

Organization looks to raise funds for troops with May 17 sale

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Stoneham - Although the country is mired in an apparent quagmire in Iraq and the presidential candidates are hotly debating the consequences and parameters of a troop pullout, members of the community are still committed to supporting the troops themselves.

The Helping Hands for Heroes Freedom Fund, part of the Weber Foundation of Helping Hands, was created in order to address the financial and medical needs of troops returning to the U.S., according to council member Nancy Delrossi of Stoneham.

She added that there is a lack of awareness of assisting soldiers returning from military service abroad and that it is “a disgrace.”

Delrossi also said that their requests are being submitted on a weekly basis and described the soldiers’ situations as often “heartbreaking.”

She said she witnessed first-hand how poorly treated the troops were upon returning from the Vietnam War, saying that “no one pays attention to what happens when they come back.”

She added that as Americans it is our duty to honor soldiers and “take care of our own” in regards to supporting them when they return from combat.

The organization will hold an indoor rummage sale next Saturday, May 17 and another major fundraiser in June.

Delrossi felt the rummage sale was well timed, given the fact that people will look to clear out their garages and basements with the onset of spring.

“It’s that time of year where people do their spring cleaning and just throw stuff away. This is an opportunity to donate it to a great cause,” she said.

Delrossi also felt strongly that the supporting of troops should be a “community effort” and that if everyone donated a little, the result would mean a lot to the troops.

“What if everyone donated just one dollar. Everyone can spare a dollar. Give up that cup of coffee for a day or that pack of gum,” she said, adding that you can find a dollar even “on the floor of your car.”

“I have to believe in my heart that there isn’t a true American who wouldn’t want to help a soldier,” she added.

Delrossi said she recognizes the fact that, in today’s tenuous economy, some may feel they are unable to help, and that was part of the reasoning for the rummage sale.

“Many people are worried about their finances and believe that there is nothing they can do. I came up with the idea of having a rummage sale at the Town Hall where people could donate their unused items to help raise money,” she said.

Delrossi wanted to emphasize that the events and the fund itself is completely non-profit and that each dollar goes to soldiers in need.

She also expressed sadness regarding the recent decline of patriotism, saying that the upswing after 9/11 was positive, but that now the flags are down.

“We need to hang the flag from our homes because we are at war and we need to honor our soldiers,” she said.

In June, the foundation will host a dinner event at the Burlington Marriott. The night will feature live entertainment and a silent auction. For more information, visit www.theweberfoundation.com.

The Weber Foundation was founded by Elizabeth Weber in October of 2000 in order to help those in need, whether they be individuals or their families affected by illness or other misfortune.

Delrossi said the foundation “helps people in dire need” and has assisted those who have had their houses burned down or needed handicap ramps built at their residence.