

## Governor Quinn Kicks Off Holiday Cheer Basket Program for Servicemembers

Written by Erin Wilson

Tuesday, 18 December 2012 13:45

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*Teams Up with Illinois Dept. of Veterans' Affairs, Illinois Lottery, USO of Illinois and Chicago White Sox to Help Military Families*

CHICAGO – December 17, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn today joined Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Director Erica Borggren and Superintendent Michael Jones from the Illinois Lottery to announce the state's partnership with the United Service Organization (USO) of Illinois and the Chicago White Sox to sponsor this year's Cheer Basket Program, a partnership to support the USO of Illinois Families on the Homefront Program, for servicemen and women. The program will send 150 cheer-filled holiday care packages to Illinois servicemembers and their families. As part of his mission to support servicemembers, Governor Quinn also encouraged parents to purchase Illinois Vets Cash lottery tickets to include as a great stocking stuffer.

"The Cheer Basket Program is a great way to give a little back to the servicemen and women who give so much," Governor Quinn said. "I want to thank the USO of Illinois and the Chicago White Sox for helping bring joy to our servicemembers and their families this holiday season. And I want to encourage all Illinois families to purchase a Vets Cash ticket as a stocking stuffer this Christmas, to give the opportunity to win tens of thousands of dollars as well as support a great cause – our troops."

The Cheer Baskets include a \$50-\$100 Dominick's gift card, White Sox gear and Garrett's Gourmet Popcorn. A total of 150 Cheer Baskets will be assembled with the help of White Sox Volunteer Corp, USO staff and Lottery/Northstar volunteers. 125 Cheer Baskets will be given to

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servicemembers in need, while the remaining 25 Cheer Baskets will be shipped to the Great Lakes Naval Base to be distributed to the servicemen and women stationed there.

“Once again, the USO of Illinois is thrilled to partner with the Illinois Lottery’s Veterans Cash campaign,” Alison Ruble, president and chief executive officer of the USO of Illinois said. “During this holiday season, with support from the Illinois Lottery, we are able to bring more assistance to our troops, using these Cheer Baskets to support our military and their dependents through the USO Families on the Homefront Program.”

“We are thrilled to be a partner in this wonderful program,” Christine O’Reilly, White Sox senior director of community relations said. “The entire White Sox organization is always looking to do anything we can to help those who serve our nation, and the members of our Volunteer Corps are always looking for ways to lend a hand, so this is a perfect fit for all.”

“For the past three years, we have joined the Illinois Lottery and the USO of Illinois to send needed and greatly appreciated care packages to Illinois servicemen and women,” IDVA Director Erica Borggren said. “These Cheer Baskets are tangible expressions of our gratitude, and their arrival right before the holidays will be tremendously meaningful to our heroes in uniform.”

The Cheer Basket Program is funded in part by the *Veterans Cash* lottery ticket. Since Governor Quinn first launched *Veterans Cash* in 2006, the program has awarded more than \$10 million in grants to Veterans’ organizations statewide. The Illinois Lottery’s *Veterans Cash* game is the first lottery game in the United States to earmark 100 percent of net proceeds to Veterans. Proceeds from *Veterans Cash* have resulted in cash awards to more than 190 organizations supporting Veterans throughout the state.

“The Illinois Lottery was created to generate funds for good causes in Illinois. As an example: *Veterans Cash*, an instant lottery game championed by Governor Quinn while he was Lieutenant Governor in 2006, has raised more than \$10 million to support our Veterans programs throughout the state,” said Lottery Superintendent Michael Jones. “These Cheer Baskets will go directly to our servicemen and women to help them enjoy this wonderful time of year.”

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The latest *Veterans Cash* game is available at 8,100 Illinois Lottery retail locations throughout the state. Each ticket costs \$2 and the game features top prizes of \$20,000. The Lottery anticipates raising \$900,000 for Illinois Veterans from the new game. The instant ticket measures 4" by 7.5" and is the largest \$2 game ever offered by the Lottery. The ticket face was designed by Common Ground, the Lottery's award-winning, cross-cultural advertising/marketing agency that designs the Lottery's "special-cause" instant games, like *Veterans Cash*.

*Veterans Cash* is also available at participating American Legion posts across the state of Illinois including: American Legion Department of Illinois, Bloomington; Post 979, Bartonville; Post 285, Galesburg; and Post 71, Urbana.

For more information about Veteran's Cash please visit [IllinoisLottery.com](http://IllinoisLottery.com). To apply for a grant, please download an application at

[the Veterans Cash website](#)

. For more information about IDVA and its programs, please

[visit the agency's homepage](#)

. To find out how you can help Illinois Veterans, visit

[www.OperationHomeFront.org](http://www.OperationHomeFront.org)

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The USO lifts the spirits of America's troops and their families. The mission of the USO is to enhance the quality of life of the U.S. Armed Forces personnel and their families and to create a cooperative relationship between U.S. military communities and involved or supporting civilian communities. The USO of Illinois is a civilian 501(c)(3) registered non-profit that is not government funded but is supported solely by the generosity of the American people. For more information about the USO of Illinois visit [www.usoofillinois.org](http://www.usoofillinois.org) or [facebook.com/usoofillinois](https://facebook.com/usoofillinois)

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