



Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Honor Teddy Bears arrive at Operation Mend

On Saturday February 15th, 11 handmade Honor Teddy Bears, made by Eva Murphy of VFW Post 12118 Ladies Aux, arrived at Operation Mend to an ecstatic reception. Within days the first bear was given to wounded Army SGT Khalil Saltani. Khalil told the staff that he was so grateful and mentioned it was little things, like the bear, that really matter most.



UCLA Operation Mend is a groundbreaking program that provides returning military personnel with severe facial and other medical injuries access to the nation's top plastic and reconstructive surgeons, as well as comprehensive medical and mental-health support for the wounded and their families. It was established in 2007 through a partnership envisioned by Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center Board and Executive Committee member Ron A. Katz and his (now deceased) wife Maddie.

In a partnership with [Brooke Army Medical Center \(BAMC\)](#), a leading burn and rehabilitation center in San Antonio, Texas, the [V.A. Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System](#), and [UCLA Health System](#), Operation Mend started with facial reconstruction. The program has since expanded in order to optimize healing-body, mind, and spirit. In addition to plastic and reconstructive surgery, mental-health support (for warriors and their families), orthopaedic reconstruction for severely damaged limbs, urologic treatment, otolaryngological care, the examination and treatment of reproductive issues, repair of airways, and design of new prosthetic ears are provided.

"It is a privilege for UCLA Medical Center to assist our country's men and women in the military," said [Dr. David T. Feinberg](#), President of UCLA Health System and CEO of UCLA Hospital System. **"We are honored to partner with Brooke Army Medical Center to help heal several of America's wounded warriors."**

The program is currently funded through an existing grant from the Iraq Afghanistan Deployment Impact Fund (IADIF) via the California Community Foundation, along with important individual donor support.

For more information about Operation Mend visit <http://operationmend.ucla.edu/>

For more information about our local VFW Post 12118 contact Commander Gilbert at coppervfw@gmail.com.