

Fort Drum Press Release

Release Nr: 2504-04

April 23, 2025

Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum BOSS volunteers make a positive community impact

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Soldiers looking for volunteer opportunities need only to visit the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) center and sign up for a worthwhile cause in the community.

In the month of April alone, Fort Drum BOSS hosted a Red Cross Blood Drive, supported a North Country Pet Adoption program in Jefferson County, and assisted patrons at the Veterans Food Pantry in Watertown.

Spc. Joshua Silva, 1st Brigade Combat Team BOSS representative and volunteer coordinator, said the latter event is scheduled every third Saturday and it happened to coincide with a long holiday weekend.

Still, Soldiers joined dozens of community volunteers to support local veterans in the Feed Our Vets program.

"We didn't intend on dipping into people's holiday plans," Silva said. "So, for those who are here and chose to volunteer, they obviously wanted to do something good for our community."

Silva said it is hard not to feel a bit homesick when he's missing out on the traditional family brunch.

"But then I think to myself, 'Why not create that family feeling here and make the most of being part of this community?'" he said.

Silva said that when Soldiers volunteer, it reflects positively on the Army and the 10th Mountain Division, and it strengthens community bonds. Many of the volunteers with the Feed Our Vets program are former military members who return monthly to keep the food pantry operational.

"If we didn't have volunteers, we wouldn't have a food pantry," said Irene Riley, Veterans Food Pantry operations manager. "My volunteers come in throughout the month to help unload our product from the food bank and stock the shelves so everything is set. Then they are here to assist veterans from start to finish – meeting them at the door, they shop with them, and then take their cart to the car to unload the food. None of this would happen without our volunteers."

Spc. Lisa Dayoub, BOSS secretary, has been with the organization for nearly a year and has participated in many community service activities.

"I just like helping people," she said. "It's a great opportunity to get Soldiers out of their rooms and get that fulfillment of knowing they are helping others."

She said assisting veterans at the food pantry has been a meaningful experience.

"As I'm helping them, I get to hear their stories and learn a little about their lives," Dayoub said. "As a Soldier, it's been great meeting them because they've done a lot, and it inspires me to do more."

Pvt. Keily Boutte has only been with 7th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, for a few weeks but she learned right away about the benefits of BOSS.

"We were told that whenever we had spare time and nothing to do, go to the BOSS center," she said. "I'm a people person, and I love to volunteer and seeing the smiles on people's faces."

Boutte said for those who aren't as extroverted, volunteering can help build confidence and improve self-esteem.

"When you make the time to give back to people, it makes a difference to others and yourself," she said. "But you may not know it at the time and moment how much a difference you are really making."

Silva said he also seeks community service projects outside of the BOSS program, like working with the unit ministry team to rebuild a sign, or an outdoor beautification project in the brigade area to improve quality of life.

"Volunteering, for me, is a selfless act that I want to do more of," he said. "And it is a huge part of what we do in BOSS. Aside from recreational and leisure activities and life skills, volunteering is the pillar that allows Soldiers to give back and show people who we are. Soldiers fight, protect, and train, but we can also serve in other ways that matter too."

To learn more about BOSS volunteer opportunities, call (315) 772-7807, stop by the BOSS center in Bldg. 10650 on 5th Armored Division Drive, or visit [www.facebook.com/bossfortdrum](https://www.facebook.com/bossfortdrum).

Fort Drum community members also can learn more about volunteering by speaking with a Volunteer Corps coordinator at (315) 772-2899 or visiting the Family Resource Center, Bldg. 11042 on Mount Belvedere Boulevard.

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Photo Captions:

1 - Fort Drum Soldiers assist patrons inside the Veterans Food Pantry in Watertown on April 5, in support of the local Feed Our Vets program. The Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program organizes this volunteer opportunity for members of the 10th Mountain Division (LI) every third Saturday of the month. (Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

2- Spc. Joshua Silva talks with an event organizer as Fort Drum Soldiers assist patrons inside the Veterans Food Pantry in Watertown on April 5, in support of the local Feed Our Vets program. The Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program organizes this volunteer opportunity for members of the 10th Mountain Division (LI) every third Saturday of the month. (Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

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