

Local

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Youth group writes letters to soldiers

By Nikki Patrick | THE MORNING SUN

GIRARD — Members of the Trinity Lutheran Church senior youth group spent Sunday morning writing letters to cheer U.S. soldiers in Iraq.

"Some of the letters are going to soldiers who are from around here, and some we got from anysoldier.com," said Lisa Mahnken. She and her husband, Steve, lead the youth group.

In addition to a personal letter, each soldier will receive a CD of Christian music and small cards with handwritten Bible verses.

"We found verses about protection in time of danger and trouble," Lisa Mahnken said. "We're laminating the cards so the soldiers will be able to carry them at all times."

Her husband said that the letter-writing project is just one of the activities done by the youth. Nine youth and three adults recently attended the National Youth Gathering in Orlando, Fla.

"We went to Wakiva, Fla., where they're building a new high school, and we helped stamp their books and worked in their supply room," Mahnken said. "We also plan on helping at the Heritage Nursing Home here in Girard and delivering canned goods to the needy at Christmas."

"In Orlando, some of the kids also had a chance to blog with soldiers in Iraq," his wife added.

The youth said this was very moving and meaningful for them.

"After we came back from the National Youth Gathering, I think everybody wanted to get involved," said Erin Stolte, Girard High School senior. "It's important for our soldiers to know we believe in them."

"I really like the idea of us writing letters to the soldiers because they do so much for us," said Jeanine Kunshek, GHS junior. "It's the least we can do to cheer them up."

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"I think what the soldiers are doing is great, and I just want to show my appreciation," added Joshua Holloway, GHS senior. "I've got a second cousin, Scott Kroenke, who's there. He's a combat engineer."

"I feel everybody should do something like this," said Logan Curran, GHS junior. "It feels good after you do it."

"It gives you a sense of accomplishment," added Teague Harris, GHS junior.

"It would be good if we could hear back from some of the soldiers, and maybe learn some needs that we could send them to give them a little taste of home," Mahnken said. "It's amazing that something so small can be so uplifting."



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