

GLENCOE NEWS — Dec. 16, 2004

## Glencoe girl sells bracelets to buy care packages for troops

**BY ANDREW SCHROEDTER**  
STAFF WRITER

The idea came to J.J. Gavillet after learning that Operation Glencoe Cares, a villagewide, fund-raising effort to benefit an Illinois National Guard unit, was short the money it needed to ship care packages to Iraq.

The 10-year-old girl knew she wanted to help, she just wasn't sure what to do.

After kicking around a few ideas with her father, Ron, she decided to design a red, white and blue bracelet and sell 200 or so of them to her classmates at Glencoe's Central School.

Gavillet's brainchild is similar to what Lance Armstrong, six time Tour de France winner, did to raise money for cancer research. The yellow wristbands, emblazoned with the motto "Live Strong," are seen all over and especially on wrists of a celebrity or professional athlete.

Most likely, Gavillet's bracelets won't gain the same sort of pop cult status.

But charity, not fame or fortune, is the real motive here, she said.

Gavillet's goal is to raise \$200. All proceeds will be donated to Operation Glencoe Cares, which benefits Illinois National Guard Unit Battery F, 202nd Artillery. The unit, which hails from Galva, Ill., is stationed in Taiji, Iraq, and won't return home until March.

Because it is so rare these days for any Glencoe resident to serve in the armed forces, Ron Gavillet said he hopes the wrist bands bring the war's reality a little closer to home.

"The bracelets are a constant reminder that people are separated from their families and doing good throughout the world," he said.

Before the bracelets were ordered, J.J., a fifth-grade Central School student, said she sketched out a number of design possibilities and, with her father's help, eventually decided on a colorful band with the word "Trooper." Her father said the design looks like the American flag.

The family then scoured the Internet looking for a company to make their idea a reality.

They eventually clicked on a Web site for Wov-In, a Wisconsin-based promotional product supplier, and ordered 220 bracelets. The shipment was delivered this week, and Gavillet, along with older sister Alexandra, will sell them during lunch at Central School.

Gavillet said she hopes her fellow students will buy one of the bands because "they'll remember that they helped the troops."

Since October, Glencoe volunteers have collected nonperishable items to send the unit's members. Snack foods, magazines and crossword puzzle books have made up a bulk of the donations.

In late November, Operation Glencoe Cares shipped 25 of the packages, weighing between 10 and 12 pounds, at a cost of \$292. Shipments of another 15 to 20 boxes were delayed because the group lacked money for postage.

Gavillet said she hopes she can raise enough money to cover future shipping costs.

If she is successful, Katie Sweeney, one of the group's organizers, said another batch of packages may be shipped in January, and then again in March. Sweeney said the troops desire travel-size items, such as toiletries and snack food, as well as CDs and DVDs.

A complete list of desired items can be found at [www.goglencoe.com](http://www.goglencoe.com) or by calling the village manager's office at (847) 835-4114.

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