



Cell Phones for Soldiers is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides free communication tools to active-duty military members and veterans. The organization was founded in 2004 by Robbie and Brittany Bergquist, then 12 and 13 years old, with only \$21. Cell Phones for Soldiers relies on generous donors for cash contributions and funds raised by the recycling of used cell phones.

#### ***Cell Phones for Soldiers Fast Facts***

- In 2012, Cell Phones for Soldiers shared more than 515,000 communication tools with military families, providing 31 million minutes of talk time.
- The program collected and recycled more than 815,000 phones in 2012.
- Since 2004, Cell Phones for Soldiers has provided troops with 181 million minutes of free talk time.
- Since 2004, more than 10.8 million cell phones have been recycled, reducing the impact on landfills.
- Approximately 12,000 calling cards are mailed each week.
- A \$5 donation warrants 2.5 hours of talk time; a \$100.00 donation gives 50 hours or 3,000 minutes of talk time
- There are more than 2,600 collection points across the nation.
- In 2012, Cell Phones for Soldiers launched its newest program, Helping Heroes Home. Helping Heroes Home provides emergency funds for returning veterans to alleviate communication challenges as well as physical, emotional and assimilation hardships



#### ***Military Member Benefit (Statistical information provided by the Center for American Progress)***

- Due to extreme work conditions and lack of family interaction, 42 percent of military personnel have reported feeling like a “guest” in their home following deployment.
- Divorce rates nearly doubled for military members from 2001 to 2004 and have risen steadily ever since. Cell Phones for Soldiers works to keep families close by helping them communicate regularly during deployment.
- One in five returning troops from Iraq and Afghanistan show signs and symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), stemming from extreme work conditions and lack of emotional support.
- Thirty percent of deployed troops suffer from PTSD, depression or anxiety.
- Studies by the United States Army reveal a direct correlation between PTSD and family problems.
- The Military Benefits Deployment Center lists staying in touch with loved ones as a top-five “how to survive deployment” strategy.
- Currently in the United States, one in four homeless persons is a veteran.

#### ***Environmental Benefit***

- Each year more than 130 million cell phones are decommissioned.
- Cell phones contain hazardous chemicals and heavy metals which pollute the earth if placed in landfills.
- The charity works with Mindful eCycling to recycle the donated devices.

For more information, please visit [www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com](http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com), [www.helpingheroeshome.org](http://www.helpingheroeshome.org) or [www.facebook.com/JoinCellPhonesforSoldiers](https://www.facebook.com/JoinCellPhonesforSoldiers).

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