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Red, white and blue Christmas colors at Liberty Luncheon

By JENA SCHEUNEMAN

BULLHEAD CITY -- There were no red and green decorations and no toys were donated at a charity luncheon held Wednesday.

The Liberty Luncheon, which was organized by friends of the Colorado River Medical Center community, was held to honor military men and women serving overseas who have no other family to remember them.

"We feel very patriotic," said Joanne Cardone. "We really appreciate what we have and what the soldiers are doing -- what they have done for our country through all wars."

"As generations go on, I think people, especially youth, tend to forget how lucky we are," said Mardi Benedict.

"Except for our kids in Iraq, they don't forget -- and there are kids over there," said Mona Hinkle.

While many members of the military have friends and family who send packages, some do not. The purpose of the Liberty Luncheon was to gather items for those soldiers. The program, called "Attn: Any Soldier," was started by Army Sgt. Brian Horn who noticed some soldiers serving in Iraq never received any mail.

The Tri-state area women decided to throw Liberty Luncheon to support the "Attn: Any Soldier" program.

The cost to attend the lunch, held at Colorado Grill, was a donation of an item to send to the soldiers. Toiletries, decks of cards, reading materials, movies, candy, and cash (for postage and phone cards) were among the

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items donated.

"There are so many things they don't have. It's just amazing," Benedict said.

A list of items that soldiers would appreciate is on the www.anysoldier.com Web site. There are also some suggestions of things not to mail: too large of package, home cooked food and flea collars. What the soldiers would really like, the web site says, is a letter from home.

"This is about support, not just stuff," Sgt. Horn wrote on the Web site. "A letter, from you, your children, the kids at church or school, is the best thing to send. A show of personal support is far better than spending a bunch of money that you don't have."

The friends of the Colorado River Medical Center community will continue to collect items and cards until Dec. 23. Donations can be dropped off at the offices of Dr. Richard Cardone or Dr. Richard Benedict in the Colorado River Medical Complex in Fort Mojave.

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