



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Media Contact:

Julianne Shasteen

(904) 343-0211

jshasteen@creatwoodpr.com

Taco Bell donates \$30,000 of improvements to Mayport USO Center

Jacksonville, Fla., April 22, 2010: Taco Bell franchisee Southeast QSR Inc., has donated a remodeled communications room and children's play area to the Mayport USO Center on behalf of the Armed Forces Families Foundation (AFFF). The total donation, including construction and new equipment, was \$30,000.

The improved communications room will allow military families to see their loved ones overseas as they speak to them through an online connection. Renovations include privacy cubicles around all computer stations, 12 new Dell computers with Skype telecommunications technology (nine for the communications room and three for USO staff), and nine Logitech Web cams.

"This will make a huge impact on families, especially the children, here," Mayport USO Center Director Ed Champagne said. "It's one thing to talk to someone over the phone, but to be able to see your loved one who is 8,000 miles away is phenomenal."

The children's play area will receive new carpeting, a baby changing table, toys and books, a fresh coat of paint and an improved heating, ventilation and air conditioning system.

"The new children's room will allow parents the freedom to talk during play groups," said Helen Williams, New Parent Support Specialist for the Fleet & Family Support Center. "They need to connect with other parents in the same situation while their children are kept busy playing."

Area residents can donate new toys, games and books for the children's play area, during a collection at participating Taco Bell restaurants in Jacksonville, from Monday, April 26 through Friday, April 30. Taco Bell will provide donors a coupon redeemable for a free Seasoned Beef Taco, while supplies last.

The completed project will be presented at 3 p.m., May 3 at the Mayport USO Center. At the event, Taco Bell will host a catered lunch and announce the renovations that have been made to the military families in attendance.

At 3:15 p.m., a virtual ribbon cutting will take place in the communications room. Delina Eden will connect with her son, Sgt. Marshall Tostie, in Iraq via the new Web cams and computers with Skype.

“I’m so excited,” Eden said. “I’ve come here for three years to talk to my son and husband during deployments, and now I will be able to see their faces. I plan to use these computers a lot more now.”

The improvements were funded through a Freedom Bells fundraiser in November, in which Taco Bell sold paper bell icons for \$1 with all proceeds going to the AFFF. More than \$60,000 was raised at Taco Bell restaurants in Mobile, Ala.; Augusta and Southeast, Ga.; and Pensacola and Jacksonville, Fla.; to benefit military families in each area.

The AFFF is a nonprofit organization focused on improving the lives of service members and their families. One hundred percent of all donations go to benefit the well-being and support of troops and their families.

“With the help of Taco Bell volunteers and the many loyal patrons who gave donations during our fundraiser, we are able to give families at Mayport a better experience when communicating with loved ones overseas,” said Thaddeus Foster, Chief Operations Officer for Southeast QSR, a Taco Bell franchisee. “Next, we plan to implement similar projects in areas of need at military bases in Augusta and Mobile.”

The AFFF asks the public to suggest projects in Augusta and Mobile, or to give feedback. Visit www.facebook.com/armedforcesfamilies.

For more information:

Southeast QSR: <http://www.theborder.com/BA/pledge.asp>

Armed Forces Families Foundation: <http://www.armedforcesfamilies.org/>

USO Jacksonville: <http://affiliates.uso.org/Jacksonvilleflorida/>

Contact:

Thaddeus Foster
Chief Operations Officer/Franchisee, Southeast QSR
(904) 543-1838
Thaddeus@theborder.com

###