

Governor Quinn Calls on Illinois Residents to Support Our Troops This Holiday Season

Written by Andrew Mason

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Launches Annual Holiday Card Drive for Wounded Troops, Urges Support for Homeless Veterans at Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony

CHICAGO – November 29, 2010. Governor Pat Quinn today joined local schoolchildren to light the state of Illinois' annual holiday tree and launch the Illinois Heroes holiday card drive. Governor Quinn encouraged schoolchildren from across the state to take part in the annual drive by making holiday cards for servicemembers at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC) in Germany. Governor Quinn will personally deliver the cards during a visit to troops at LRMC later this year.

“We want every servicemember who is spending the holidays at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center to know that we are all thinking of them and are grateful for their courage and sacrifice,” said Governor Quinn. “I encourage everyone in Illinois to join me in supporting our servicemembers and Veterans this holiday season.”

This year will mark the sixth time that Governor Quinn has visited Illinois troops and their families at LRMC. The center is the largest American hospital outside of the United States. For more information on how to participate in the Illinois Heroes holiday card drive, please visit OperationHomefront.org

Governor Quinn was also joined at the tree lighting ceremony by Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) Director Dan Grant and representatives from a number of Veterans' organizations to encourage residents throughout the state to support homeless Veterans during the holidays. The IDVA operates the Prince Home for Homeless and Disabled Veterans, a facility that has become a national model for supportive housing and therapeutic services for homeless Veterans.

“Everyone always asks what they can do to help Veterans, especially at this time of the year,” said Director Grant. “Supporting the organizations that are providing essential services for homeless Veterans and helping them to rebuild their lives is one of the best ways you can do it.”

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The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that approximately one-third of the nation's adult homeless population is made up of Veterans, with many suffering mental illness and alcohol and/or substance abuse problems. In Illinois, nearly 10 percent of the homeless population is made up of Veterans.

Governor Quinn was also joined at the tree lighting ceremony by the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center Inspirational Choir and Chase Bernardi, a formerly homeless Iraq War Veteran.

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