

**LIVE LAUGH LOVE...
PEOPLE**



DEAR SOLDIER LETTER PROJECT

Organizer's Guide



For more Live Laugh Love Projects visit us @ LiveLaughLove.com

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What are Live Laugh Love® Projects?

Live Laugh Love® was founded on the core philosophy that life should be lived with heart! What you live for...what makes you laugh... what you love... can be different for each person, but when you put your heart and soul into them, it makes life worth living. Every day becomes an adventure that brings more excitement, more joy, more satisfaction. We've created Live Laugh Love Projects to help you do that. They are fun, easy ways for you to get involved with something you care about and bring positive changes to your community. So if you want to live a life that is inspired and that inspires others, then Live Laugh Love projects are made for you.

Life is better when you really live, laugh and love.

When you embrace life, you appreciate it and you want it to be the best it can be -- not only for you, but for everyone. And the best life is one that is lived to the full, one filled with laughter and love. Whether you live laugh love nature and animals, or people and community, these projects offer something that will speak to your heart.

Change starts with you.

We give you all the information you need to organize and successfully carry out great initiatives that will not only benefit the wildlife and community around you, but will give you the opportunity to have fun as you build and grow relationships with your friends, family and neighbors. So don't sit around and wait for someone else to do it. Every person is unique and has something important to contribute. Each of us can make choices that bring beauty, love and good into the world we live in. Will you?

**So jump in. Have fun.
Make a difference.**

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Do you have a heart for people? Do you want to help those in need?

At **LIVE LAUGH LOVE** we think loving others is the most important thing any of us can do. Sometimes it's easy, sometimes it's not. But it's always the right choice. Do you feel the same?

Lots of people could use a dose of love in their lives, especially when life gets tough. Our American soldiers are no exception. Many live away from their families and friends under dangerous and stressful conditions and do not have the day to day comforts that we all enjoy. Veterans have experienced life-threatening circumstances, lost loved ones and have often suffered physical injury while serving their country.

Our **Dear Soldier Letter Project** is a way to say "Thank You" for all the sacrifices these soldiers have and still make. A "Thank You" may not make their job easy or make up for their losses, but it will definitely bring some encouragement to their souls, a little love in their hearts and a smile on their faces. An added bonus - it will do the same for you!

So get your friends or family together and have fun! This is a creative, easy way to share some love and gratitude with those who need it. And remember...

Life is best when it is lived with love. Don't settle for anything less.



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Introduction

If you love fun, creative projects and want to make a difference in someone's life, then keep reading! We all like to feel appreciated. Especially when we've worked hard to get something done or sacrificed to make someone else's life better. Our American soldiers make sacrifices every day for our country --for us. When they return from serving, they are sometimes wounded and cannot go back to the life they lived before. Taking the time to say "Thank You" means a lot. It warms the heart and comforts the soul. So show your appreciation and send a little love their way. You will be happy you did!

Special skills

No special skills required, just a loving heart and a willingness to share it with those in need.

Group size

This is a great opportunity to get a couple of friends or family together and have some fun! But, you can even tackle this alone. It's up to you.

Time Commitment

This is something you can do in an afternoon, or spend the day and make an event of it.

All Over Benefits

It's fun, creative and will bring a lot of joy -- to you and the soldiers.

Remember, when you give love away, it always comes back.
So live and give from the heart.

PROGRAM GUIDE



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Step 1: Veterans or Active Duty Soldiers?

Decide which group you would like to focus on - whether veterans or active duty soldiers. Both are deserving of your thanks and support so pick which appeals to you the most.

- A. **Veterans:** Research where the closest VA Hospital is in your area. Try www.VA.gov. Call them and let them know you would like to drop off some thank you cards for the veterans. Make sure you get their permission before you start.
- B. **Active Duty Soldiers:** For the protection of our soldiers overseas, addresses are kept confidential so the best way to send your thank-you cards or letters is to get connected with an organization that can help. Try a non-profit like SupportOurTroops.Org, which can send your letters along with their care packages to soldiers all over the world.

Step 2: Plan Your "Dear Joe. Dear Jane." Party

- A. **Choose a place**
Choose a place for the letter writing party - it can be your house, a friend's backyard and pool, the park, the beach...Make it somewhere fun!
- B. **Pick the Day and Time**
Choose a day and time that will give you a chance to have fun as you write - maybe a Friday Night or a rainy Saturday when it's the perfect time to stay indoors. Or pick a sunny Sunday afternoon and go to the park to meet your friends, or have a barbeque or swim party. You can have the party any time of the year or you can plan it around a holiday like Christmas, Independence, Memorial or Veteran's Day, etc.
- C. **Plan Refreshments/Entertainment**
Don't forget to plan the menu and entertainment for your letter-writing party. It can be as simple as chips and salsa with music, deli sandwiches in the park, or hot dogs and hamburgers in your backyard. Maybe you use a red, white and blue patriotic theme with food or drinks - or just decorate in those colors with paper plates and napkins. You can make it has simple or as big as you like. The important thing is to have fun with it.
- D. **Invite your friends or family**

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Whether online, word of mouth, or a physical invitation - spread the word and the excitement for your party. Be sure to give people enough notice to attend. A month ahead of time is ideal.

E. Get supplies for the party

- a. You can buy the supplies yourself, ask your friends to each bring something, or ask your friends if they will split the cost with you. But only ask if they are your very close friends. Otherwise, you may offend.
- b. Your shopping list may include:
 - i. Packs of cheery cards that are blank inside or
 - ii. Standard white paper to make your own cards
 - iii. Colorful pens, pencils, markers and get creative
 - iv. Utensils, paper and tableware. (Remember the red, white and blue theme)
 - v. Food and beverages as per your menu plan
 - vi. Entertainment (i.e. music, IPOD/MP3 player, stereos, DVDs)
 - vii. Picnic basket or cooler
 - viii. Picnic blanket

Step 3: Party Day

It's time to have fun with your friends and write the letters. Here are some writing tips:

- a. Be positive. The cards are meant to uplift and encourage.
- b. Be thankful. Be sure to communicate your appreciation for the soldiers' sacrifices and dedication to us and our country.
- c. Be respectful. These women and men have earned it more than most of us!
- d. Be kind. Remember most of us have never and will probably never have to endure the difficulties that these soldiers have experienced.
- e. Be encouraging. Hope and love are the best medicine to heal a wounded heart.
- f. Make sure to leave the cards and letters unsealed.

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Step 4: Deliver your cards

- A. Contact the charity or local organization that you chose to partner with and arrange to drop off or ship the cards or letters to them. Make sure to include any information they have requested. For safety reasons it is important that you follow their instructions carefully.
- B. If you are bringing the cards to a VA hospital, get in touch with your contact there. They will most likely have you drop off the cards at the front desk so they can be distributed by the hospital staff.

OTHER FUN IDEAS

- If you are having your party indoors, consider also baking red, white and blue decorated cupcakes or cookies to give along with your thank you letters. Homemade treats are always fun and appreciated.
- If you have young children, use this as a chance to teach your kids about heroes and how each person can be a hero every day. You can also talk to them about patriotism. Help out by writing a few words on the cards and then let your kids communicate their "thank-yous" with crayons and/or finger paint.
- Make "thank you" signs to hold up during Veteran's Day or Independence Day parades.
- Consider putting together some care packages items for soldiers serving overseas to be sent along with your thank-you letters. You can find a list of items specifically requested by the troops by clicking on the care package icon of the SupportOurTroops.Org website.

Legal

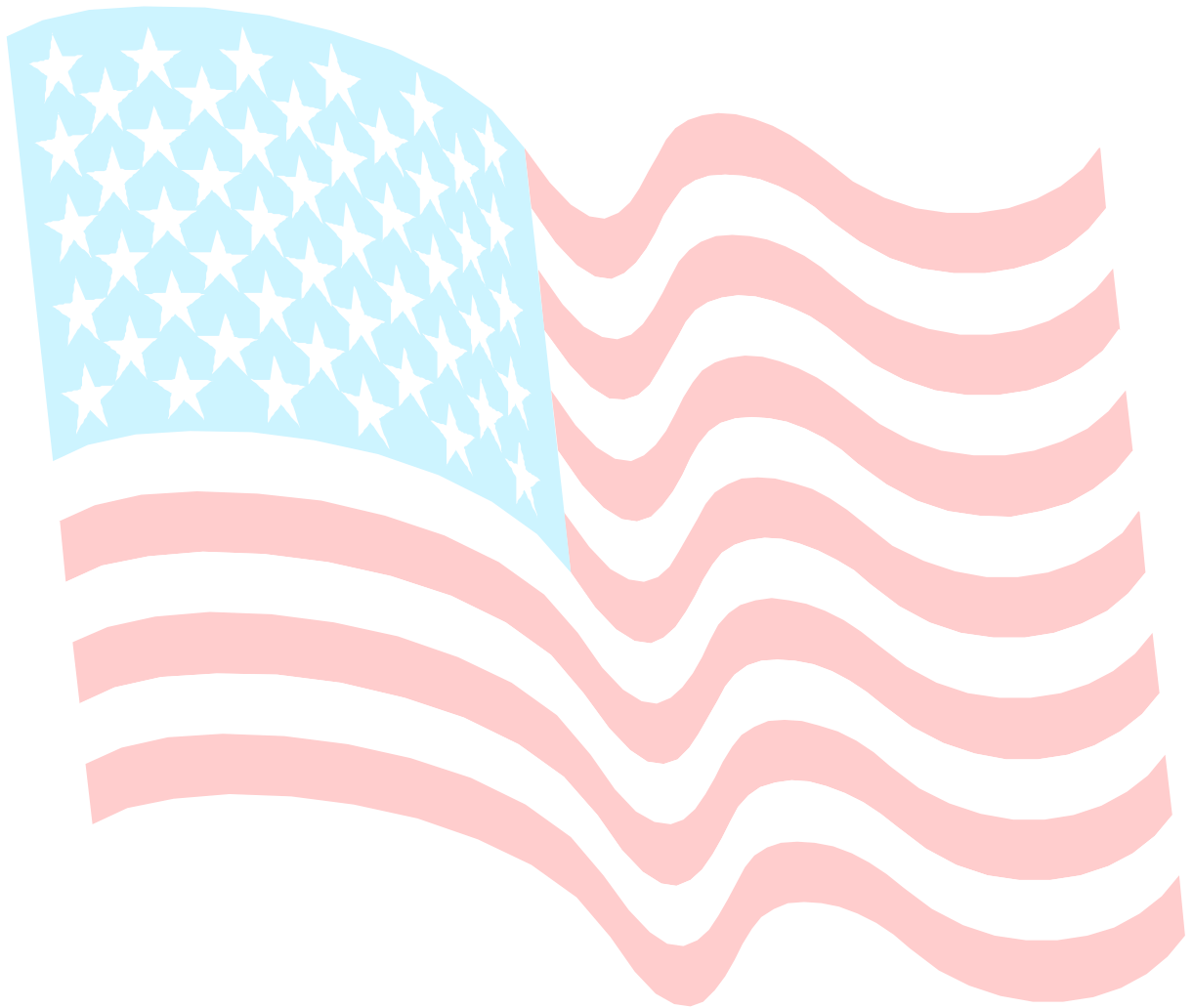
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- How much time was involved?
- Were any news articles written about your event? Can you include them for us to share or send us a link where people can read about it?
- Did you get any support from your community or local government leaders?
- Do you plan on doing this project again later on or perhaps a different one?
- Was anyone inspired to do something similar because of your example?
- How did the community respond?
- What did you do to recruit volunteers?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- Pictures would be great to have so if you can, please include them after photos. Then everyone really get an understanding of what your team were able to do.
- If you really want to get everyone's attention, you can also write a short news article summarizing your event and its success. Hearing it from your perspective makes that much more meaningful!

SO TAKE SOME TIME, SHARE YOUR HEART, AND HELP US MAKE THE GREAT PLACE TO LIVE LAUGH LOVE.

Thanks!

The LLL Team

LiveLaughLove.com