



E-Update

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In this age of gladiatorial combat between political parties, with election rhetoric tearing the country apart, we at the Center for Neighborhood still believe in the passage from Corinthians 1:13,

¶ I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.+

If we have love, we won't vilify those who disagree with us, or savagely attack in the name of advancing an agenda. And beyond our words, we believe in extending ourselves, with love, to help others. In this spirit, CNE plans to launch a new initiative to help returning veterans who are in need of assistance. This is not an act of charity but a token of our love and appreciation for what they have given us.

Recently we were shocked when we saw television coverage of marines standing in full-dress uniform waiting for hours for food giveaways. A report just released by the Food Bank of New York City entitled *From the Front Lines to the Bread Lines: Food Poverty Among Veterans*, reveals that 25 percent of all households with a military veteran in that city are experiencing difficulty affording food. This is something that should never happen in America, and in response, CNE's Families Sharing initiative is being created to facilitate and coordinate the generosity of families, churches, businesses, and community groups to help needy veterans and their families. The initial focus areas will be in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia, but we expect to take the concept nationwide.

Specifically, CNE and its network of community-based organizations will recruit host families to partner with veterans' families identified by military relief organizations as in need of food. The host family would meet or provide transportation to the military family to one of the big box stores such as Costco or Sam's Club, to purchase groceries. The cost would be minimal to the host family, since shopping at these stores results in savings of some 35%. The Center will act as a switchboard to match host and recipient families in the same zip code. As a result of these one-on-one encounters, we hope that more extensive relationships will evolve. Care will be given to ensure that the goal of self-sufficiency is ever present and the dignity of the recipient family is always respected. The hope is that no veteran coming back from Iraq or Afghanistan will ever again have to stand in a food line and that a temporary gift of love and assistance will demonstrate our gratitude to these vets and help them get on their feet. We plan to launch this initiative in January and will update everyone as to how they can help.

CNE wishes you and yours the happiest of holidays and a blessed New Year!