





Two weeks ago **Mary** invited me and a few other girls over to her house for a little night of crafts and cocktails. The purpose wasn't just an excuse to get friends together (as it normally is with us) but to write letters to soldiers who are serving overseas. After posting **this Instagram** shot with a few of the many, many cards we created I got emails and messages from some of of you awesome readers and followers wanting to also get involved...and I thought I'd share all the information about the project and how you can participate in the hopes that more of you are interested!

Here is the backstory: Mary's mother Marlene Summers founded **The Troops Project** in 2005. She had talked to a young man just before his deployment to Iraq and it made her think of ways she could support soldiers and troops while they were away from home and loved ones. At the time, Marlene owned a gourmet chocolate chip cookie company and she thought that sending batches of the **giant cookies** along with thoughtful notes of encouragement would be a great way to give a "hug" to the troops. Not only did the soldiers find the cookies to be over the top delicious, but emails and letters started pouring in to Marlene thanking her for her meaningful gesture.

The Troops Project is recognized by the IRS as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit project with the goal of letting those who serve our nation know that their commitment is honored and that their unselfish sacrifice is always appreciated. Since 2005, Marlene has worked to raise funds for the cost of production and mailing and received help from others in the creation of the cards that are sent with the cookies. As you might expect, this is an enormous effort. Depending on the amount of donations that are given to the project, Marlene tries to do two of the massive mailings per year.

The first shipment for 2015 is well underway and Marlene is in need of 5,000+ cards. This goes back to Mary's girls night...five of us gathered around construction paper, glitter, markers, and more to create cards with thoughtful messages. It was a fun activity but what made it powerful was what we were creating. Our notes all started with "Dear Solider," "Dear Hero," or "Dear Troops" and were followed with words of encouragements, gratitude, appreciation, and love. One of the friends at the table has an older brother who is currently enlisted and having that personal connection made it all the more real that the men and women in our armed forces are selflessly separating themselves from their families to bravely

serve.

If you are interested in contributing to The Troops Project there is still time to send in letters before they are shipped! The cut off date is February 5th but the more cards Marlene has, the better (: It can be something short and sweet, a Bible verse, a quote, a child's drawing, or anything in between. The only requirement is that you cannot include any personal contact information (for security purposes). We signed our notes with our first names. Letters can be sent to:

Grammy's Cookie Convoy
P.O. Box 1202
Montgomery, Texas 77356

And if you can't make the February deadline or don't want to make cards but would still like to get involved, the project is always (always, always) in need of monetary donations that make the shipments possible. Donations can be made payable and mailed to the above information or you can make an electronic contribution by clicking the "Donate" button on **The Troops Project** website which will take you to this **PayPal page**.

Thank you in advance to any and all of you who decide to get involved! And of course, thank you to Mrs. Summers who makes all of this possible.