

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Military Mail Call project collects 23,000 cards and interest from Smithsonian Institution

SOUTH BEND, IN/October 20, 2009/Martin's Super Markets/ -- The recently concluded Military Mail Call project has collected over 23,000 cards and letters from around the area, as well as having generated interest from researchers at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

The project's initial objective was to encourage citizens of all ages to write a supportive note or letter to United States Armed Forces troops stationed overseas. Martin's Super Markets, headquartered in South Bend, Indiana, acted as coordinating partner of the Military Mail Call project, an initiative of two area organizations: Camouflage Kids and Blue Star Mothers. Camouflage Kids, founded by Jeff Nix, is dedicated to supporting the children of our service men and women. Blue Star Mothers is an organization whose membership has a son or daughter serving in one of the armed forces branches.

Martin's donated thousands of cards to the effort, and its 20 area stores acted as public collection points. In addition, many local schools, churches and social organizations contributed to the card-writing effort.

"The community's response to the project was immediate and nearly overwhelming," according to Dave Mayfield, Martin's Advertising Manager and acting project coordinator. "The messages themselves range from simple pictures done by small children to heartfelt and inspirational letters written by adults of all ages and backgrounds."

Added Camouflage Kids Nix, "Being part of an organization that sees every day the hardships that children of service men and women endure during their long absences, we're encouraged by the show of support this program has received from the public." Continued Nix, "While Camo Kids works to support kids, the Military Mail Call project has been a great way to show our troops that their efforts are appreciated even though they serve far away from their family, friends and country."

The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. contacted Martin's shortly after the project was announced. Researchers there are in the midst of compiling artifacts and samples for a planned National Postal Museum permanent exhibit on the role of military and civilian mail to troops in times of war and peace. At their request, curators there have been sent samples of some of the cards collected, as well as the initial media coverage which helped communicate the project to the public and make it such a great success.

A showing and farewell event will be held on Tuesday, October 27 at the Martin's Super Market located at 7355 Heritage Square in Mishawaka. The public is invited to stop by between the hours of noon and 8pm to see a representative sample of the over 23,000 messages that will be soon sent to Iraq and Afghanistan by the Blue Star Mothers organization. Mayfield and Nix will be on hand from noon until 2 p.m. to answer questions and discuss the project.

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Martin's Super Markets was founded in 1947 and currently has 20 stores in South Bend, Mishawaka, Granger, Elkhart, Goshen, Plymouth, Nappanee and Logansport, Indiana, and Niles, Stevensville and St. Joseph, Michigan.

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