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## Organization provides 'quiet comfort' to soldiers

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In July 2004, Operation: Quiet Comfort was founded in Michigan with the initiative of providing support to the nation's wounded troops abroad and in the United States and to the caregivers that take care of them.

Tracy Branigan, a records analysis and coordinator at the university, said she has been a member of OQC for the past two years.

"It's one of those organizations that puts me in a position where I'm comfortable with the amount of volunteer work that I'm doing," Branigan said. "It also pushes me to ask myself what else I can do to help our wounded troops."



Media Credit: Courtesy of Marian Watt

Operation: Quiet Comfort has been sending care packages to soldiers abroad for more than 3 years.

Marian Watt, president of OQC, said the founder, Lori Pate, started out by sending regular care packages to troops through the Web site AnySoldier.com.

"One of her care packages was sent to a captain in a hospital," Watt said. "He asked her if she would be interested in sending packages to the wounded troops. That was when she realized that this was something that was really lacking."

She said when Pate received the message from the captain, Pate made a decision.

"She said, 'This is it. This is our opportunity to show our soldiers that we are going to treat them right and take care of them - no matter what,' " Watt said.

Marty Horn, president of Any Soldier, said he chose to partner with OQC soon after OQC was officially established as a non-profit organization.

"We have a very direct focus," Horn said. "We are about helping the troops in the field and Operation: Quiet Comfort is about helping the troops that are hurt. We find that to be an incredible important thing."

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Choosing to affiliate themselves with OQC was done carefully, he said.

"Our reputation rests on who we support so we wouldn't partner with them if they we didn't think they were terrific," Horn said. "We have troops that write to us and tell us about their injured soldiers," Horn said. "We immediately notify Operation: Quiet Comfort so that they know right away where a problem is so that they can help."

In a second interview, Watt stated in an e-mail message that OQC tries to help all the troops that come to them for help.

"We have 64 units that have support overseas right now - and to this date, whenever a unit has come to us and asked for our support, we have never turned one down," she said.

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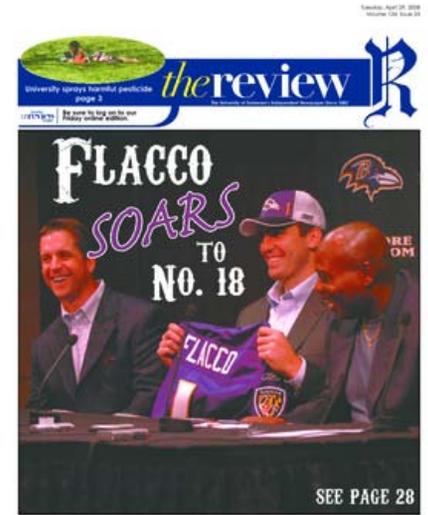
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