

Tom Russell, the Director of Step Up For Soldiers, received the Governor's Award for Volunteer Service which is the highest designation of appreciation for distinguished volunteer service in the state of North Carolina at a dinner hosted by the Cape Fear Volunteer Center at Thalian Hall. This award "honors people who have shown concern and compassion for their neighbors." Mr. Russell's tireless efforts on behalf of the military returning from deployment certainly exemplify this kind of behavior and have produced great results. Currently, the group is involved in finalizing plans for its annual Kids Fishing Tournament on June 11 in Kure Beach. This event is devoted to those children of military service people on deployment. The day is filled with fun and opportunities for those "feel good" moments that may not occur as often with a parent overseas.

In addition, they will be co sponsoring an important fundraiser in Sunset Beach for the benefit of SFC John Masson, whose severe injuries resulted in his current status as a triple amputee. The fund raiser, in conjunction with the Bridge Grill, will be held for four days beginning on April 28 and ending on May 1 and includes entertainment by several bands and good food and drink.

Little did Tom know when he started his work for Step Up in 2004, that his passion would have such great rewards for others. However, in addition to his work for Step Up, Tom has also volunteered as a fireman for Kure Beach, member of the Church Council at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and he is the FRG for the North Carolina National Guard. Congratulations to Tom as a great example of volunteerism that works.