

*“For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways...
- Psalm 91:11*

CCE Grade 4: Soldier Kit Items and Greeting Cards

Project Overview: Students learn about soldiers and their needs while away from home. Students should do chores to earn the money needed to purchase items for soldier kits that will ultimately be constructed and sent overseas. Students should also make hand made greeting cards letting the soldiers know how much Jesus loves them and how much we appreciate them and their service.

Understandings:

- Spiritual:** God loves us all and wants us to show compassion for those who are far away and in need.
- Social:** What does it feel like to a soldier in today’s world? Why do some people want to be soldiers?
- Intellectual:** Learning what being a soldier entails, what hardships they endure and what we can do to help.

PROGRAM START DATE:

SEPTEMBER 24

PROGRAM FINISH DATE:

OCTOBER 9

For some greeting card templates, please see attached.

Please turn in the items to the Social Concerns bin in the AMC . Thanks!

PROJECT BENEFITS:

TIP OF THE SPEAR & HOUSTON MARINE MOMS-SERVING MILITARY MEN AND WOMEN OVERSEAS WITH CARE PACKAGES
CONTACT: LISA D’OLIVER AT

SERVICE PROJECT QUESTIONS:

Contact Elementary CCE @ 281-265-5774 OR
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Soldier Wish List Items:

Please only purchase individually-sized packages as the soldiers hike with the items in their packs so they need them small and easy to carry:

Tuna/chicken soft packets (no cans), granola/power bars, cheese crackers, nuts/sunflower seeds/trail mix, dried fruit (no cans), powered drink mix, hot cocoa, Raman noodle/cup of soup items, mac and cheese, jerky/Slim Jim, tea bags, coffee bags/instant coffee packets, black cotton crew socks, adult disposable wash cloths, hand sanitizer, hand warmers, shoe gel inserts, Gold Bond foot powder, sunscreen and lip balm.



Writing Letters and Sending Packages to Soldiers Helps Boost Morale

By **The Collegian**
Jun 12, 2012

The once common phrase “Don’t forget to write” is slowly slipping from mainstream vocabulary. With the ease of email, text and video calling, “snail mail” is quickly becoming a last resort for communication, especially among younger generations. But handwritten letters still retain immense importance in America for an audience that can sometimes only receive snail mail. Writing to members of the U.S. Army and other armed forces can make a difference and a large impact on the morale of the protectors of the country.

Soldiers in the field often have little or no contact with home while on duty. Letters from home give them the connection that they’ve lost. Nadine Davis, retired Sgt. 1st Class and resident of Kansas City, Mo., said handwritten letters give soldiers joy. “Everyone got so excited to get a letter or package,” Davis said. “It made them feel like they weren’t forgotten. Receiving letters and packages were a real morale booster.” Davis worked in respiratory therapy, aiding other soldiers in combat, as well as fighting as a soldier herself. She said the change in soldiers when they received mail is reason enough to write to them. “It’s very important to write to your soldiers,” Davis said. “You have no idea how big of a deal it is or the excitement it brings.”

People who have family, friends or loved ones serving in the military obviously write to maintain contact, but according to Davis, soldiers were even more excited to receive support and encouragement from people they didn’t know. Matthew Uppman, senior at Graceland University and substitute teacher for Hickman Mills and Grandview school districts in Missouri, said more people should write to soldiers and veterans, even if they don’t know them. “Sadly, nobody thinks to write to Army members if they don’t have to,” Uppman said. “Everybody protecting us needs that support. Including the veterans who already did their part.”

Uppman supports the troops by having his elementary students write thank you letters to soldiers as a Memorial Day project. The children write letters which Uppman then sends to a random soldier. He repeats the tradition every year. Uppman often receives responses that he gives back to his students. “Not only does it help our troops, but it makes the kids feel like they helped in something much bigger than them,” Uppman said.

Davis also noted the importance of receiving surprise gifts from people you didn’t know. When people in her unit received mail, the sender would usually pack items for everyone to enjoy. “You lived in a tent with about 12 other people,” Davis said. “Some members got care packages that had things in it for everyone. Somebody was always getting one, so there were always lots of gifts.”

Many organizations exist to help people send letters and packages to soldiers, and each offers different kinds of services. Some, like letterstosoldiers.org, offer the option to send an email instead of a handwritten letter, some give supporters the option to write to soldiers deployed to combat zones, and others allow letters to be sent to any soldier. No matter where a soldier is stationed, it is likely they are far from where they call “home.” For people who would like to write but don’t know what to say to a stranger, there are many websites that offer tips.

There are rules for letters and packages, which each organization lists. Bear in mind that letters, both to and from soldiers, are screened to ensure they do not contain sensitive information or are otherwise problematic. Packages must meet certain guidelines. They can only contain non-perishable food items. Senders should not send anything that can leak fluid, such as batteries, and they should be aware of the country to which they are mailing to avoid sending anything that violates its laws or taboos.

Another way to show support is to donate to organizations like Blue Star Mothers, Books for Soldiers and Cell Phones for Soldiers. These organizations take donations to send anything from reading material to appropriate food and hygiene materials to troops. But while these much-needed items provide a welcome boost to soldiers, handwritten letters have a particular power to make an emotional impact on soldiers' lives.

"Writing a letter is more personal," said Adrienne Haney, graduate student in curriculum and instruction. "It shows that you go the extra distance." Haney went the extra distance by writing letters to a soldier for years. This former soldier is now her husband. "We were friends while we were writing," Haney said. "Through letters, we became more interested in each other and took it to a deeper, more romantic level."

Haney advised more people to write to troops. She said that working up from a small start can help develop a rhythm. "Start small; send an email first," Haney said. "Then, if you have more time, write an actual letter. It will make a difference. This may not affect your daily life, but it will affect theirs."

Haney, Davis and Uppman all said they hope more civilians will write to troops, especially overseas. They agreed that there is something special about writing to the protectors of the country to show appreciation and support. "It's always easy to Skype or email, but letters are special; they can be read over and over again," Haney said. "Do something for the troops."

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Send a letter:

letterstosoldiers.org Offers opportunities to write to soldiers via email and donate packages or goods.

amillionthanks.org Offers opportunities to send letters and cards, particularly for major holidays.

Packages, donations and other help:

booksforsoldiers.com Donate books and DVDs for deployed soldiers and wounded soldiers recovering in hospitals.

cellphonesforsoldiers.com Donate cell phones and calling cards to give soldiers cost-free ways to communicate with their families.

operationgratitude.com Send packages to soldiers. Also allows soldiers to post requests.

soldiersangels.org An organization that allows people to "adopt" a soldier and provides help for veterans and families in need.

adoptaussoldier.org An organization that allows people to "adopt" a soldier, including those currently stationed in combat zones.

anysoldier.com Specializes in gift packages for soldiers and contains a list of most-requested items.

Don't know what to write?

teachspace.org/soldiersangels/mentees/fistletter.html A mentor for SoldiersAngels.org provides tips for people who want to write, but don't know what to say.

ehow.com/how_4720442_write-soldiers-letters-home.html Provides tips and several different types of letter formats to try.