Operation Hat Trick Excellence in Service Awards, 2018 News and Social Media Templates

University of San Diego; University of Nebraska; University of Minnesota; Clemson University & Utah State University win 2018 Operation Hat Trick Excellence in Service Awards for commitment to recovering U.S. service members and veterans

Donations received from OHT will assist local veteran-focused organizations

SAN DIEGO, CA-May 9, 2018 – Operation Hat Trick (OHT) today announced the winners of its 2018 Excellence in Service awards, recognizing outstanding efforts by colleges and universities in aiding the recovery of wounded U.S. combat service members and veterans.

The two co-winners this year are The University of San Diego and the University of Nebraska. Three finalists were also recognized: The University of Minnesota, Clemson University and Utah State University. Monetary prizes received from OHT are donated to local veteran-focused organizations chosen by each school.

Operation Hat Trick donates a portion of each sale of OHT branded hats and merchandise to select organizations that support the recovery of wounded service members and veterans. Since 2014, OHT has given out nearly $900,000 to programs that meet its mission and is on track to reach an aggregate $1,000,000 by Dec of this year. Over 1.5 million consumers have made an OHT "purchase with a purpose."

The five winners of this year's Excellence demonstrated their commitment to supporting veterans by generating significant sales of branded merchandise and promoting Operation Hat Trick on campus, at retail, in their communities and through their social media, advertising and marketing campaigns.

In recognition of their impact, OHT will make donations on each school's behalf to the following organizations:

University of San Diego- https://www.travismanion.org

University of Nebraska - https://heroesintohomes.org

University of Minnesota - https://www.minneapolis.va.gov

Clemson University - https://www.purplehearthomesusa.org

Utah State University - https://cachevalleyveterans.org

The University of San Diego generated over $15,000 in donations to help veterans recover from the visible and invisible injuries suffered in combat. Their fund raising programs included a partnership with '47 Brand to produce and sell three co-branded OHT hats. Launched Memorial Day weekend, the event was held on the rooftop of the historic Western Metal building at Petco Park, where hundreds of alumni, friends and guests watched the San Diego Padres play the Chicago Cubs. Other programs included OHT-branded booths at major USD events; strategic email blasts on veteran relevant holidays and participation at the black tie Founders Gala.

"The University of San Diego is honored to be part of the Operation Hat Trick family. We understand the sacrifices the military makes on a daily basis to keep us safe and free. So we join OHT in making a difference in the lives of wounded and recovering service members and veterans. We're proud to help fill some critical gaps in care," said Coreen Petti, Associate Vice President-Advancement, Marketing and Strategic Partnerships-the University of San Diego.

The University of Nebraska's fund raising efforts kicked off July 4 on Facebook and Twitter, yielding consumer generated storytelling video of veteran and military families. This content was curated on Huskers.com, across social channels and played in-stadium. The campaign engaged military families and veterans who were recognized at U Nebraska football games and presented with OHT gear. Nearly one million total social media impressions were generated and U Nebraska/OHT branded merchandise experienced 150% sales growth year-over-year.

"The University of Nebraska is honored to be part of the Operation Hat Trick family. We understand the sacrifices the military makes on a daily basis to keep us safe and free. So we join OHT in making a difference in the lives of wounded and recovering service members and veterans. We're proud to help fill some critical gaps in care," said Lonna Henrichs, Director of Licensing and Branding, University of Nebraska.

The University of Minnesota's fund raising efforts included creation of a special video played on the scoreboard, both pre and in-game, during the football match vs. University of Maryland. Consistent Facebook and Twitter content visibility was key to the program's success. Other initiatives included bookstore point of purchase signage, game day photos featuring "real time" use of Golden Gophers & OHT gear and heavy promotion of the cause via Goldy's Locker Room, the official merchandiser for Gopher athletics.

"The University of Minnesota is honored to be part of the Operation Hat Trick family. We understand the sacrifices the military makes on a daily basis to keep us safe and free. So we join OHT in making a difference in the lives of wounded and recovering service members and veterans. We're proud to help fill some critical gaps in care," said Dave Lindquist, Director of Licensing and Athletic Properties, University of Minnesota.

Clemson University's fund raising efforts leveraged "Purple Out" for its Military Appreciation Day football game to raise awareness for OHT. Campaign elements included co-branded Clemson and OHT gear at retail, storytelling content on social media, video board displays during games and in-store signage for local retailers. The school also produced a special Clemson/OHT video. Sales of the co-branded merchandise increased 281% year-over-year.

"Clemson University is honored to be part of the Operation Hat Trick family. We understand the sacrifices the military makes on a daily basis to keep us safe and free. So we join OHT in making a difference in the lives of wounded and recovering service members and veterans. We're proud to help fill some critical gaps in care," said Mike Money, Assistant Athletic Director, Clemson University.

Utah State University's fund raising efforts leveraged the "Salute to Service" military game to promote OHT and support the significant number of veterans in the Cache Valley area. The campaign included creation of a Utah State OHT video, promoted via social channels and on the video board during games. The school partnered with local retailer Locker 42 to sell co-branded USU and OHT gear. Video of Coach Welts urged fans to support veterans by buying the merchandise.

"Utah State University is honored to be part of the Operation Hat Trick family. We understand the sacrifices the military makes on a daily basis to keep us safe and free. So we join OHT in making a difference in the lives of wounded and recovering service members and veterans. We're proud to help fill some critical gaps in care," said Heidi Adams, Trademark Licensing Director, Utah State University.

About Operation Hat Trick

OHT generates awareness, support and funding for the recovery of America's wounded service members and veterans. The 501c3 pursues these goals through the sale of OHT branded merchandise, proceeds of which are distributed to select organizations supporting its mission. The non-profit organization has partnered with hundreds of sports teams, including more than 350 universities and colleges, 130 high schools, 21 National Hockey League teams, 15 NBA teams, 165 high schools, more than 70 Minor League Baseball teams, and over 80 companies.

OHT products are sold through over 900 retailers and an estimated 5,000 retail doors, including Target, Dick's, Lids, Hibbett and Modell's. The organization is dedicated to Nate Hardy and Mike Koch, two Navy SEALs who trained, fought and died together in Iraq in 2008. For more information, to make a donation online or to purchase OHT apparel and merchandise, visit www.operationhattrick.org. 47 Brand (www.47brand.com) and The Collegiate Licensing Company (www.clc.com)

About IMG College Licensing

IMG College Licensing (IMGCL), the trademark licensing affiliate company of IMG College, has been the leader in connecting passionate college fans to their favorite college brands for more than three decades. IMG College Licensing represents nearly 200 of the nation's top colleges, universities, bowl games, athletic conferences, the Heisman Trophy, and the NCAA, and those collegiate partners entrust IMG College Licensing to protect, promote, and grow their brands. For more information, please visit www.img.com.

About '47 Brand

'47 (www.47brand.com), the nation's premier sports apparel company, is the exclusive headwear and apparel partner of Operation Hat Trick.