



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Bob Evans Farms Partners with the USO and Celebrity Chef Andre Rush to Support Military Heroes' Mental Well-Being**

*New Wakefield Research survey from Bob Evans Farms finds that family mealtime is one of the sacrifices of military personnel*

**NEW ALBANY, OHIO (May 23, 2023)** – In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month and Military Appreciation Month, Bob Evans Farms, Inc., a leading manufacturer of farm-fresh refrigerated dinner sides and breakfast products, today announced a new partnership with the United Service Organizations (USO) to support the mental well-being of military members. The partnership builds on the company's commitment to giving back to those who serve through its *Our Farm Salutes*® program.

As part of this year's effort, Bob Evans Farms is working with celebrity chef and U.S. Army veteran Andre Rush to promote mental health awareness and the benefits of bringing people together through food. Chef Rush is known for his work advocating for military communities and mental health services, including the 2,222 daily push-up regimen he completes in honor of the 22 veterans lost to suicide each day.

"At Bob Evans Farms, we have a long history of supporting military service members, veterans and their families," said Mark Delahanty, Bob Evans Farms president and CEO and U.S. Navy veteran. "Service can take a serious mental toll on people. Our military heroes deserve robust mental health support, and we're proud to contribute a small piece to that by partnering with the USO."

"Frequent moves to unfamiliar environments, separation from home and loved ones and more – service members and their loved ones face unique stressors. Supporting their mental well-being through every step of their military journey is paramount to keeping them strong," said USO Chief Operating Officer and retired Rear Adm. Alan Reyes. "The USO is grateful to Bob Evans Farms for their partnership and commitment to the women and men who serve and their families around the world."

Bob Evans Farms' partnership with the USO includes a \$125,000 donation and sponsorship of the USO Chef's Table Experience, which occurred on May 3 at Fort Belvoir, Va., where Chef Rush joined to share his story of resilience. The quarterly event brings together a small group of active-duty service members and their guests for a one-of-a-kind world-class six-course dinner prepared by top military chefs from each branch of the armed forces.

"I've dedicated my life to giving back and supporting the mental health and wellness of our service members," said Chef Rush. "Food has helped me and saved my life. It brings us together and connects us to family and friends like nothing else. Having the opportunity to share my passions and help others through efforts like this with the USO and Bob Evans Farms is why I do what I do."

## More than a meal

Numerous studies have found that regular family meals offer a wide range of mental, physical and social-emotional benefits, but a new Wakefield Research study from Bob Evans Farms found that family mealtime is just one of the many sacrifices of military members.

- **Missing meals.** Nearly 73% of active-duty military parents often or always go two or more weeks without being able to share a family meal, compared to 33% of civilian parents.
- **A quick bite.** Shockingly, nearly half (47%) of active-duty military parents spend less than 10 minutes with their families during mealtimes versus only 15% of civilian parents.
- **Limited engagement.** Therefore, it's not surprising that more than 3 in 5 (63%) military members have at least sometimes felt out of practice in how to engage with their families during mealtimes, compared to only 44% of civilian parents. Furthermore, active-duty military parents (76%) are more than three times as likely as civilian parents (22%) to struggle often or always with engaging during family mealtimes after prolonged periods of being away.
- **Off course.** A consequence of abbreviated mealtime is not having the chance to maintain strong bonds with families, as only 25% of military members identify maintaining family bonds as a benefit of sharing meals, compared to an overwhelming 68% of civilians.
- **Soul soothing.** One view of family meals that Americans generally agree on is that they serve as a pick me up. The vast majority of civilian families (89%) and military members (82%) report that the simple act of sharing a meal with family helps them feel less lonely or sad.
- **Fulfilling times.** Mealtime can also bring a satisfying sense of togetherness. An overwhelming 94% of civilian families agree they feel more connected to their loved ones after sharing a family meal and 84% of military members feel the same.

## Packaging for a cause

As part of the USO partnership from July through September, select packages of Bob Evans® dinner sides and breakfast products and Owens® Sausage products will proudly turn purple to symbolize all branches of the military and feature the *Our Farm Salutes* and USO logos to raise awareness of the need for services that support their mental well-being.

For more information and to find out how you can support the USO's efforts, visit [OurFarmSalutes.com](http://OurFarmSalutes.com). Consumers also can find elevated comfort food recipes from Chef Rush on the website.

## About Our Farm Salutes

Launched in 2016, the Bob Evans Farms' *Our Farm Salutes*® program is focused on supporting America's service members, veterans and their families through volunteerism, strategic partnerships, grant opportunities, awareness and donations. Since the program began, the company has awarded more than \$500,000 to military causes and veteran-owned businesses through various *Our Farm Salutes* initiatives.

## About Bob Evans Farms, Inc.

For 75 years, Bob Evans Farms has delivered delicious, quick-to-table, farm-inspired food that makes mealtime a little bit easier and a lot more delicious. We're proud to be the No. 1-selling refrigerated dinner sides\*, including many varieties of wholesome, feel-good favorites such as mashed potatoes and macaroni and cheese, sold in grocery stores across the country. We're

also a leading producer and distributor of sausage and bacon products, egg products including liquid eggs, and frozen handheld breakfast items. In addition to our flagship Bob Evans brand, our product portfolio includes Simply Potatoes, Egg Beaters and Owens Sausage. Bob Evans Farms is based in Columbus, Ohio, and is owned by Post Holdings, Inc., a consumer-packaged goods holding company. For more information about Bob Evans Farms, Inc., visit [www.bobevansgrocery.com](http://www.bobevansgrocery.com).

### **About the USO**

The USO strengthens America's military service members by keeping them connected to family, home and country throughout their service to the nation. At hundreds of locations worldwide, we are united in our commitment to connect our service members and their families through countless acts of caring, comfort and support. The USO is a private nonprofit organization, not a government agency. Our programs, services and entertainment tours are made possible by the American people, the support of our corporate partners and the dedication of our volunteers and staff. To join us in this important mission and learn more about the USO, please visit [USO.org](http://USO.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

**Editor's note regarding methodology:** The Bob Evans Farms Our Farm Salutes Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research among 1,000 nationally representative U.S. parents ages 25-45 and 500 U.S. active-duty military members and veterans, between April 28 and May 9, 2023, using an email invitation and online survey. Data was weighted to ensure an accurate representation of each audience.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points for the parents' group and 6.2 percentage points for the data of active-duty military and veterans, from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

\* SOURCE: IRI Total US MULO Latest 52 W/E 2/26/23

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