

Star Courier

KEWANEE
ILLINOIS

City

Guard helps raise funds for one of their own

By DAVE CLARKE Of The Star Courier

KEWANEE -- The Kewanee National Guard did double duty Sunday, reprising the popular pancake breakfast held in the spring to raise funds to help pay the medical expenses for the infant daughter of one of their members.

Headquarters Battery, 202nd Air Defense Artillery,

including one soldier home on leave from Iraq, served more than 700 people who turned out to help Elisa Munoz, the 19-month-old daughter of Spec. Leticia Munoz of Kewanee. Elisa is being kept alive by a dialysis machine at OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria.

When Spec. Munoz, a single mom, returned from annual training with the unit in August, she noticed her daughter's belly was getting bigger. A checkup revealed a cancerous tumor which, it was learned, had been caused by an abnormal chromosome growth. A one-pound tumor was removed from her stomach, but the cancer had spread to her kidneys.

One kidney has been removed but she is not eligible for a transplant until she is cancer free and her body is too weak for chemotherapy. The dialysis machine is her lifeline. "She has good days and bad days," said her grandmother, Emily Munoz.

Elisa has so far undergone four operations.

"The support from the community has been fantastic," said Master Sergeant Bob Haverback. Among those turning out to help were Miss Henry County Fair

Ashley Maxwell of Galva, and Little Miss Henry County Fair Claudia VanOpdorp of Annawan.

Spec. Nathan Kull, currently serving in Iraq with F Battery, 202nd ADA, who is home on leave, also pulled a shift in the kitchen Sunday morning before going to church with his family. A bake sale held by the unit's Family Readiness Group also went "very well," according to Haverback.

Spec. Munoz, a cook in the unit, has been in the National Guard for four years.

All proceeds will help pay Elisa's mounting medical expenses.

Those wishing to help may send donations to:

Family Readiness Group

c/o Elisa Munoz Fund

111 N. East St.

Kewanee, Ill. 61443