



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Airport USO provides haven for traveling service members

RELEASE DATE: Wednesday, November 11, 2015

CONTACT: Linda Hughes, Marketing Manager, 937.454.8200

Don't underestimate the power of a comfortable chair or a quiet place to grab a bite to eat. From snacks to support, the USO branch at the Dayton International Airport sees small gestures make big differences for service men and women every day.

More than 9,600 active duty and retired military personnel a year—just about 800 a month—check into the USO branch at the Dayton International Airport. For them, the location is much more than just a place to take a break.

"We are incredibly proud of the work the USO branch does here at the airport," said Terrence Slaybaugh, director of the Dayton International Airport. "Every day, we see the huge difference they are able to make in the lives of the troops who pass through the airport."

Center Manager Yolanda Young manages an all-volunteer team of 51 at the USO location, a branch of USO Central & Southern Ohio. The team works in four hour shifts, every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., including all holidays, checking in active and retired members of the military and giving them whatever they need to feel comfortable before, after or in between flights.

"Anything we can do to make them feel more comfortable during their time here, we want to do it," Young said.

The location includes two sitting rooms, a computer, two big screen TVs, a snack room, table and kids' reading corner. It's a small space at the airport, but it's just enough to make a big difference in the lives of military members and their families.

"When they see the USO, they know it is a place they are welcome," Young said.

The location is stocked with snacks, warm food, hot coffee, cold drinks and whatever is needed to make military members feel comfortable. Food is purchased from donations made to a small box that sits on the check-in counter or is donated by patrons to the airport gift shop Paradies. Paradies also makes its own donations, including books military members can take with them for

City of Dayton, Ohio



Phone: 937.333.3616

free and drop off the next time they pass through a USO location. The gift shop also made a large donation of reading glasses to the branch, which Young said has been extremely helpful.

The USO location is entirely dependent on such donations, Young said, noting that they get regular donations from a VFW Ladies Auxiliary chapter in Columbus. An American Legion chapter in Vandalia donated the large cooler that keeps drinks and healthful snacks like yogurt and hummus. A preschool student even did a toiletry drive earlier this year that stocked some of the shelves with much-needed items.

Everything at the USO is provided free of charge to the military members, but beyond the tangibles, the location also offers the ability to have quiet family time before a deployment, a warm welcome for soldiers returning home, the ability to escort family members to the gates to meet loved ones and support for family members of the fallen. Those things, Young said, are priceless.

For Young, whose son is active duty Air Force, any chance to give back and offer support to the troops and veterans who have served is meaningful. Volunteering through the USO has provided her with a great chance to make a difference for active duty and retired military.

The USO is always looking for volunteers, Young said. You can get more information by calling the USO at the airport at (937) 454-1221 or visiting them on Facebook at facebook.com/usocsodaytonairport.

###

