

From Our Hearts FAQs

These are not *requirements*, but simply guidelines from the many questions we receive regarding what we like to see when opening a box of cards. We don't like to set down "rules" as we appreciate your time, talent, creativity and willingness to help us. These are steps you can take to help us to get the cards you contribute over to our servicemen and women quickly. We ship thousands of cards every month, and your help is invaluable!

- **Are there a minimum number of cards I have to send?**

No! You may send us one card and it is as important as the contributors who ship us hundreds of cards. Each card, when added with the next, eventually fills up a box!

- **What size card can I send?**

We recommend the standard 4 ¼" x 5 ½" card (a half sheet of 8 ½ x 11 card stock folded in half) as two rows of these fit perfectly in a large priority mail box – this is how we ship over the cards. However, we do accept "odd" or "oversized" size cards – we simply place them on top of the cards in the box as there is room. We can usually fit in 10-15 of these cards in a box.

- **What about envelopes? And I read about "clear envelopes" – what are these?**

Please be sure your envelope fits the card you are sending to us. The size for a standard card is A2. We recommend Stampin' Up! medium size or www.envelopes.com size A2 (bulk buy in large quantities). Please do not re-use envelopes from greeting cards you may have purchased and never used if they have the imprint of the company on the flap.

Clear envelopes or "sleeves" as we call them, are sealable envelopes that the card and envelope are placed in to keep the card clean and in pristine shape while shipping. Every card shipped is sent over protected in a clear envelope. We recommend Stampin' Up! Translucent or www.clearbags.com size B54 or VL54 (VL are the "value size" – a little thinner, less expensive, work great, and are only available in larger quantities). If you are unable to provide either of these, we can provide them. We would appreciate a small donation to help us with the cost of their purchase.

- **What about "slips" – what are they? Do I have to provide them?**

"Slips" are what we call the small piece of paper that we include with each card that contains From Our Hearts' contact information. We slip these between the clear envelope and the envelope so that it is legible when turning over the card. Why the slips? We receive thank yous from the service members and their families. It also gives the service members our website so that they can read about all of our contributors!

This is what is on our slips that we ADD to each card that arrives without one:

From Our Hearts
PO Box 105243
Jefferson City, MO 65110
<http://www.fromourhearts.info>
Thank you for all you do.

We recommend that each of our contributors customize this slip by including your name and city/state.

For example: **This card was created especially for you by Martie S from Jefferson City, MO for:**
and then From Our Hearts' contact information follows.

If you don't wish to add a customized slip but wish to add one with just FOH's contact information, this is just fine. We appreciate the extra step you take for us! We create these in a word document, 3 columns, in a small font, and recommend printing them in grayscale to conserve ink.

Some of our regular contributors have had customized stamps made and stamp on the back of each card. This is fine – just let us know you are doing this so that we don't add a slip to your cards! Some contributors have created their own business cards via with their information – Vistaprint has regular offers for free business cards.

So to answer the question, no, you don't have to provide the slips, and if you don't, PLEASE, don't seal the clear envelopes as we just have to open them up to add them!

- **What if I can't get the cards to you with clear envelopes but want to have a customized slip included?**

Not a problem! Make up your slips (enough for the cards you are sending), cut them up and place them in a Ziploc bag. We'll be sure your slip is added to your cards when they are prepped for shipping. We've had contributors who have "donated" our slips (not customized) to us, cut and ready for us to use.

- **Embellishments – any restrictions?**

It costs nothing for our service men and women to mail a card home. Layers, hardware, ribbon, brads, etc. are acceptable. We recommend that you make your cards with whatever you see fit. We send QUALITY cards – those that you would be proud to send to YOUR loved one!

- **Can I stamp on the inside of the card?**

You may, of course! We ask, however, that if it isn't apparent by looking at the card what it is (for example, the front of the card says "congratulations" and the inside says "on your graduation", that you indicate somewhere or somehow what type of a card it is. We use small labels that we attach to the front so that when the service men and women are looking through the cards, the label is visible. They don't have to guess and more importantly, they don't have to open up the card to know what it is!

Some contributors stamp what is stamped inside on to a small piece of paper and place it in the back of the card, where the slip goes (along with the slip).

- **May I sign the back of the card?**

Absolutely, yes!

- **I hear you want card fronts. What are they and why do you need them?**

Card fronts are simply the front of a card that stampers use to trade ideas through the mail, swaps, conventions, and get together. When the card idea is no longer needed, these "fronts" are typically stored away in boxes or drawers. Pull them out and send them our way! We have a group of volunteers in Kansas who devote their time to turning them into beautiful cards. It matters not if the front is a year old or 5 years old – they work their magic and the cards look brand

new. Please help us to spread the word of our need as we like to keep them busy. Our volunteers converted over 10,000 card fronts the very first year! Contact us for the address to send the card fronts.

Please, do not send us the fronts of cards from store bought cards. We do not use them. We only accept hand crafted card fronts.

- **What if the cards I have to send are remade from used store bought cards?**

Due to the possibility of copyright infringement, we do not put From Our Hearts' slip in any cards that are "remade" from store bought cards. We have a contact, locally, who accepts them on our behalf and who mails them to dozens of soldiers overseas.

- **Where do the cards go?**

The boxes of cards are mailed to Iraq, Afghanistan and to many other areas of the war zone – and we don't exactly know some of the locations as they cannot tell us. The number of contacts grows weekly. Most are mailed to Chaplains, many who travel and take the boxes with them, distributing the cards to soldiers in remote locations. Some of our contacts are actual units located in remote locations with no amenities at all.

- **What types of cards do you need the most?**

The inventory sheet we provide lists the types of cards that we mail over in each box and the major holiday card shipments. The cards most in demand are love you, thinking of you, and miss you. HOWEVER, we need all of the other types of cards, too, as we place several of each in each box, as we have them available.

- **How many cards do you send every month?**

It all depends on the number of cards are contributed and of course, the funds to ship the boxes, too. Each box contains anywhere between 265-300 cards – depending upon the thickness of the cards (layers) in the box. We try to ship each contact one box every 4-6 weeks, but this isn't always possible. Some of our chaplains support literally thousands of troops – and one box isn't nearly enough for them. We would like to send more, and do what we can.

- **Can I contribute in other ways?**

By all means! We cannot purchase postage, envelopes and supplies to support our operation without the generous support of so many of you.

You can help us by:

- Sending a cash donation with each box to help us with postage or the purchase of supplies
- Donating card stock (80# weight) – we are in need of Stampin' Up! colors – and especially retired colors so we can turn those card fronts into cards
- Sending pens that we add to each box that is shipped over (please, either black or blue) as we have them available
- Spreading the word of what we do!
- Posting about our effort on your blog

- Adding From Our Hearts' button (link) on your blog (the link is located on the right side bar)

- **I'm ready to ship. Where do I mail my box of cards?**

Our mailing address is:

From Our Hearts
PO Box 105243
Jefferson City, MO 65110

- **Is there anything special I need to know about shipping the cards?**

Please be sure to include your contact information in each box. We suggest you use the inventory sheet for this purpose. Name, address and e-mail address are the minimum information we request. We record each and every contribution received – this is required by the IRS. And, as time permits, we will let you know when your box arrives via e-mail.

A count of the contents of your box is a TREMENDOUS help to us. Imagine receiving 10 boxes and having to count each and every card? This is also a requirement of the IRS – to account for the contributions received and to record them. This small step, on your part, is a big help and time saver. This assures that we can spend our time packing up the cards to ship overseas!

Many boxes come to us “presorted” or “bundled” by type of card. Again, a help to us – and this can be done in many ways. A simple sticky note separating the type of card (birthday, thinking of you, miss you, etc.) will do. Some will place the various types in Ziploc bags. Others tie them with ribbon. Whatever works best for you and the method you are shipping your cards – we appreciate it.

Please – if your cards are not coming to us sealed in clear envelopes (they stay protected this way) – we ask that you pack the cards tightly so they do not shift in transit. Imagine how a box of envelopes looks when you purchase them. This is how they should be packed when mailing them. When we receive boxes of cards that are loose, many are damaged as they shift, get stuck together and the layers tend to fall off. It is disheartening to us to have to pry the cards apart and then fix them. Cards do travel well when packed tight so don't be afraid to push them together and “back fill” the box with whatever packing material you have on hand. We do recycle!

- **Is there anything else I need to know?**

We appreciate all of our contributors! Your contributions will be posted on our blog as quickly as we can get it up. Sometimes it may take a few weeks, especially when the contributions are heavy.

We don't know if this answers all the questions that you may have. If not, please contact us at info@fromourhearts.info and we'll be sure to get you an answer as quickly as we can.

Thank you for helping us to make a difference, one card at a time!