

## *Non-profit, students start letter, package campaign for vets*

**Ashley Rodrigue, Northshore Bureau Chief, WWL** 6:51 p.m. CST November 11, 2014  
(Photo: WWLTV)

Hundreds of letters just like these will be collected from school children across St. Tammany at the end of the week. They're set to go to Marines still stationed overseas.

COVINGTON, La. -- "Dear Marines, thank you so much for giving me freedom and rights," wrote 9-year-old Julia Sutton.

"I know you have made many sacrifices," wrote student Jacob Sutton.

Hundreds of letters just like these will be collected from school children across St. Tammany at the end of the week. They're set to go to Marines still stationed overseas. Some are going as Thanksgiving letters, while others as being sent as a part of a shipment of Christmas care packages next month, all coordinated by non-profit We Heart Veterans.

"It seems when you look at the news, you see Ebola or other things that they're talking about, and they're not talking about service men and women who are actually still serving overseas," said co-founder John Sutton.

We Heart Veterans was actually started to help veterans who either don't qualify for or don't know how to obtain home health care through the V.A. These holiday projects are something extra, which volunteers, like former deployed Marine Sgt. Amanda Street, are proud to be a part of.

"There are a lot of Marines out there who are not fortunate enough to have family and friends like I did to send me care packages and that way we can kind of filling in the gaps and get it to the marine units who really need it most," she said.

Amy Rogers, a PTA volunteer helping coordinate the student letters, said, "They all had experiences with soldiers whether it's friends they had or neighbors that are in the military and they were so excited."

The community's help is now needed to bring the effort full circle. Businesses like Albertsons have already pitched in to fill the packages by offering pre-made bags for sale that any family or business can buy for the cause.

"It just seemed like a great way to get involved in the community. We're always looking for ways to reach out," said Albertsons Mandeville Store Director Don Clay.

It's a way to do a little more when saying 'Thanks for your service.'

If you'd like to help with the year-round goal of helping veterans get at-home health care, or the holiday projects, visit [www.whvets.com](http://www.whvets.com) or [www.facebook.com/pages/We-Heart-Veterans](https://www.facebook.com/pages/We-Heart-Veterans). You can also make a donation at any Capital One Bank in the "We Heart Veterans" fund.