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Group gathers DVDs for troops

By Matt Baker

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As yellow ribbons and bumper stickers ask Americans to support our troops overseas, Nancy Spencer-Morris is leading a campaign to help.

Spencer-Morris spearheads the Soldiers Support Group at the Four Seasons Retirement Center.

She and a handful of residents meet every few weeks to box packages of toiletries, candy and drink mixes to send to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I wanted to do something to support the soldiers, so I thought up a support group to get the residents involved," Spencer-Morris said.

After a push to create pen pals failed, she decided on sending troops care packages.

The group's latest project is a DVD drive to help soldiers create a video library across the Middle East.

Organizers hope to collect 500 discs at their drive from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at Four Seasons. They also are

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Ruth Lienhoop, right, Ruth McCracken, and Betty Pierson pack plastic baggies as part of the Soldier Support Group at Four Seasons, Monday. Along with hygiene supplies, Soldier Support Group will be conducting a DVD drive with hopes of collecting 500 movies for troops stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

If you go

WHAT: Soldier Support Group DVD Drive.

WHEN: Noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

WHERE: Four Seasons Retirement Center, 1901 Taylor Road.

WHAT TO BRING: New and used DVDs. Organizers also encouraged monetary donations



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accepting donations to pay for popcorn and shipping fees.

for popcorn and shipping.

INFORMATION: 372-8481.

Spencer-Morris said many officers request a few good movies for their men so they can relax while keeping in touch with home.

"And they just need some down time to get away from the war for a while and get lost in a movie," Spencer-Morris said.

Other recent packages the group sent included Girl Scout cookies, 200 Easter bags and 92 boxes of drink mix so soldiers can enjoy flavored water.

Army Lt. Col. Craig Triscari said his troops in Iraq enjoyed receiving the Easter goodies and drink mixes from groups like the one at Four Seasons.

"Soldiers love to receive mail of any type," Triscari said.

"It reminds us of home and the people who support us."

Helping war victims

The group also has geared many of its projects toward children who are too poor to buy clothes or food. Women in the group knitted hats and gloves for an Afghan orphanage.

Bill Wuestenfeld said these gifts from American troops keep the children safe and improve the country's image.

"It's a way to get to them and let them know we're on their side," Wuestenfeld said. "We've got to free their minds as well."

These gifts of candy, toys and toiletries also benefit the troops, Triscari said.

"A smile on a child's face after you have given them candy or a stuffed animal will raise the spirits of not only the child, but also the soldier," Triscari said.

Spencer-Morris said she connects to troops through AnySoldier.com, a Web site where officers can request items from civilians. Many officers such as Triscari write back to thank her for the gifts.

Just as soldiers love receiving the packages, the residents like sending them.

Ruth Lienhoop said she enjoys the fellowship of meeting with friends and the satisfaction of helping others.

"It makes me feel like I'm contributing a little something to their comfort,"



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Lienhoop said.

Even though some disagree with the war's purpose, Spencer-Morris said the entire community should support the soldiers fighting it.

"They don't get to choose what battles they're in, so we don't have a choice to support them or not," she said.

"It's not a question of should we or could we support them, but what can we do to help?"

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