

# The Daily Star

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## Club helping kids, soldiers overseas

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Staff Intern

ONEONTA — A local club is working to make a difference for soldiers and inhabitants of war-torn countries.

More than a year ago, Skip Murdock of Richfield Springs decided to start The Care Club. Murdock said he wanted to help soldiers and children in Afghanistan as well as other countries in need of assistance because of war.

A certificate of appreciation was presented to The Care Club by a volunteer group called Mission Afghanistan on Oct. 10 for the club's help in donating to children in schools and orphanages. Along with the certificate, a letter from Capt. Michael W. Langston of the United States Navy was sent thanking the club for its efforts. For more information, visit [www.missionafghanistan.com](http://www.missionafghanistan.com).

From experiences serving in the Army for three years, Murdock said, he could tell when soldiers needed support and he wanted to do something for them.

Murdock has worked with mentally disabled men for past four years as a rehabilitation assistant at Springbrook, known until recently as the Upstate Home for Children and Adults, at a facility on Country Club Road. He asked fellow workers and friends if they would be interested in starting the club with him.

The club has four members, including Claudia Mclean of Richfield Springs.

"I thought it was a great opportunity to lend support to the troops," she said last month.

The club began by holding garage sales. People donated unwanted items, such as old workout equipment, said Dean Bradon, Murdock's supervisor at Springbrook. The donated goods were sold to buy products, such as clothing for the children overseas, as well as to pay for shipping costs.

Murdock said he considered introducing part of the project to Springbrook, where some

of the disabled adults could help in the packaging and sending. With support from Bradon, the idea passed and many of the adults still assist today.

Murdock said he is pleased that Bradon allowed the club to work with the adults.

Recently, 215 packages filled with children's clothes and stuffed toys were sent to Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait and Kosovo. The club also sent blank videotapes and children's books for the soldiers, Murdock said.

"The blank tapes are used to record the soldiers reading the books to the children and then are sent back to the U.S. for their families to watch," he added.

His idea came from [www.anysoldier.com](http://www.anysoldier.com), which started in 2003 as a place where people could find addresses for sending letters and packages to soldiers, who would then distribute them to troops who do not receive much from home, according to the website.

The club receives donations in other ways. The members, employees at Springbrook and residents of the community spend money from their pockets to help, Bradon said. He added that people gave items to be sent directly to the soldiers, unlike the garage sales where items were sold and used to buy needed products.

Murdock said the next project is to send 500 Christmas cards to the soldiers. Employees at the center are writing notes to the troops and inserting candy with the cards, which will be sent in bunches until early December.

"Everyone is working hard to help the soldiers," Murdock said.