

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CAMP FIRE USA CELEBRATES 35 YEARS OF SUPPORTING
“NATIONAL SALUTE TO VETERANS WEEK”**

(Kansas City, Missouri) – For over 35 years, Camp Fire USA has supported the Department of Veterans Affairs’ **National Salute to Veterans Week** (February 8-14th) with a host of activities that bring children together with our nation’s veterans.

The National Salute to Veterans Week recognizes the service of the more than 23 million military veterans in the United States. Activities last at least a week but always include Valentine’s Day because the sentiments of caring, sharing, and love match the Salute’s purpose of expressing appreciation to hospitalized veterans.

Camp Fire USA Councils around the country have developed partnerships with local military bases, troop support groups, VA hospitals and nursing homes. Children are engaged in many different projects. Some will write letters to veterans or send Valentine’s Day cards or care packages. Others will visit veterans and share writings and draw pictures around the themes of patriotism, citizenship, freedom, peace and compassion. Many reach out to military families in their community or donate gifts such as calling cards to help veterans and service members keep in touch with their families. Through their many projects, children develop a sense of caring for others and learn civic responsibility.

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“Last year, the Jackson Adventure club distributed a huge basket of decorated cards and heartfelt messages to the patients at the Veterans Hospital in Muskogee, Oklahoma. They handed them out to the veterans, going floor to floor, and were so happy to see how much their efforts meant to the veterans. It was a great adventure for our youth and it taught them what sharing and caring can really mean to others of any age,” stated Bobbie Henderson, Executive Director of Camp Fire USA Green Country Council, Inc. (Tulsa, Okla.). Events like these, held throughout the nation, teach children about the role of our military and the importance of paying tribute, and expressing thanks, to the veterans for their selfless service.

“We are inspired this year by two milestones - Camp Fire USA’s Centennial and its 35th year of participation in Veterans Week,” says Geri Anne Elsen, Vice President of Council and Program Services for Camp Fire USA. “From our years of involvement in Veterans Week, we know the positive impact we have on both our veterans and our children. I know this personally. I’m married to a Vietnam vet, have brothers that served in the military and a brother is currently serving in Iraq. I can tell you how much I love the fact that Camp Fire is doing this good work.”

Camp Fire USA’s involvement in Veterans Week builds a bridge, enabling young people to gain a new appreciation for the lives and contributions of our military.

For nearly a century, Camp Fire USA has changed young people’s lives. Camp Fire USA offers girls and boys, from birth to 21, opportunities to learn and play together in comfortable settings. Through their interaction and involvement with Camp Fire USA, they build confidence, independence and develop an awareness of who they are and who they can become. They learn to protect nature by discovery, curiosity, compassion and concern for the environment. As Camp Fire USA continues to strengthen youth and families, the benefit can be seen in local communities. Camp Fire USA, with national headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, provides all-inclusive, coeducational programs, providing nearly 30 million program hours each year, in hundreds of communities across the United States. For more information, visit www.campfireusa.org.

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