



For Immediate Release

## **Halloween Candy Buy Back Program at Community Bank**

**JOSEPH, OREGON** – October 23, 2017

Taking candy from children is usually frowned upon, but teaching kids the value of giving back by selling their excess Halloween candy in support of U.S. Troops and First Responders is a win-win for kids, parents, and dentists alike.

This Halloween, local trick-or-treaters will join kids across the nation when they bring their Halloween candy and handwritten letters of gratitude to any branch of Community Bank. The goodies will be shipped to Operation Gratitude for inclusion in Care Packages to U.S. Service Members deployed overseas in harm's way and to First Responders serving here at home.

Community Bank is proud to participate in the Operation Gratitude program to reduce excess sugar consumption, prevent dental decay, and teach children the importance of saying "Thank You" to all who serve.

To encourage participation, Community Banks across Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington will be purchasing candy from kids for \$1 per pound, up to five pounds. Buy-back dates are during normal business hours from November 1<sup>st</sup> through November 7<sup>th</sup>.

Americans spend an estimated \$2.5 billion dollars on a whopping 600 million pounds of Halloween Candy each year. In 2015 alone, 294 tons of that candy was sent to Operation Gratitude for distribution through its Care Package Programs.

"Operation Gratitude has shipped more than 1.6 Million Care Packages that include items such as DVDs, handmade scarves and hygiene products. Halloween candy is a wonderful addition to these packages," says Operation Gratitude's founder, Carolyn Blashek. "The candy is a great morale boost for the troops, and a means to create positive interaction with local children.

Candy and handwritten letters or drawings to Service Members will be collected at all Community Bank branches and shipped to Operation Gratitude for distribution in mid-November.

### **About Operation Gratitude**

Operation Gratitude is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, volunteer-based organization that seeks to lift spirits and meet the evolving needs of the U.S. Military and First Responder communities, and provide volunteer

opportunities for Americans to express their appreciation to all who serve our nation. Every year, Operation Gratitude sends 200,000+ individually-addressed Care Packages to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines deployed overseas, to their children left behind, and to New Recruits, Veterans, First Responders, Wounded Heroes and their Caregivers. Each package contains food, hygiene products, entertainment and handmade items, as well as personal letters of support. Through Collection Drives, Letter Writing Campaigns, Craft Projects and Care Package Assembly Events, Operation Gratitude provides civilians anywhere in America a way to say “Thank You” through active, hands-on Volunteerism. To date, Operation Gratitude volunteers have assembled and shipped 1,610,355 care packages .

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