

## ***Our Heroes' Tree*<sup>SM</sup> Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the *Our Heroes' Tree*<sup>SM</sup> program?**

Marlene Lee and Stephanie Pickup co-founded *Our Heroes' Tree*<sup>SM</sup> in 2005 to honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's military families. *Our Heroes' Tree* consists of community members (groups or individuals) creating handmade ornaments honoring service members from past and present wars, conflicts and peacetime operations. These ornaments are then placed on a tree. Stories about individual service members can also be submitted and displayed in a binder near the tree. With several thousand Hoosier military members currently deployed overseas, the Military Family Research Institute (MFRI) at Purdue University saw this program as a means to pay special tribute to these families in the state of Indiana.

### **Who developed the *Our Heroes' Tree*<sup>SM</sup> program?**

Inspired by her volunteer work with injured soldiers and their families, Marlene Lee authored *The Hero in My Pocket*, a keepsake book for children affected by the loss of a service member. Marlene designed *Hero* to help facilitate communication among children and adults on the difficult topic of grief and recovery. Marlene and co-author Lil Ingram published *That's My Hope*, a story of hope and inspiration for families of wounded warriors.

Stephanie Pickup helped her young children through her husband's two Army deployments overseas during the holidays; she also led an Army Family Readiness Group for more than two years. Based on her experiences, Stephanie, a mother of four, authored *The Soldier's Tree*, a book for children (ages 3-6 years) whose loved one is deployed during holiday time.

### **What type of support will we receive if we participate in this program?**

Each participating library will receive a resource kit, which will include community and educational tools and curriculum to assist your library in planning a successful event, as well as flags and ribbons to decorate with. The resource kit will also have directions on how to upload pictures and stories about the Hero ornaments to be included in the online Indiana Virtual Heroes' Tree.

### **How will I publicize this event in my community?**

MFRI will provide you with a press release to distribute to your local newspapers, as well as fliers and other marketing materials that you can post and distribute to encourage participation in this program.

### **What are some of the goals for the program?**

- To bring groups of people or individuals together to recognize military service in Indiana
- To increase availability of resources in communities to support veterans, service members and their families.

### **What are the minimum requirements to participate?**

The minimum each library needs to provide is a tree and 21 white lights. The white lights symbolize those who have lost their lives during a war or conflict. No other colored lights should be displayed. The selection of the type of tree (real versus artificial or large versus small) will be left to the discretion of the library staff. Optional activities are encouraged and the resource kit will provide assistance with these activities.

### **How do we sign up to participate?**

To participate in this program, visit the Military Family Research Institute website at [www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri](http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri) and complete the registration form.

### **We have more than one branch for our library, can each branch participate?**

All libraries are welcome, whether public, private, academic, or corporate. Each branch would need to register their specific location in order to receive the resource kit.

## **What is the timeline for registration and the program?**

7.1.08: Registration opens for the program

8.15.08: Registration for this program closes. Registrations received after this deadline are not guaranteed to receive a full resource kit, but partial resource kits will be sent.

10.1.08: Resource kits will arrive at each registered location

10.1.08: Ornament pictures and stories/descriptions can be uploaded to Virtual Indiana Our Heroes' Tree

11.7.08: Virtual *Our Heroes' Tree*<sup>SM</sup> launches for viewing with State-wide celebration

11.14.08: Minimum time-frame for the Heroes' Trees to be displayed in the libraries. This is the earliest date that trees can be taken down, but they may remain up longer if desired.

11.18.08: Evaluation of the program is due to the Military Family Research Institute

## **Why was the time-frame November 7, 2008 through November 14, 2008 selected?**

This program is designed to celebrate Veterans and their families in each local community. At 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918, World War I ceased. In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson designated November 11<sup>th</sup> as Armistice Day. In 1954, Congress changed the name of the holiday to Veterans Day to honor all U.S. veterans. According to the Veterans Administration there are 23,816,000 veterans in the United States - roughly 1 in 8 U.S. citizens over the age of 18. MFRI is inviting all libraries across Indiana to join us in starting a community tradition to honor our veterans and educate our communities on the significance of Veterans Day through the Our Heroes' Tree<sup>SM</sup> program.

## **Why were libraries selected?**

Libraries are unique in their community-centered philosophies and they provide a place for residents to congregate, learn, and participate in the lives of their communities. Many libraries collaborate with schools and community groups while providing educational and learning opportunities to support their county or town. Because we want to be inclusive in our efforts, we also encourage private, corporate, academic and any other library to participate in the *Our Heroes' Tree*<sup>SM</sup> program.

## **What is the Military Family Research Institute?**

The Military Family Research Institute is a research and outreach organization based at Purdue University, funded by the Lilly Endowment, the Office of Military Community and Family Policy in the Department of Defense, and others. Guided by the belief that discovery, learning, and engagement are essential components of a strong research and outreach program, our goal is to create meaningful relationships that bring organizations together in support of military families.

Our mission is to conduct studies that provide insight into the experiences of military members and their families, and to design and implement outreach activities that assist military families in Indiana and beyond. MFRI strives to proactively build relationships with partners in both the military and civilian communities.

## **Will there be other opportunities to partner and collaborate with the Military Family Research Institute?**

We are hoping this program will be one of many relationship building opportunities.

## **How do I find out more about the Military Family Research Institute?**

The easiest way is to go to our website, [www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri](http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri). However you can also contact us by phone at 765-496-3403.

**Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University**  
Purdue West Down Under, 1402 W. State St., West Lafayette, IN 47907  
[www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri](http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri)