



# Yellow Ribbon Support Center



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Senior Capstone Spring 2023

## Background History

The Yellow Ribbon Support Center is a Non-Profit organization that was started in 2004 by Keith Maupin when his son SSG Matt Maupin was taken captive by Iraqi insurgents. The Maupin family launched a campaign to box and ship care packages to troops overseas with labels on each box showing Matt's face in hopes that someone will recognize him and help bring him home. (Maupin 2004)



<https://www.facebook.com/TillTheyAllComeHome/photos>

Since then, It has been the Yellow Ribbon's mission to support both troops overseas and remember those who did not get to come home through the following initiatives:

- **Care Packages** | Packages filled with health, nutrition, and entertainment items for those serving in harm's way.
- **Let Us Never Forget Scholarship** | The Yellow Ribbon raises money to award scholarships in the memory of fallen heroes.
- **Raising Awareness** | Volunteers are active in the community and encourage any and all support for those overseas and Veterans here at home. (Maupin 2004)

## Purpose

As a volunteer at the Yellow Ribbon Support Center, my mission was to do what I can to bring value to the organization and help them continue to make an impact on the community around them and those who are serving overseas.

Their biggest need was revamping their inventory operations for their warehouse in Cincinnati, OH

## Volunteer Experience

During my experience volunteering for the Yellow Ribbon Support Center, I had the opportunity to innovate their inventory management system. The Yellow Ribbon owns a warehouse in Cincinnati, OH where they store donations and purchased goods that are used in their care package campaign or auctions to raise money for their Scholarship fund. Their current inventory process was done by hand in a notebook.

I utilized Microsoft Scan-IT and Excel to create forums and spreadsheets to streamline their inventory operations to improve:

- Time Management
- Productivity
- Organization



Microsoft Scan-It



Microsoft Excel

“Capacity and inventory management are fundamental topics of operations management” (Song et al. 2020, p. 36) This process helped automate the Yellow Ribbon's operations and support strategic shipping based on inventory levels.

When the Yellow Ribbon receives new inventory, each volunteer is now linked through Microsoft's Scan-It app where they can scan the barcodes of each item and enter specific details such as quantity and model number. This information is then exported to a shared Excel workbook where the data is automatically organized in a preset table where users can filter to find products quickly by a variety of factors such as Skid Number, Item Description, or Brand.

To conclude my volunteer time at the Yellow Ribbon's warehouse, I trained each volunteer on the new process and helped convert all current inventory to the Excel workbook, so everything was updated, and they had a foundation to build upon.

I also dedicated some of my time to contributing to the Let Us Never Forget Scholarship event on April 8<sup>th</sup> through preparing different decorations for the dinner that night.



<https://www.facebook.com/TillTheyAllComeHome/photos>

## SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Strong Mission and Community Support	Limited warehouse space	Exposure to offering increased Veteran support in the United States	Inflated shipping costs
Strong Volunteer base	Streamlined transportation	Large number of U.S. military based around the world.	Growing national care package organizations

## Recommendations

From evaluating the Yellow Ribbon's operations and SWOT analysis, I provided the below recommendations to tackle threats and weaknesses:

- Continue to utilize the new inventory management system to fully maximize the limited warehouse space available.
- With transportation costs constantly rising, an investment in a delivery vehicle can be beneficial to transporting care packages from their warehouse to international shipping partners. Another option is to partner with companies such as UPS or U-Haul to borrow moving vans or facilitate monthly pick-ups.
- With online care package organizations growing, launching a marketing campaign online through utilizing website design and search engine optimization can increase traffic to the Yellow Ribbons website and boost donations.

These recommendations to continue to elevate the Yellow Ribbon's operations and continue to support their mission, “Till they all come home”.

## References

Maupin, Keith. *Yellow Ribbon Support Center*, 2004, <https://www.yellowribbonsupportcenter.com/about-us/>.

Song, Jing-Sheng., et al. “Capacity and Inventory Management: Review, Trends, and Projections” *Manufacturing & Service Operations Management* vol.22 no.1, 2020 pp. 36-46 [https://pubsonline-informs.org/uc.idm.oclc.org/doi/epdf/10.1287/msom.2019.0798](https://pubsonline.informs.org/uc.idm.oclc.org/doi/epdf/10.1287/msom.2019.0798)

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