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Students send greetings to wounded soldiers

By **Ann Bryant** , *Staff Writer*
Thursday, December 13, 2007

Two messages sent by students for pullquote:

"Happy Holidays

I am Karina, a student at Mt. Blue High School. My school is located in the town of Farmington in Central Maine. I am sending this card to thank you for your service to our country. I appreciate all that you do and the sacrifices you make to protect us.

Just know that we are thinking of you and wishing you and your family a safe holiday season and a happy and hopeful new year."
"I appreciate your courage to be put through all the dangerous situations you must encounter. I am so glad you do have the courage to do what you do."

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Students send greetings to wounded soldiers

FARMINGTON - Compassion, concern and appreciation fill the handwritten messages being sent to wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center this week.

At an early-morning meeting of the Future Business Leaders of America at Mt. Blue High School on Wednesday, students committed to sending 150 cards this Friday. Adviser Priscilla Conner already has more than 100 cards from students.

"They have liked doing this," Conner said. "I've read messages of compassion, concern and appreciation that they have written themselves. I didn't tell them what to write."

Projects like this one encountered a glitch when it became known that Walter Reed rejects and destroys cards that are not addressed to specific soldiers. But, the Red Cross came to the rescue, volunteering to screen the mess mailings for any anti-war messages, and then distribute them to the soldiers at Walter Reed.

Farmington students have put some hard work and serious thought into their cards and messages. Some cards are artistic projects in themselves. Karina Durrell stamped, glued and designed her own very special cards that thank the soldier for his service to this country.

"I appreciate all that you do and the sacrifices that you make," she says in her card, after explaining who and where Mt. Blue High School is located.

Another student also penned words of appreciation, "I appreciate your courage to be put through all the dangerous situations you must encounter. I am so glad you do have the courage to do what you do."

The holiday project was suggested by school health coordinator Alyce Cavanaugh who is a 30-year veteran of the Air Force. While Cavanaugh did not see combat, she was hardly ever able to come home for Christmas, she said.

"It was very depressing," she added. "I cannot tell you how much it means to military personnel to know people are thinking of them. Some of these soldiers aren't much older than some of these high school students."

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There's more to teaching health, she said, than just the physical aspect. This is a great social program that promotes the well being of the student through giving to others.

Mt. Blue Middle School teacher Kathy Kerr also involved her students in the project, Cavanaugh said. She attended Kerr's class and told the students about her experience in the service and how much it really meant to soldiers away from home for the holidays.

"I watched them make cards and they were just so smart. One student wrote something about 'it's not how a soldier dies, it's how a soldier lives his life,'" she said.

Other classes participating include Weld Elementary School and Mary Paradis' kindergarten class at Mallett School. Lynda Szenes, a one-on-one special education teacher, has involved her 12-year-old daughter in preparing cards, she said.

Cards, which may received through Dec. 27, may be sent to: We Support You During Your Recovery, C/O American Red Cross, P.O. Box 419, Savage, MD 20763-0419.

Cavanaugh also suggests visiting the Web site, www.anysoldier.com where soldiers serving in Iraq are listed that could be adopted by an older class or group of students.

"It would be great for them to receive things all year," she said. "It's not about a political view. No matter what you think, these soldiers are just doing their jobs."

Comments

Posted By: inspired at December 13, 2007 8:00 AM ([Suggest Removal](#))

Excellent!! I't great to see some good news. Thank you for serving those who serve. You're great Americans

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