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Brownies collect supplies for troops in Iraq

By Theresa Freeman/TAB Staff Writer

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A few care packages and some letters have brought local Brownies and U.S. troops close together, despite them actually being half a world apart. Ashland Brownie Troop No. 2376 last month collected snacks and other items reminiscent of home for United States military men and women stationed in Iraq. The 11 girls - who are in the first and second grades - mailed four large boxes to soldiers stationed in the war-torn country.

"It really means a lot when someone that you don't know is willing to do something nice for you," one of the soldiers wrote back.

Members of the troop are Kelsey Collins, Emily Finnegan, Emily Fosberg, Isabella Getman, Rachel Hickey, Abby Kane, Kate Kane, Abby Keeler, Meghan Moriarty, Allie O'Brien, Marissa O'Gara, Claire Paulson, Amanda Rosadio, Annie Speilberger and Katherine Scherer.

"We collected things because they need food and because they are far from home," said Paulson.

The packages had snack foods like popcorn, pudding and candy and some supplies like batteries, said Speilberger. It took them about a month to collect everything from relatives and friends.

"They don't have a lot of food where they are," Rosadio said of the troops.

The Brownies sent the packages last month to mark Veterans Day on Nov. 11, O'Gara explained.



Brownie Troop 2376 holds its monthly meeting at the Ashland Public Library. From left, are Rachel Hickey, Kelsey Collins and Abby Kane. (Milton Amador)

"We wanted to find a special way to honor them," said mom Marcia Reni, who leads the troop with Diane Fosberg and Denise Finnegan.

All of the soldiers wrote letters back to the girls, and one man even sent a black and gray patch from his airborne division.

"We thanked them for fighting for our country," said Scherer.

The project made the girls happy, and afterwards they felt good, they said. Some said the project made them think more about not fighting with their friends.

The project was inspired by Ashland resident Donna Ciccarelli, who this fall collected supplies for her son who is stationed in Iraq. Ciccarelli told Reni about the Web site www.anysoldier.com, and the Brownie troop also used the site for its project.

Any Soldier Inc. is helping nearly 100,000 American soldiers in all branches of the military, in both active duty and reservists, It makes sure the men and women who have been deployed for the war are cared for, via letters and packages from "home."

Reni said troop leaders hope to organize another supplies drive in the spring.

The one thing they would do differently, if they could? Deliver the packages in person to see the look on the soldiers' faces, they said.

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