



Until Every One Comes Home®



United
Through
Reading®

United Through Reading® Military Program



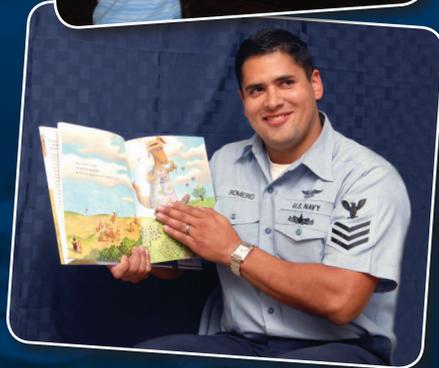
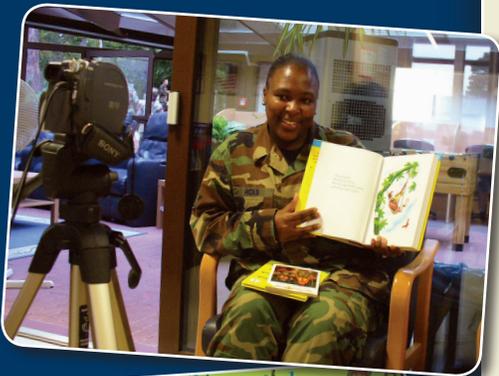
“ Katy was reaching for you on the screen. I ended up getting huge squeezes, but I think they were intended for you! It was really great watching you and hearing your voice. We don't get enough voice time ... Will close for now; want to get them settled, watch your movie, and go to sleep.”



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The kids are in their pajamas, bath time is over. Time for a bedtime story with dad. No squirming as his calm voice reads a favorite Dr. Seuss book aloud. When he's done, they replay the DVD and watch him again. The bond between parent and child grows strong over a story that the child wants to hear over and over. When a parent is on duty away from home, the USO and United Through Reading® make that bond possible.

Here's how it works: The parent reads a children's book aloud while being recorded on a DVD at a USO center or other site. The DVD, the book and simple instructions are sent back home, at no cost to the troops or their families.

And here's what happens next: Kids watch the DVD again. And again. They memorize every word of the story and soak up every gesture from mom or dad. Parents or caregivers at home often photograph or tape their children's reaction, which they send back out to the deployed parent to share the impact.

"Those DVDs of dad reading a book brought a big smile on all three of our children's faces," said one mom. And a couple who are both stationed in Baghdad told us about making a DVD for their two daughters back home. "We recently went to Qatar for a four-day pass and used your USO facilities," the mom wrote. "The staff was wonderful and ensured that the books and video made it to our children. Our girls enjoyed the DVD so much they brought it to school and both classes watched it!" One mom reported her little girl would go up to the TV and touch the screen, because "that's where daddy lives."

For young children, the DVD helps them remember what a parent looks like during a long deployment. "A child has a hard time understanding that mom or dad is okay from an e-mail or a letter," a Marine chaplain told us. "A video image reassures the child that his or her parent is doing well."

United Through Reading® fulfills an aching need for the on-duty parent, too. Like the brand-new dad en route to Iraq who stopped at a USO center after two days in transit without sleep. Never mind a shower, never mind a snack. He immediately headed for the United Through Reading® room to tape a story for his infant son. Before the USO staff in Iraq could even set up a permanent center, service members were asking them about the program. "We were often taping service members after midnight," one recalled. "Now, the USO here in Balad has a room dedicated to United Through Reading®."

USO centers have a supply of books that kids love. Many deal with issues that they are facing – missing a parent, starting a new school, being afraid – while others are just fun. "My wife wrote me that my daughter watches her video every day and that she answers my questions each time as though I were right there asking them," said one sailor. "Apparently she has been missing her daddy pretty badly ... now when she is missing me, she just puts in the movie and that seems to help."

United Through Reading® links parent with child, helping both deal with separation through the simple power of a story.

This program is one of the many ways that the USO fulfills its mission to lift the spirits of U.S. troops and their families. Through special programs, targeted services, entertainment tours and in more than 140 USO centers around the world, this private, nonprofit organization continually seeks ways to build morale and express appreciation to active duty military personnel and their families.