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Sebastian's Park Place residents assist troops in Iraq, Afghanistan

By **MARY INGUI**
correspondent
June 1, 2007

SEBASTIAN — Park Place residents should be proud themselves and of the work their Social Club has done to supply soldiers overseas with gift boxes filled with necessary supplies.

In May, members of the club purchased and mailed supplies to many soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.



photo provided

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This "Adopt a Box" program was the brainchild of Amanda Orthmann, a Park Place resident since 2001. She organized a committee consisting of the following individuals: Peg Tears, Amanda's co-chair; Marie Dame, Katie Campbell, Sonja Fekete, Cheryl Johnson, Norman Dame, Sally Haag, Nancy Charest, Sue Doss, Kathy Yocum, Caroline Petch, Jean

The Park Place "Adopt a Box" program was the brainchild of Amanda Orthmann, a Park Place resident since 2001. She organized a committee consisting of Peg Tears, Marie Dame, Katie Campbell, Sonja Fekete, Cheryl Johnson, Norman Dame, Sally Haag, Nancy Charest, Sue Doss, Kathy Yocum, Caroline Petch, Jean Bell, Liz Sary, Tim Sandmeyer and Jo Bliss. Here committee members hold some of the boxes they mailed to soldiers overseas.

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Bell, Liz Sary, Tim Sandmeyer and Jo Bliss.

This "Adopt a Box" Committee circulated a letter to all their Park Place neighbors asking for their participation. Residents could choose to collect items for the boxes or donate money for postage or for items to be purchased for the boxes. A list of suggested items was attached to the letter. Residents also could fill up a box themselves and simply give to any committee member. Those interested in helping were instructed to sign up in the mail room.

The committee met in the clubhouse from 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays and again from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. to answer questions, accept donations or supply a box or two. The boxes used were the flat rate ones available at the post office.

The committee also launched several fund raising activities for their program. They held bake sales, had a raffle and sold hotdogs by the pool. In all they raised almost \$4,000 in cash including donations for the project, in addition to receiving items for the boxes from many of the residents.

Everyone who participated in the project received a vinyl flag to put in their car window.

Committee members had to buy various items in bulk to fill the boxes.

Individual serving size food items (e.g. potato chips, cookies, Kool Aid, iced tea, cheese and crackers) were sent, as well as books, magazines, cards, socks, T-shirts, headbands, fly paper, sun screen, lip balm, foot powder, hand-held fans, travel-size games and toiletries.

Food items were packed separately from the other items, Orthmann said. She also noted that candy, crayons, paper and small toys were requested, so that the troops can give these items to the children there.

At first, the committee asked residents for names and military addresses for service men or women they knew. Some residents got names from people they knew outside Park Place. These names were given to Peg Tears and Amanda Orthmann. Then they went to www.anysoldier.com to get other names.

Three packages were sent to that person who would then share it with others in their unit. Every branch of the service was included in this project.

Orthmann noted that they have received several postcards back and one letter. The letter indicated that the soldiers love getting mail and packages and greatly appreciated their generosity.

This experience made the participants feel that they were doing something positive for the troops.

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Dear Service Person,

This package comes to you from the Social Club of Park Place, (a senior park in Sebastian, Fla.) to let you know that even though you are far from home you have not been forgotten.

We have enclosed a postcard for you to return to us. If you have any suggestions about other articles that might be helpful, please let us know.

Thank you for your service to our country. God bless you and bring yourself safely home.

Sincerely,

Your friends at Park Place

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