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Pick up, fill a box to support U.S. troops at Christmas

By David Stoneberg STAFF WRITER Thursday, December 20, 2007

The staff at Morrison Funeral Chapel in St. Helena has joined an effort to support U.S. soldiers stationed all over the world. From now through Dec. 28, they are collecting a wide range of items needed by individual soldiers.

Nick Bermudez, general manager of the business, said the program is called "Supporting Our Troops with a Little Piece of Home." Those wishing to support troops stationed in Iraq, Afghanistan and throughout the world can go to Morrison's, pick up a special box that is 8inches by 8-inches by 4-inches, and a list of what's needed. Fill the box and return it to the funeral chapel by Dec. 28 for shipping in mid-January. The business will pay for shipping the box to U.S. troops. Morrison Funeral Chapel is located at 990 Vintage Ave.

Bermudez said this is the first year the business has participated in the program and added he and his staff are excited about it. "We thought this was a nice program and that our soldiers could get a lot of support," he said. So far, because of a small notice printed in the Yountville Sun, Morrison's staff has distributed six boxes. "We're hoping to distribute a number of boxes and hope this community, which is so generous, can do something for our soldiers."

Bermudez said he is working through a Web site, anysoldier.com, which is all-volunteer effort where soldiers register their addresses and list their requests — the things they go without every day. The items sought include letters, coffee and baby wipes, nuts, sunflower seeds, peanuts, Power bars, protein bars, nutritional bars, pre-sweetened drink mixes, individually-wrapped snacks, beef jerky, toothpaste, shampoo, hand and body lotion, sun block, body lotions, books and magazines. Only pre-packaged items should be packed in the boxes. Items should be travel or sample sizes. Pork, pork byproducts, fruit, yeast and homemade items are not allowed.

A much longer list of what the soldiers want is available from the staff at Morrison. One soldier registered on the site, Sgt. William Purcell is stationed in Iraq. His requests are typical: coffee, sugar, cream, candy and books.

The Web site was started in August 2003 by U.S. Army Sgt. Brian Horn, who was stationed in Kirkurk, Iran. According to the Web site, it has helped more than 121,000 service members.

Those participating in the program can pick up and drop off their boxes from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, except Dec. 24-25, through Friday, Dec. 28.

For more information, call Bermudez, 963-3536.

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