and many local sites near major military installations. They often need assistance with projects to help families while the military member is deployed.
2) Their web site is www.operationhomefront.net.
3) [Name of congregation contact person] will maintain contact with the Executive Director and sign up for their newsletter on their website. This will keep the congregation contact appraised of helpful project needs that can be satisfied with volunteers from the congregation.
4) [Name of congregation contact person] will maintain a list of members within the congregation who have volunteered to help. These volunteers can come from men’s and women’s groups as well as individuals in the congregation.
5) Projects examples include building ramps for wheelchair-bound service people, helping with home moves, arranging for or providing emergency childcare needs, providing various types of assistance due to unforeseen medical requirements, etc.
6) Familiarize yourself with the content on the Operation Home Front website so that you can direct people to the website for blogs, volunteering, opportunities for donations, etc. as appropriate.
7) Once a project need is identified, the congregation contact will contact those on the pre-arranged list to confirm their availability to help.

Communications should include monthly announcements in the bulletin and flyers describing the program. As projects are completed they should be described in the newsletter and made known to the congregation to achieve the goals stated above.
Recognition of Congregation Veterans

GOAL: Provide public recognition to the members of the congregation that are Veterans of military service. This can also include widows who might be in the congregation.

COORDINATOR(S): [names, phone numbers, emails of those responsible for the program]

ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET: >$0 (none is expected though if a ceremony is chosen that is extensive there may be some cost involved which would likely be minor).

EXECUTION STEPS:
1. Key holidays to consider doing this are Memorial Day, July 4th Weekend, and of course Veterans Day. Consider one or all or as many as you wish.
2. A first step is having a list of names of people the congregation that are veterans. Advertise in the bulletin or newsletter that this ceremonial event will occur. Consider sending a letter to the veterans letting them know personally.
3. The basic idea is at some point during the congregation’s liturgy, recognition of the veterans and widows in the audience be made.
4. This may be done by asking them to stand in place, or come up to the front. At that point the audience can be asked to give a round of applause.
5. The congregation leader may decide to read out the names.
6. The congregation leader may also wish to offer a prayer, or say some special words. There is no one way to do this.
7. Special prayers or reading can also be considered; again, consistent with a faiths normal practices

This can be a very powerful and emotional event for some. So keep that in mind and be prepared for being sensitive to this possibility.

[Name of congregation contact person] will maintain a list of members within the congregation who have volunteered to help.
Books for Soldiers

GOAL: Collect and ship books to those serving overseas. Many soldiers have free time on their hands, both during convoys and in evenings, and books can be a good way to keep our service members’ minds engaged and entertained during their down time. This also lets our service members know that people back home have their needs in mind and can help those in the congregation feel connected to military members overseas.

COORDINATOR(S): [names, phone numbers, emails of those responsible for the program]

ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET: $100 to $500 or more (depending on how many books are donated and shipped overseas. Shipping costs are the big expense with this program).

EXECUTION STEPS:
Review the program flyer at the end of this section that describes a 12-week workshop that is currently conducted in the Columbus, GA area as a model for what you can do.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1) Have a couple of people who are interested in spearheading the project go to the official Books for Soldiers website (http://www.booksforsoldiers.com/) and become official volunteers (this can take up to two weeks). Only official volunteers can gain access to the troops’ requests for books and addresses, and only official volunteers can address the boxes.

2) Identify a good location in the congregation’s facilities for a collection box (a large box is suggested—or many smaller but sturdy boxes—books are heavy) and put one out.

3) Put an announcement in the bulletin about the project. An example follows:

“Books for Soldiers (http://www.booksforsoldiers.com/aboutus.php) is a nonprofit organization run by a church in North Carolina. Troops who are deployed can go on the website and request books--they actually have quite a bit of free time and can get pretty bored! Just about every genre is requested, from science fiction to popular fiction to mystery to romance. Paperbacks are preferred over hardcovers since the paperbacks can fit in ACU pockets. Video games and DVDs are also sometimes requested, so if you have any you want to clear out, this is a great way to do it! Just bring books you want to donate to this Program and leave them in our donation box, located at __________. The troops really enjoy getting mail, so even if you don’t have books you want to contribute, you can write little notes for our men and women in uniform.”

4) Include Books for Soldiers in your synagogue bulletin to get the word out.
5) Have people donate money if they wish to help cover shipping, especially if your congregation doesn’t have money in the budget for such projects.

6) It is suggested to make an Excel spreadsheet with the authors and titles of all books donated so that it is easier to match up requests from the website with books that have been donated. Sort books about once a week and keep them organized so it is easy to find books that you have matched with soldiers to send out.

7) Acquire boxes and customs forms from the Post Office (the flat-rate shipping boxes are available for free and can be great since books are heavy). As official volunteers go through the website forums and make matches, customs forms can be filled out and boxes shipped to the soldiers. It is good to include a note or letter in the package—many times soldiers will write thank-you notes back!

8) Continue this process as long as you wish.

This program was created at St Thomas Episcopal Church in Columbus, GA. The template write was contributed by Alison Laney, a member of their choir, who started the program at her congregation.
Writing Our Way Home

GOAL: Researchers have found that writing about traumatic events can help service people sleep better, work more efficiently, strengthen their relationships and even enhance their immune system. This program is designed for returning veterans, allowing them to explore and share their experiences of the spiritual and emotional impact of war through writing and dialogue. *A program like this is dependent upon an LCSW Crafting and executing the content in order to create a healthy and healing atmosphere for participants.*

COORDINATOR(S): [names, phone numbers, emails of those responsible for the program]

ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET: $100 to $200 (it is expected there would be a charge for the class which pays for the instructors or they do it gratis; the budget is for refreshments)

EXECUTION STEPS:
Review the program promotion flyer and brochure at the end of this section that describes a 12-week workshop that was planned to be conducted in the Columbus, GA area by the Pastoral Institute. Note that this workshop was not conducted due to last minute scheduling issues. But nonetheless, the workshop approach, format, and idea is worth sharing.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:
1) This program may be well-suited for a congregation hosting this workshop for an entire community rather than just one congregation.
2) The hosting congregation does not necessarily have to be the Lead Congregation in the community.
3) This workshop is very dependent on the right skills in a person who can facilitate both the writing as well as the dialogue that will occur.
4) Ideally, the two skills needed are an MFA degree and a licensed therapist.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF A PROGRAM IN COLUMBUS AT THE PASTORAL INSTITUTE:

**WRITING OUR WAY HOME:**
A 12-week Workshop for Returning Vets

Writing about traumatic events helps you sleep better, work more effectively, strengthen your relationships and enhance your immune system. If you are a returning veteran, we invite you to join us for a 12-week workshop that will allow you to explore and share your experiences of the spiritual and emotional impact of war through writing and dialogue.
Limited to eight participants, each workshop is 90 minutes long. You don't have to be a "writer" to participate. During each session, we will explore an aspect of combat trauma and the mission of returning home. We will read poetry and short prose pieces by published war veterans. Participants will compose different kinds of writing, including free-style, poetry and journals. You choose whether to share your writing with the group.

By learning to write about and through your traumas, you will acquire a skill that empowers you for life.

Facilitators are:

Noreen Lape, Ph.D., an Associate Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center at Columbus State University.

Stephen Muse, Ph.D., LMFT, LPC, Director of Counselor Training and Clinical Services at the Pastoral Institute and a Diplomate Board-Certified Expert in Traumatic Stress.

Fee: $300 for 12 weeks, payable at the first session

Each participate should:

- Have a referral from a therapist or
- Sign a waiver stating you have had sufficient therapy in the past to have learned ways to deal with intense feelings and flashbacks should they occur.
PROMOTION DOCUMENT

Writing our Way Home:
A 12 week workshop for returning vets

The spirit seeks the body through speech.
--Martin Buber

It is not enough to be committed to leaving no Soldier behind dead or alive on the battlefield. A different war is waged upon return home. Along with the recognition that “War is hell.” comes the understanding that no one goes to hell and comes back unscathed. On a societal level the psychological, emotional and spiritual effects of war are present in some respect for all persons touched by war, just as must as those who suffer from medically diagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder. For each and every one of us, this represents a communal responsibility for justice and healing. And we cannot rest assured that we have brought our Soldiers home, until they are home spiritually, psychologically and emotionally.

-- Stephen Muse “Fit for Life, Fit for War.” INFANTRY. March-April 2005

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Writing heals. Researchers have found that writing about traumatic events can help you sleep better, work more efficiently, strengthen your relationships -- and even enhance your immune system. If you are a returning veteran, join us for a twelve-week workshop designed to allow you to explore and share your experience of the spiritual and emotional impact of war through writing and dialogue.

Limited to eight participants, each workshop will be ninety minutes long. You need not consider yourself a “writer” to participate. During each session, we will explore an aspect of combat trauma and the mission of returning home. We may read some poems and short prose pieces by published war veterans. Then you will be prompted to compose different kinds of writings -- including free writing, poetry, and journals. Although you will never be required to share your writing with the group, guided group discussion of your writings will be a central focus of the workshops. By learning to write about and through your traumas, you will acquire a skill that will empower you for life.

Facilitators:

Noreen Lape, PhD, is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center at Columbus State University where she teaches writing, composition pedagogy, writing tutor training as well as multicultural American literature. She has published two academic books and several articles in scholarly
journals; she also keeps a journal and writes poetry as a means to her own personal growth. Recently, she has begun to investigate the spiritual dimensions of writing as a means to exploring trauma and healing.

Stephen Muse, PhD, LMFT is a pastoral counselor and Diplomat Board Certified Expert in Traumatic Stress. He currently serves as Director of Counselor Training and Clinical Services for the D.A. & Elizabeth Turner Ministry Resource Center of the Pastoral Institute, Inc. and as a supervisor and trainer in the U.S. Army Family Life training program at Fort Benning. He has a life-long enjoyment of writing and has published poetry, authored numerous scholarly and trade magazine articles, edited two books and served as editor of *The Pastoral Forum* from 1992-2001.

Cost: $25 per session ($300 for 12 weeks payable at conclusion of first group meeting)

Pre-requisites:

Recommendation from current individual and/or group therapist or sign a waiver stating you have had sufficient therapy in the past to have learned ways to deal with intense feelings and flashbacks should they arise, without becoming destructive to self or others.

Group will begin in August 15th and run for 1.5 hrs weekly for 12 weeks.

**Estimated Budget with Revenue and Expense**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Expense</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 participants x $300 each</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator #1 $75/hr x 12hrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator #2 $75/hr x 12hrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over / under to cover unanticipated expenses</td>
<td></td>
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Registration Form

Name: __________________________
Address: ________________________
City: ____________________________
State: __________________________
Zip: _____________________________
Phone: __________________________
Email: __________________________

Payment:
\_ Check payable to Pastoral Institute
\_ Visa
\_ MasterCard
Name on card: _____________________
Card No.: __________________________
Signature: _________________________

Submit registration by mail or fax to:
Margie Watson
2022 Fifteenth Ave.
Columbus, GA 31901
706-649-6363 fax
mwatson@pilink.org

Writing Our Way Home:
A 12-week workshop for returning vets

The spirit seeks the body through speech.
– Martin Buber
Writing Heals

Researchers have found that writing about traumatic events can help you sleep better, work more efficiently, strengthen your relationships, and even enhance your immune system. If you are a returning veteran, join us for a twelve-week workshop designed to allow you to explore and share your experience of the spiritual and emotional impact of war through writing and dialogue.

Limited to eight participants, each workshop will be ninety minutes long. You need not consider yourself a “writer” to participate. During each session, we will explore an aspect of combat trauma and the mission of returning home. We may read some poems and short prose pieces by published war veterans. Then you will be prompted to compose different kinds of writings—including free writing, poetry, and journals. Although you will never be required to share your writing with the group, guided group discussion of your writings will be a central focus of the workshops. By learning to write about and through your traumas, you will acquire a skill that will empower you for life.

Facilitators

Noreen Lape, PhD is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center at Columbus State University where she teaches literature and writing, trains writing teachers and tutors and hosts a yearly poetry slam. She has published two academic books and several articles in scholarly journals; she also keeps a journal and writes poetry as a means to her own personal growth. Recently, she has begun to investigate the spiritual dimensions of writing as a means to exploring trauma and healing.

Stephen Muse, PhD, LMFT, LPC is a pastoral counselor and Diplomate Board Certified Expert in Traumatic Stress. He currently serves as Director of Counseling and Clinical Services for the D.A. & Elizabeth Turner Ministry Resource Center of the Pastoral Institute, Inc. and as a supervisor and trainer in the U.S. Army Family Life training program at Fort Benning. He has a life-long enjoyment of writing and has published poetry, authored numerous scholarly and trade magazine articles, edited two books and served as editor of The Pastoral Forum from 1992-2001.

Registration

Cost: $300 for 12 weeks payable at first session

Pre-requisites: Recommendation from current individual and/or group therapist or sign a waiver stating you have had sufficient therapy in the past to have learned ways to deal with intense feelings and flashbacks should they arise, without becoming destructive to self or others.

Schedule: Group will begin on August 14 and run for 1.5 hrs. weekly for twelve weeks.

Contact: For more information or to register contact Margie Watson at 706-649-6360, ext. 1207 or mwatson@plink.org
Other Programming Ideas

We have always felt that that we will discover more ideas for Veteran Outreach Programs from congregations that we meet while encouraging use of the Programs indicated in this Guidebook. We expect to find more than what we can think of ourselves; and certainly more than we can document.

This section of the Guidebook lists other ideas we have come across. We have not necessarily seen or heard of them implemented, but they have been mentioned by others and/or shown in presentations from time-to-time. In general they require more resources, organization time to plan and implement. They may also have a higher cost to the congregation associated with them.

Should anyone decide to implement one or more of these, please let us know. We would be most appreciative of receiving any documentation that you may be willing to share that can help others in their implementation and execution efforts of a similar program. To aid in that effort, we have provided a TEMPLATE to document that program. When completed, please send to:

CareForTheTroops, Inc.
c/o Programs Coordination
1795 Johnson Ferry Road
Marietta, Georgia 30062
Miscellaneous Program Suggestions:

- Sponsoring a gathering once a month for Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve military families of all services in your community to come together.
  - Time to “network” and get to know each other
  - Kid-friendly
  - Provide a meal, movie, speaker, or program
  - Emphasis on predictable meeting time to establish relationships
  - Foster and encourage these military families becoming a support for each other

- Providing childcare times where spouses of deployed might drop off children and have some free time to regroup and refresh or times when reuniting couples might enjoy an evening out

- Offering special children’s programs or playgroups or tutors for school subjects

- Advertise and host a Torah Study group for military families

- Advertise and host courses on strengthening marriages for military families

- Deliver some meals to provide encouragement

- Offer to assist with chores in the yard or around the house

- Offer to sit with a wounded Service Member so the family care-giver can run errands or have a bit of time away. Respite care for these families is a BIG need.

- Be there to coordinate a temporary home for pets if a family must leave suddenly to go to the bedside of a wounded family member.

- Invite the chaplain of a nearby unit (Guard or Reserve) to come and speak to your congregation about ministering to service personnel and offer support to that unit.

- Partner with the local American Legion to conduct “Welcome Home” ceremonies.

- Host a special concert to raise awareness of Wounded Warrior issues. Take a special offering to support one of the organizations that work in support of this population. www.qolfoundation.org

- Searchable database will help to identify a worthy organization.

- Find out who your denomination’s military chaplains are and where they serve. Adopt one and see what support is needed.

- Celebrate birthdays of the family members of the deployed and include these families in other holiday celebrations during the year as special guests.

- Assign a congregation member to be a congregation liaison to spouses of deployed Service Members. This liaison could connect with the spouses regularly and communicate needs to the congregation.

- If you are located close to a military installation with a hospital, adopt a Fisher House (like a Ronald McDonald House) and work to supply items they might need. If you are
not located close to an installation, contact the nearest Veteran’s Administration hospital or satellite clinic to establish a partnership or contact the local Red Cross or USO.

- Make use of congregation counseling resources.
- Equip counselors to work with those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- Make congregation counseling services readily available and affordable to family members of military personnel.
- If congregation counseling services are not available, consider the CareForTheTroops Therapist Database available on the CareForTheTroops web site. You can search it and attempt to arrange their availability to support your workshop.
TEMPLATE for Program X: Name of Program

GOAL: [List the Goal of Program]

COORDINATOR(S): [names, phone numbers, emails of those responsible for the program]

ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET: [$xxx-$xxx estimate as best you can]

EXECUTION STEPS:

1. As best you can, specify the steps one would go through to put the ministry into operation and to achieve the Goal specified above; yet keep within the budget you have available.
2. Be sure to list any outside resources, websites, organizations that can be (or should be) used to help implement this Program.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- These can include examples and key documents
- They can also include any MUST DO items such as required training or contact with a certain person or organization

The following are possible items included in this section

- Suggested text for bulletin entries
- Suggested newsletter text for entry in a congregation publication or website
- Suggested letter(s) to the congregation members announcing the program or announcing a specific event conducted as part of the program.
- Any documents that are known ahead of time that would be signed or filled out in order to participate in the program. This may be documents filled out on behalf of the congregation and/or on behalf of the individual participant.
- Finally, any tips or shortcuts that will help the leader of the program to be successful.
Part 3 – Service Inserts and Ideas
Introduction
This section contains prayer inserts and suggestions of where in a service it might make sense to include these prayers, reflections or other additions. If you are not clergy, you may want to speak with your rabbi and/or cantor and your congregation’s ritual committee to discuss how you can add in these prayers. You might want to plan for an entire service to focus on and honor active-duty military, veterans and their families. Adding in these prayers is a way to connect with a large number of people about your partnership with CFTT, in addition to helping service members in your community feel welcome in your congregation.

Additional prayers and reading for our troops, times of conflict, and for peace are available on the URJ’s Prayers and Blessings page.
Opportunities within a Prayer Service:

Mi Shebeirach l’cholim

Mi Shebeirach l’’aliyah

Community prayers for our troops

T’filat Haderech (in preparation for deployment)

Birkat Hagomel (upon returning from deployment)

Pre-Kaddish meditation/Memorial Prayer

An entire service honoring our servicemen & women
Mi Shebeirach l’cholim, Prayers for Strength and Healing

Mi Shebeirach l’cholim is said for family, friends, community members and others close to us when they are in special need of healing, strength or renewal. It can be recited traditionally in Hebrew or in English, or sung by the community or service leaders. What follows the Hebrew, transliteration and translation are modern interpretations of this text.

PRAYERS FOR HEALING

Mi SHEBEIRACH avoteinu v’imoteinu, Avraham, Yitzchak v’Yaakov, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel v’Lei-ah, hu y’vereich et hacholim [names]. HaKadosh Baruch Hu yimalei rachamim aleihem, l’hachalimam ul’raporan ul’hachazikam, v’yishlach lahem m’heirah r’fuah, r’fuah shleimah min hashamayim, r’fuat hanefesh ur’fuat haguf, hashata baagala uviz’man kariv. V’nomar: Amen.

MAY THE ONE who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless and heal those who are ill [names]. May the Blessed Holy One be filled with compassion for their health to be restored and their strength to be revived. May God swiftly send them a complete renewal of body and spirit, and let us say, Amen.

Mi SHEBEIRACH avoteinu
M’kor hab’rachah l’imoteinu.
May the Source of strength who blessed the ones before us help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing and let us say, Amen.

Mi shebeirach imoteinu
M’kor hab’rachah laavoteinu.
Bless those in need of healing with r’fuah shleimah, the renewal of body, the renewal of spirit, and let us say, Amen.
Be with me, God. I feel so lost. I can't seem to escape the dark cloud that is hanging over me today. Help me, God. Give me strength to combat despair and fear. Show me how to put my pain into perspective. Teach me to have faith in the new day that is coming. Thank you, God, for today's blessings, for tomorrow's hope, and for Your abiding love.

Amen.

Revive me, God, so I can embrace life once more in joy, in passion, in peace.

Amen.

When I feel tainted, God, remind me that I am holy.
When I feel weak, teach me that I am strong.
When I am shattered, assure me that I can heal.
When I am weary, renew my spirit.
When I am lost, show me that you are near.

Amen.

May God heal you, body and soul.
May your pain cease,
May your strength increase,
May your fears be released,
May blessings, love and joy surround you.

Amen.

Teach me always to believe in my power to return to life, to hope, and to You, God, no matter what pains I have endured, no matter how far I have strayed from You. Give me the strength to resurrect my weary spirit.

Rabbi Naomi Levy

Talking to God: Personal Prayers for Times of Joy, Sadness, Struggle and Celebration

God, make me brave for life: oh, braver than this.
Let me straighten after pain, as a tree straightens after the rain, Shining and lovely again.
God, make me brave for life: much braver than this.
As the blown grass lifts, let me rise from sorrow with quiet eyes, Knowing Thy way is wise.
God, make me brave, life brings such blinding things.
Help me to keep my sight; help me to see aright
That out of doubt comes light.

Author unknown
Prayers for Healing, ed. Maggie Oman

Healing is both an exercise and an understanding
And yet not of the will nor of the intention.

*It is a wisdom and a deeper knowledge of the daily swing of life and death in all creation.*

There is defeat to overcome and acceptance of living to be established and always there must be hope.

*Not the hope of healing but the hope which informs the coming moment and gives it reason.*

The hope which is each person's breath the certainty of love and of loving.

Death may live in the living And healing rise in the dying for whom the natural end is part of the gathering and the harvest to be expected.

*To know healing is to know that all life is one.*

From the East End Temple's Service of Healing
To be read with a person who has suffered:

You are in need of healing.
You seek comfort in your distress.
You would wash yourself clean of the memory of pain, of anger of fear.
Know that you are loved. Know that God sustains you by giving you the strength to heal your wounds of body and spirit.
I have been wounded, but I can heal. Let my hurt not keep me from caring about the hurt that others feel.
I have been helpless, but I can act. Let my suffering not keep me from reaching out to help others.
God, give me wisdom to know that You are with me even now, to overcome my pain, my anger, and my fear, to accept the help of those who care for me.
God, give me strength to return the love of family and friends.
The God who has implanted within you the power of healing, be with you now and heal you.
Heal me, O God, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved.
Jeremiah 17:14

The God who created the world with light, bring light to your eyes.
The Eternal One is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
God is the strong hold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
Psalm 27:1

May the God whom we call the Hope of Israel, plant hope in your heart.
You show me the path of life. In Your presence there is fullness of joy.
Psalm 16:11
Mi Shebeirach l’aliyah

Different from the *Mi Shebeirach l’cholim*, the *Mi Shebeirach l’aliyah* is recited over the person called to bless the Torah. An alternative take on this blessing (please see below) recognizes and honors the service member when they standing before the congregation and the Torah.

**MI SHEBEIRACH FOR ALIYAH**

_mišbe’erach_ ʿavoteinu vʾimoteinu,
Avraham Yitzchak vʾYaakov,
Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel vʾLei-ah,
hu yʾvareich et [name] ben/bat [parents]
baavur she-elah/she-altah
lichʾvod HaMakom, lichʾvod haTorah.
Bisʾchar zeh HaKadosh Baruch Hu
yishʾmʾreihu/yishʾmʾreah
vʾyatzileihu/vʾyatzileah
mikol tzarah vʾtzukah umikol nega umachalah,
vʾyishlash bʾrachah vʾhatzlachah
vʾchol maaseh yadav/yadeha,

**MAY THE ONE WHO BLESSED** our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless [name] son/daughter of [parents], since he/she has come up to the Torah in honor of God and Torah. May he/she merit from the Holy One of Blessing protection, rescue from any trouble or distress, and from any illness, minor or serious; may God send blessing and success in his/her every endeavor, together with all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

May the God of our fathers and our mothers, bless you, who have served and continue to serve our country in times of conflict and peace. With integrity and dignity, you defend our nation and may our gratitude and appreciation be heard here on earth and in the heavens above. May you be protected as you protect us. And let us say, Amen.
Community prayers for our troops

May the Everlasting who blessed our ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah bless all the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces and all those who are protecting our people. May the Source of Blessing protect them and free them from all trouble and anxiety, and may all they do be blessed. May God send safety and redemption to all our soldiers in captivity.

May the Eternal have mercy on them and bring them from darkness to light and from enslavement to salvation, give them strength and save them. May the Eternal listen to all the prayers of our people.

Merciful God, may Your compassion be with us, and remember Your covenant with Abraham. May you spread the covering of Your peace over the descendants of Ishmael, son of Hagar, and over the descendants of Isaac, son of Sarah, and may it be fulfilled that they shall hammer their swords into spades and their spear into ploughshare. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation and they shall learn war no more. And each shall sit under their vines and their fig trees and none shall disturb them.

And let us say: Amen
Prayer for our Servicemen and Women

We ask you, O God, to shield and protect our armed forces, in the air, on sea, and on land. Guard our servicemen and women and their families on their mission to protect the well-being of our country. May it be Your will that the dominion of tyranny and cruelty speedily be brought to an end and those who gallantly serve our nation return safely home. Grant to our President, his counselors and advisors, and all who are entrusted with the guardianship of our rights and liberties such wisdom and understanding that they lead our nation in the path of justice and righteousness in advancing the cause of freedom throughout the world. Blessed are You, O God, Gracious Giver of Peace.

Amen.

From Jews in Green
A Prayer for Our Troops

Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu - Our God and God of our ancestors, Watch over those who defend our nation.

Shield them from harm and guide them in all their pursuits. Grant their commanders wisdom and discernment in their time of preparation and on the battlefield.

Should battle erupt may their victory be swift and complete. May the loss of life for any of your creations be avoided. Grant healing to those who are wounded and safe redemption to those who fall into enemy hands. For those who have lost their lives, grant consolation and Your presence to those who were close to them.

We also ask that you stand with our President and all our military leaders. Guide them in their decision making so that Your will is implanted within their minds. May it be Your will that world hostilities come to a rapid end and that those in service are returned safely to their families.

We pray that freedom will dawn for the oppressed and Fervently we hope that the vision of Your prophet will come to be, "Let nation not lift up sword against nation nor learn war anymore." May this vision come to pass speedily and in our day,

Amen.

From ReformJudaism.org
**T'filat Haderech (in preparation for deployment)**

Tefilat HaDerech or the Traveler's Prayer or Wayfarer's Prayer, is a prayer for a safe journey recited before travelling by air, sea and even on long car rides. It can be recited with or by a service member before being deployed.

**T’FILAT HADERECH — Ṭeﬅiḥa Ṭa’mid — UPON SETTING FORTH ON A JOURNEY**

> יִשָּׁנֶה, זֶרֶנִי מְלַפֵּכַנִּי, יִתְבֹּנְנִי וַיְכֹלֵנֵי
> לַאֲדוֹנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ בָּרָאָתָם וְיָפֻדוּתָם
> וַיהֲעָגוֹל לְעָשָׁה לְכַלְמָהּ הַפְּסִינָה
> לַהֲקִימוּ הַלְּשָׁמָּהּ לְשָׁלוֹם.
> עָשֹּׁר רְאוֹתֵינוּ בְּעַדְּנֵינוּ
> יֶלֶדֶת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, יִשֶׁרְאֵל צְרּוֹ.
> יִשָּׁנֶה כְּבָרָה בְּכַל מַעְטֵשָׁה יִדְבּוֹן,
> וְיָמָעֵשׂ יִבְּדֵל אָתָא שְׁמֵךְ.
> בֶרֶךְ אַתָּה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ שָׁמוֹאֵל יִשְׁרָאֵל צְרּוֹ.
> Baruch atah, Adonai, shomeir Yisra'el laad.

May it be your will, our God and God of our ancestors, that You lead us in peace and help us reach our destination safely, joyfully and peacefully.

May You protect us on our leaving and on our return, and rescue us from any harm.

And may You bless the work of our hands, and may our deeds merit honor for You.

Praise to You, Adonai, Protector of Israel.

-Baruch atah, Adonai, shomeir Yisra'el laad.

May we be blessed as we go on our way
May we be guided in peace
May we be blessed with health and joy

May this our blessing, amen.
May we be sheltered by wings of peace
May we be kept in safety and in love
May grace and compassion find their way to every heart
May this be our blessing, amen.
Amen, may this be our blessing, amen.

Debbie Friedman

Birkat Hagomel (upon returning from deployment)

*Birkat Hagomel* is recited upon completion of a difficult journey or time. Reciting this blessing thanks God for allowing one to make it through the challenging situation and marks a transition into a new stage of life’s journey.

**BIRKAT HAGOMEIL — ברכת הגומל — THANKSGIVING BLESSING**

*Individual recites:*

**B**ARUCH **A**TAH, **A**DONAI **E**loheinu
Melech haolam, sheg’malanu kol tov.

**B**LESSED **A**RE **Y**OU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has bestowed every goodness upon us.

*Congregation responds:*

Amen. Mi shem’alchem kol tov,
Hu yigmolchem kol tov. Selah.

Amen. May the One who has bestowed goodness upon us
continue to bestow every goodness upon us forever.
Numbers 31:19, 23-24: 19 "You shall then stay outside the camp seven days; every one among you or among your captives who has slain a person or touched a corpse shall cleanse himself on the third and seventh days. 20 You shall also cleanse every cloth, every article of skin, everything made of goats' hair, and every object of wood...." 23 — any article that can withstand fire — these you shall pass through fire and they shall be clean, except that they must be cleansed with water of lustration; and anything that cannot withstand fire you must pass through water. 24 On the seventh day you shall wash your clothes and be clean, and after that you may enter the camp."

This selection from the Book of Numbers can be used when a service member returns. This text highlights the importance of renewal and cleansing. Service members may choose to use the mikvah as part of that renewal and cleansing process. This a text that can be read before or after immersion.

Pre-Kaddish meditation

As we recite the Kaddish we are mindful of a multitude of unnamed Jewish souls who sleep in marked and unmarked graves throughout the world. In addition to those who died in combat we add the long muster of other Jewish service men and women who having returned to civilian life, have since passed to the life beyond.

From Jewish War Veterans

Memorial Prayer for Service Members

O God full of compassion, grant perfect rest beneath the cover of Your Presence to all who have bravely laid down their lives for our country. Shelter them among the holy and pure, who are as radiant as the luminous firmament. O source of compassion, bring them ever near to You that their souls be bound up in the bond of eternal life as are the souls of the righteous. And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. Amen.

From Jewish Welfare Board
An entire service honoring our servicemen & women

An entire service honoring our servicemen and women could be held at some point during the year. Perhaps, a Shabbat near Veteran’s Day in November or Memorial Day in May might be a powerful way to commemorate those occasions. During a service honoring our servicemen and women, you could invite a veteran or active duty member of the military to be the guest speaker.
Part 4 – Additional Resources
Below are the notes and key takeaways from a review session for a military ministry (veterans outreach initiative) forum that was held. We’ve included it here to illustrate some of the strengths and challenges that came up for other houses of worship when they took on the partnership with CFTT.

San Diego VA Chaplains Caring for Veterans and Families (CCVF) Military Ministry Forum

CareForTheTroops has been privileged to receive the following list of comments from the Chaplains Office at the San Diego VA Hospital. Here’s some background about the creation of this list of ministry ideas.

On June 9th, 2012, a Military Ministry Forum was conducted at the Murphy Canyon Chapel, 3200 Santo Rd, San Diego, CA 92124. It was sponsored by the Chaplains Caring for Veterans and Families, San Diego (CCVF). CCVF is an informal coalition of clergy, laity, active duty and retired military chaplains, and VA chaplains dedicated to empowering and equipping faith communities to provide spiritual care to Veterans and Active Duty personnel.

The invitees were clergy and laity from faith communities currently providing or interested in providing military ministry in Southern California. They were invited because local churches and faith communities are an essential resource to help restore family relationships and deepen spiritual well being. Some of the pertinent purposes of this Forum were:

- To gain resources and inspiration to support military ministries
- To explore the need for spiritual care for Active Duty and Veteran personnel and their families
- To present free resources for faith communities to conduct military ministries
- To consider various models of military ministries - what works well, what didn’t work well and where are the barriers

The following lists of 4 categories of comments will hopefully help you whether you are starting your Military Ministry or whether you are building upon what you have already started.

What has worked well in your veterans outreach initiative?

1. Spend time (6 months) determining what your congregation can bring to the table that VA or others are not already doing. *(CFTT comment... this is an excellent recommendation)*
2. Have service members, veterans, and their families serve on a planning discussion.
3. Set up a steering committee with representatives from each task committee.
4. Coordinate with other ministries in your congregation and with other congregations.
5. Structure your military ministry thoughtfully – homeless veterans, pastoral care, re-entry, etc.
6. Create a reintegration committee focused on Wounded Warrior Program, connected to VVSD and Stand Down.

7. Do a survey of your church congregation to determine who are veterans, active duty, and families. One church focused their activities around active duty families, and found that many veterans responded as volunteers.

8. Provide forums to inform your congregation of where they may volunteer or act individually.

9. Offer interns positions with emphasis on veterans’ issues. Contact nearby universities.

10. Have a solid program or statement arranged weekly or each time a service is held at church/group/organization. Use all time available to speak out and to our military families and not just on veteran/military holidays or special events. Speak out regularly so all can hear about military families and how we care for and serve them.

11. Use your church website to advertise: “We are a military friendly church,” or “We support military and their families.” Include military missions in your website.

12. Create a logo that can be recognized as a church that is a safe place for military, veterans, and supporters of military.

13. Get the word out through social media – Facebook, Twitter, etc.

14. Send care packages to deployed service members. Packages can be to one individual, or addressed to one individual but including supplies for tent mates and others in the unit.

15. In children’s groups or classes, have children make cards/artwork and mail them to deployed service members.

16. Send blank greeting cards to soldiers so they have something nice to write on to send their families for special occasions.

17. Start a food/clothing drive – distribute care packages for military families, Wounded Warrior units in hospitals, etc.

18. Provide space for a Military Mart – a place where families can come and access food items and personal need items.

19. Create a furniture donation program for newly relocated families – maintain a list of people who have furniture to give.

20. Start an Operation Showers of Appreciation – prepares layettes for expectant mothers, new mothers, and addresses specific needs of military families.

21. Work with local restaurants to provide meals for veterans/service members that your church program will pay for. Create a card that will be recognized and honored by participating restaurants.

22. Pair volunteer buddies with military dependent families to help with routine needs (oil changes, errands, etc).

23. Start an oil change/light care maintenance day at church for spouses of all deployed service members.

24. Offer home visits, respite care, caring for physical needs.

25. Offer programs for children and youth – Vacation Bible School, afterschool programs, youth group field trips, etc.

26. Provide financial literacy courses for military families.
27. Provide tools to strengthen relationships – retreats, communication courses (The Art of Marriage, From Warrior to Soul Mate, etc.)
28. Start a spiritual autobiography night – where participants share their spiritual journey, find common interests; identify those where ministry to military may be a match.
29. Start a Navigators Ministry – small group where it is safe to share stories and work through forgiveness and other issues.
30. Start a homeless veteran outreach program – distribute food, hygiene packs, etc. Participate in Stand Down.
31. Get involved in addiction recovery ministries – Celebrate Recovery, etc.
32. Support production of a “Re-Entry” play performance – based on hundreds of hours of interviews with returning combat veterans.
33. Create a labyrinth with the center dedicated to prayer. The labyrinth walk provides opportunity for participants to meet others in passing and to share. Focus can be on prayer for veterans, wounded warriors, families, personal healing, etc.
34. Develop a theological discussion/perspective to support warriors, war must be a civil discussion, a moral journey
35. www.careforthetroops.org Care for the Troops is an excellent resource for ideas and a place where churches can find out how to qualify as a Veteran Friendly Congregation. There is also a program where therapists who have had appropriate training can register.
36. www.adopt-a-chaplain.org Adopt-a-Chaplain is dedicated to supporting our troops through the ministries of chaplains. Churches can adopt Chaplains and their families, pray for and communicate with them regularly, and send care packages to chaplains to distribute the items to troops.

What has not worked well in your veterans outreach initiative?

1. Providing cost free babysitting center for mothers, single parents who need personal time and space. Need to find out state requirements for child care centers – insurance, ground requirements, supervisors, clearance of volunteers, facility requirements.
2. Difficult to combine varying levels of rank and functioning work groups
3. Congregation demographics different from target demographics
4. Not using acronyms wisely
5. Targeting groups

What barriers do you face?

1. Limited access to military community, particularly junior enlisted
2. Youth – generally not connected to faith communities
3. Frequent relocations of military families
4. Building trust – this can take a lot of time
5. Forgiveness issues – this is huge for close combat veterans
6. Denial (I’m okay, I don’t need help)
7. Difficulty in being able to connect BEFORE a problem presents itself (DUI/DV, etc.)
8. Religion itself can sometimes be a barrier

**Other observations, suggestions, and things to keep in mind:**

1. Listen, rather than inform.
2. Be flexible, open, and nonjudgmental in our responses.
3. Provide a warm welcome to incoming families; personal introduction to leaders of church in new community.
4. It is essential that church communities have no hidden or secondary agendas in ministering to the military community. Don’t expect military outreach to be a tool for recruitment of new members to the congregation.
5. Remember that God changes people; assess people spiritually and focus on God’s word.
6. Avoid singling out individuals; organic growth is important.
7. Get a feel for how involved they want to be and how much they want to share – some just want to be a part of the general population.
8. Provide inclusive programs for people at various stages in their faith.
9. Know your limitations – you could put yourself in a vulnerable or liable situation.
10. Understanding your people is paramount.
11. When planning group activities it is very important to keep in mind that most returning soldiers have experienced combat and have significant trust issues and are not group oriented, but prefer one-on-one contact.
12. Try to use correct terminology. For example: former Marine, not ex-Marine.
13. Be aware of the differences between various military holidays. Memorial Day is to honor the memory of service members who have died and their surviving families; Veterans’ Day is to honor the living veterans and their families who have served in the Armed Forces; Armed Forces Day is to honor all of the military; July 4th is a national celebration.
14. Stay informed about what is going on regarding news, military, etc.
15. Be proactive in your community.
16. Find and build relationships with point people – connectors who have access to military/veteran families (i.e. Chaplains).
17. Seek service from active duty personnel and veterans to help access active duty personnel and veterans.
18. Create mentorships – find and assist service members and veterans who want to become mentors.
Other Jewish Resources and Program Ideas:

**URJ Henry S. Jacobs Camp in Utica, MS**
Jacobs Camp runs a program called “Camper Incentive Program for Jewish Military Families on Active Duty,” which provides grants to families with one or both parents on active duty. The children are able to attend camp, and have the experience of Jewish life that plays a pivotal role in building Jewish identity and Jewish self-confidence. Incentives vary in amount based on military rank and age of children attending camp. Jacobs Camp is eager to open its arms and hearts to active military families. For more information about Jacobs Camp and this innovative incentive visit the camp’s website or call 601-885-6042. The [Jewish Community Center Association of North America](http://jcca.org/jwb/) runs a similar program for their NJ Y camps. The cost is deeply discounted and is designed to enable Jewish children related to men and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces to enjoy a Jewish camp experience.

**Jews in Green - [www.jewsingreen.com](http://www.jewsingreen.com)**
This is a website devoted to Jewish service members (past, present, future) and their families.

**The Jewish Welfare Board - [http://jcca.org/jwb/](http://jcca.org/jwb/)**
The Jewish Welfare Board is a government accredited agency providing for the religious, educational, and morale needs of Jewish military personnel, their families, and patients in Veterans Affairs hospitals. The JWB’s ongoing work includes maintaining liaison with the offices of the respective Chiefs of Chaplains; publications; program development; provision of religious supplies not available through military channels, recruiting, retention, and training of chaplains and lay leaders, and advice and counsel to the military and VA Jewish community. The JWB runs a number of programs to support Jewish chaplains and service members. For example, they will send a Hebrew Bible and/or *siddurim* (prayer books) to any service member free of charge.

**The Jewish War Veterans of America - [www.jwv.org](http://www.jwv.org)**
The JWV is an association of Jewish veterans whose mission includes: “to uphold the fair name of the Jew and fight his or her battles wherever unjustly assailed; to encourage the doctrine of universal liberty, equal rights, and full justice to all men and women; to combat the powers of bigotry and darkness wherever originating and whatever their target; to preserve the spirit of comradeship by mutual helpfulness to comrades and their families; to cooperate with and support existing educational institutions and establish educational institutions, and to foster the education of ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen... to preserve the memories and records of patriotic service performed by the men and women of our faith; to honor their memory and shield from neglect the graves of our heroic dead.” The JWV is organized with local posts were veterans can become members.