

# Applebee's® Celebrates Veterans Support Groups as Part of 2015 "Thank You Movement" Campaign

## Applebee's Invites Americans to Join in Recognizing and Supporting Groups Offering Veterans Assistance in Different Regions of the Country

PR Newswire  
KANSAS CITY, Mo.

KANSAS CITY, Mo., Nov. 10, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Every year for the past eight years, **Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar®** honors current and former U.S. military personnel by offering them free meals nationwide. The brand expects to serve approximately 1 million free meals to veterans on this Veteran's Day, November 11, 2015.

This year, Applebee's "Thank You Movement" campaign has broadened its focus to recognize and financially support regional groups that help veterans in a variety of ways – transitioning back to civilian life, support for homeless veterans, scholarship assistance, baby showers for military moms-to-be, and more.

The **Thank You Movement site** showcases the critical mission that each group undertakes. In addition to making a direct donation to each group, Applebee's is inviting Americans to learn more about each organization and to consider making a donation of their own.

The ten organizations that Applebee's is recognizing in 2015, listed alphabetically, include:

### **Faith\*Hope\*Love\*Charity, Inc. (FHLC)**

FHLC opened the doors of the **Stand Down House** in Lake Worth, Florida, in May 2000. The goal of Stand Down House is to provide emergency/transitional housing and supportive services that lead to sustainability for homeless veterans struggling with addictions, mental illness, PTSD, traumatic brain injuries and physical limitation.

For more on FHLC and Stand Down House, and to consider donating, please visit [www.standdown.org](http://www.standdown.org).

### **Grace After Fire**

Grace After Fire, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization founded in 2008, is dedicated to helping women Veterans help themselves by providing the means to gain knowledge, insight and self-renewal. Grace After Fire assists in the transitioning of women veterans back into the civilian sector by providing outreach efforts, community resources navigation, peer-to-peer programs, women veteran and family retreats and other women events throughout the year.

For more on Grace After Fire, and to consider donating, please visit [www.graceafterfire.org](http://www.graceafterfire.org).

### **Illinois Patriot Education Fund**

The Illinois Patriot Education Fund (IPEF) provides financial assistance and supports the educational journey for Illinois military service men and women who have served our country and their families. IPEF provides scholarships that cover the gaps in the Post 9/11 GI Bill for active duty members, veterans, their spouses and children

For more on the Illinois Patriot Education Fund, and to consider donating, please visit [www.illinoispatriot.org](http://www.illinoispatriot.org).

### **Lone Star Veterans Association**

The vision of the Lone Star Veterans Association is to prevent veteran unemployment, depression, isolation, substance abuse, family challenges, homelessness, crime and suicide by coordinating direct and innovative programs. The organization is made up of a dedicated team of veterans who provide camaraderie, peer mentoring, career assistance, community service, transition assistance, athletic engagement, family events, veteran advocacy, and mental health awareness and resources.

For more on the Lone Star Veterans Association, and to consider donating, please visit <http://www.lonestarveterans.org/>.

### **Midwest Military Outreach**

The transition home to civilian life is often challenging for service members, veterans, and their families. There are often unmet and unanticipated needs in critical life areas. **Midwest Military Outreach** connects service members, veterans and their families to the resources they need. Providing support in the critical life areas of family, employment, education, financial education and health.

For more on Midwest Military Outreach, and to consider donating, please visit <http://www.midwestmilitaryoutreach.org/>.

### **New Directions for Veterans**

New Directions for Veterans serves more than 1,100 at-risk and homeless veterans and their family members each year through permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, and comprehensive support services. By providing the nation's heroes with mental health services, job training and placement, legal assistance, financial counseling, and case management, the organization aims to helping struggling veterans regain their footing in life.

For more on New Directions for Veterans, and to consider donating, please visit [www.NDVets.org](http://www.NDVets.org).

### **Operation College Promise**

Established in 2008, Operation College Promise (OCP) is a national policy, research and education program based at Thomas Edison State College, working to close the military-civilian divide, particularly when it comes to higher education. The program prepares transitioning veterans to access higher education while supporting campuses as they develop initiatives to optimize veteran student success.

For more on Operation College Promise, and to consider donating, please visit <http://www.operationpromiseforservicemembers.com/>.

### **Operation Shower**

Operation Shower is a non-profit organization dedicated to celebrating and honoring military families by providing dream baby showers for military moms-to-be to ease the stress of deployment

and separation. Since 2007, Operation Shower has honored more than 2,700 military moms and moms-to-be from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and National Guard during Operation Shower events across the nation and overseas.

For more on Operation Shower, and to consider donating, please visit [www.operationshower.org/donate](http://www.operationshower.org/donate).

### **Returning Veterans Project**

Returning Veterans Project is a ten year old independent nonprofit in Oregon with a volunteer network of 183 independent health care practitioners who offer free and confidential services to Post 9/11 war zone veterans, service members and their families. Volunteers with the organizations include mental health professionals, acupuncturists, naturopaths, chiropractors, massage therapists, and other complimentary health care providers.

For more on Returning Veterans Project, and to consider donating, please visit <http://www.returnsveterans.org/>.

### **Veterans 360**

Veterans 360 supports today's young veterans who struggle with both their transition into civilian life and, all too often, post-traumatic stress. The organization's primary mission (Carry The Challenge) is to normalize and civilianize PTS in the hope to eliminate the stigma that takes so many lives. Veterans 360 helps today's veterans identify what they want to do and most importantly why, and helps them get there.

For more on Veterans 360, and to consider donating, please visit <http://www.carrythechallenge.org/>.

Since launching the Thank You Movement as a way of showing appreciation for the more than 24 million current and former Armed Service members, Applebee's has also enabled visitors to show their appreciation for active and former service members by writing personal "Thank You" messages in real time via [www.thankyoumovement.com](http://www.thankyoumovement.com).

The free meals on Veterans Day will be available at the nearly 2,000 Applebee's locations nationwide. In order to receive a free meal on Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2015, guests just need to provide proof of military service, which includes: U.S. Uniform Services Identification Card, U.S. Uniform Services Retired Identification Card, Current Leave and Earnings Statement, Veterans Organization Card, photograph in uniform or wearing uniform, DD214, Citation or Commendation.

*Offer is valid for limited menu items only. Menu selection and participation may vary. Dine-in only. Traditional sides are included with free entrees; 2 for \$20 appetizers, upgraded side items or extras, beverages, desserts and gratuity are not included. Applebee's will offer free meals for veterans and active-duty military during normal business hours on Wednesday, Nov. 11. Hours vary by location, so guests should call their local Applebee's restaurant in advance to inquire about specific location hours. Applebee's encourages guests to call their local Applebee's or visit [www.applebees.com](http://www.applebees.com) for more information.*

### **About Applebee's**

Applebee's Grill & Bar offers a lively bar & grill experience with an array of flavorful, handcrafted drinks, appetizers and entrees that constantly evolve. Based in Kansas City, Missouri, Applebee's as of September 2015 had more than 2,000 locations in 49 states, 16 countries and Puerto Rico.

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