

FAPC Takes Part in Donating Bubble Wrap to Blue Star Mothers

By Lacie Stockstill
FAPC Communications Graduate Assistant

STILLWATER, Okla. – The Food & Agricultural Products Center on the campus of Oklahoma State University recently took part in donating more than a half-mile of bubble wrap to the Department of Oklahoma Blue Star Mothers of America.

What began as a simple miscommunication ended with the Blue Star Mothers receiving an abundance of packing material that is essential for the packaging and safe arrival of care packages sent to American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We are glad to be part of a shipping mishap that led to the generous donation of more than a half-mile of bubble wrap to such a deserving organization,” said Jerri Beth Tivis, FAPC workshop coordinator.

The excess bubble wrap was donated by Quill Products in Palatine, Ill., and FAPC staff chose the Department of Oklahoma Blue Star Mothers to receive the packing material, Tivis said.

Members of the FAPC delivered the bubble wrap to the Blue Star Mothers’ offices in Edmond, Okla. and Mannford, Okla.

The Blue Star Mothers of America got its start during World War II when a group of mothers whose children were in the armed services volunteered in hospitals and train stations and sent care packages to troops overseas. The organization’s name comes from the flags adorned with blue stars that are still hung in the windows of families with a son or daughter in the military.

In April 2003, the Department of Oklahoma Blue Star Mothers was chartered and was the first state department chartered in more than 30 years. With 13 chapters, it is now the largest, most active and fastest growing department in the nation, according to current president Patsy Varnell of Mannford, Okla.

“Serving as the president of the Department of Oklahoma Blue Star Mothers is an awesome responsibility that I do not take lightly,” Varnell said. “I cannot accomplish our mission alone.”

Varnell’s husband is a Vietnam veteran, and all three of her sons are involved in the military. One son served in the Gulf War as an avionics technician, and Varnell’s youngest son expects to be deployed to Iraq as a combat medic by November.

“Every mother is different and copes with the stress of being a military mom in unique ways,” Varnell said. “For myself, to be heavily involved in supporting our troops, helping

to boost their morale and being part of a support network for the veterans and their families helps me look beyond my own doorstep and stress to work through what lies ahead.”

About 400 other mothers across the state share Varnell’s coping method and join forces to send American troops boxes of shampoo, conditioner, sunscreen, socks, shatterproof sunglasses, toilet paper, baby wipes and food items that are not available overseas.

Blue Star Dads and Associates including other family members and friends also support the Blue Star Mothers. The items they send to the troops are donated by organizations such as church groups, civic organizations and school groups.

The packages are compartmentalized and products are wrapped and packaged to prevent breakage.

“With the bubble wrap, delicate items have a higher probability of arriving in a useable condition,” Varnell said.

For more information about the Blue Star Mothers of America or to find the nearest chapter, visit www.bluestarmothers.org. Only five mothers are needed to charter a chapter, and anyone interested should contact the Department of Oklahoma Blue Star Mothers at P.O. Box 463, Sapulpa, OK 74067 or (918) 814-2722.

###

Photo Cutline: Patsy Varnell, president of the Department of Oklahoma Blue Star Mothers, stands next to a portion of the bubble wrap that was donated to the organization by Quill Products and the Food & Agricultural Products Center. (Photo by Mandy Gross)