



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Catharine Young, AT&T and the Blue Star Mothers of New York have Partnered with Cell Phones For Soldiers to Provide Troops with Free Calls Home

CATHARINE YOUNG November 9, 2015

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In honor of Veterans Day on November 11, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I - Olean), AT&T and the Blue Star Mothers of New York have all teamed up with the nonprofit [Cell Phones For Soldiers](#) asking the community to help troops call home by donating cellular phones and tablets. Proceeds from the recycled devices are used to buy long distance calling cards for troops at home and abroad. Although the military landscape is ever changing, as many as 200,000 troops are serving in the United States military overseas around the world. By donating to Cell Phones For Soldiers, local residents and businesses can provide a lifeline for America's bravest.

Beginning today and lasting until Monday, December 7, residents and businesses can donate their unneeded cell phones and/or tablets at the following locations:

- **Senator Catharine Young's District Office, Westgate Plaza, 700 W. State Street, Olean, NY 14760**
- **Cattaraugus County Office Building, 303 Court Street, Little Valley, NY 14755**
- **Senator Catharine Young's Satellite Office, Fenton Building, 2-6 E Second Street, Suite 302, Jamestown, NY 14701**

- **Dunkirk Library, 536 Central Avenue, Dunkirk, NY 14048**
- **Allegany County Veterans Service Agency at the Crossroads, 6085 State Route 19N, Belmont, NY 14813**
- **Dansville Library, 200 Main Street, Dansville, NY 14437**
- **AT&T stores located at 2101 West State St, Suite 1, Olean / 707 Fairmount Ave, Jamestown / 969 Vineyard Drive, Dunkirk**

“Our active duty service men and women sacrifice time away from family and friends to protect the values and beliefs we cherish as Americans. Whether stationed abroad, or in a VA hospital far from family here in the states, a phone call to a loved one can often serve as a much needed pick-me-up for the military man or woman, and their family. Hearing a friendly and familiar voice can help lessen the emotional burden, especially during a long deployment. Cell Phones For Soldiers is a great organization that helps connect service members with their friends and family. I’m proud to partner with AT&T and the Blue Star Mothers of New York to bring attention to this worthy cause,” said Senator Young.

“AT&T has a long and proud history of supporting both veterans and active military personnel and their families through various company initiatives and by establishing external partnerships with organizations that provide necessary services, such as Cell Phones For Soldiers,” said Marissa Shorenstein, president of AT&T New York. “We are privileged to partner with Senator Young, Cell Phones For Soldiers, and the Blue Star Mothers to encourage the community to join us and donate their unused cell phones and tablets to honor and thank all of the brave men and women that protect and serve our country by helping them keep connected with their friends, family and loved ones at home.”

Cell Phones For Soldiers was founded in 2004 by teenagers **Robbie and Brittany Bergquist** at the ages of 12 and 13. The charity has since provided more than 216 million minutes of free talk time to servicemen and women stationed around the world through its calling card program, Minutes That Matter. Funds raised from the recycling of cellular phones are used to purchase prepaid international calling cards. On average, Cell Phones For Soldiers distributes 1,500 calling cards each week to bases around the world, and supports care package programs, deployment ceremonies and VA hospitals.

“Each year we have been humbled by the amount of people and organizations like AT&T and New York State Senator Young that take part in this important initiative to support our military members,” said co-founder Robbie Bergquist. “The communication gap between those serving and their families is a crucial need that Cell Phones For Soldiers is committed to addressing for years to come.”

For every donated device worth at least \$5, Cell Phones For Soldiers is able to provide two and a half hours of free talk time to deployed troops via calling cards.

“The Blue Star Mothers are very grateful to Cell Phones For Soldiers for giving our family members who are serving away from home the gift of spending some time with their loved ones. There is nothing more heart-warming, for both the military member and their family, than the sound of one another's voice, especially when you have someone special serving so far away. The comfort and joy of hearing your loved one's voice can sometimes make an unbearable moment a little easier to endure and does wonders to build the morale of a soldier longing for home. On behalf of military families everywhere, we would like to thank our community, Senator Young, and AT&T for supporting our military in this way. By assisting Cell Phones For Soldiers by donating your used cell phones, you are helping our soldiers, Marines, airmen, and sailors feel more connected to their loved ones back at home,” said Susan Rowley, President of the Lake Erie Chapter of Blue Star Mothers of New York.

Since 2004, more than 11.7 million phones have been recycled or repurposed. Approximately half of the phones processed are reconditioned and reused. Phones and components that cannot be refurbished are dismantled and responsibly recycled to reclaim materials, including:

- Gold, silver and platinum from circuit boards
- Copper wiring from phone chargers
- Nickel, iron, cadmium and lead from battery packs

To prepare your mobile device for donation here are some tips on how to erase all personal information and protect your privacy:

- Remove your phone's SIM card.
- Erase your address book, photos, messages and other stored information.
- Restore the default factory settings on your device.
- For instructions, see your owner's manual or the manufacturer's web site.

As part of the 2015 Legislative Session, Senator Young helped pass several initiatives to support active duty military personnel. The Senate passed legislation that would prevent a military member's deployment or probability of deployment from being a detrimental factor when determining child custody if a suitable child care plan is presented. Senator Young also helped pass a bill that would permit military personnel scheduled for deployment in less than 30 days to get married within 24 hours of receiving their marriage license.

For more information on Cell Phones For Soldiers, please visit

www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com.

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