



Support for troops

Verlo Mattress Factory Stores lends a hand to supporting area family's efforts

MILWAUKEE, Wis. – When 8-year-old Ashley Rome overheard her mom, Julie, discussing the exuberant cost of obtaining everyday, simple items in Iraq, like bar soap, lotion and foot powder, Ashley decided she needed to take action.

Persistent, little Ashley was determined to organize a drive to get these items to her uncle, 2nd Lt. Kevin Eaton, and cousin, Anthony Savorias, and fellow comrades of about 120 men and women.

“She wasn’t going to give up. She said we should do a drive to get people involved. She encouraged me to contact friends and family to collect these items, and as her mom, I went full force with the idea,” Julie said.

Full force, indeed. Soon, Julie found herself contacting 94.5 FM – WTKI in Milwaukee requesting that the station make public service announcements regarding the drive for troops. The station agreed as long as there was a drop-off spot in place.

Enter Verlo Mattress Factory Stores. Verlo Mattress Factory Stores of Greater Milwaukee franchise owners Greg Gardetto and Mike Murphy agreed to support Julie’s efforts. Julie’s husband, Dale Rome, is a veteran of Desert Storm and also the general manager for their Verlo Mattress Factory Stores.

“They are such a huge advocate of the community, so I knew it wouldn’t be a problem,” Julie said.

In addition to having all eight of its locations accept donations, Verlo Mattress Factory Stores is also doing its part by selling Mattress Man plushies, mini replicas of the franchise’s lovable mascot, for \$5 each with proceeds going toward the purchase of additional items for the drive.

“This is totally a grassroots effort by Julie and her family, and we are so happy to have another opportunity to support our troops abroad,” Gardetto said.

Julie is thrilled with how her efforts have magnified. Since her initial outreach to the community, other media, including Milwaukee radio station 99.1 FM – WMYX, television station Today’s TMJ 4, are also drawing attention to the drive. Greenfield High School and Elementary School are participating in a drive as well.

Requested items include:

- Foot powder
- Bar soap
- Travel-size lotion
- Magazines
- Hard candy
- Powdered drink mixes to pour in bottled water
- Phone cards
- Cards and letters of encouragement

“It’s the little things sent from the USA that put smiles on their faces. They appreciate every little thing sent,” Julie said.

Some of the items may even save the soldiers’ lives. Julie was enlightened by her brother when he mentioned that hard candy is used to distract Iraqi children from getting in the way of trucks when they are traveling.

“There’s so much that we take for granted,” Julie said.

Anyone interested in contributing to this cause can drop off donations at any of the Verlo Mattress Factory Stores locations listed below. Items will be collected now through Friday, Nov. 2. The shipments should be delivered in time for soldiers to have by Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Verlo Mattress Factory Stores of Greenfield – 6501 W. Layton Ave.

Verlo Mattress Factory Stores of Brown Deer – 6922 W. Brown Deer Rd.

Verlo Mattress Factory Stores of Glendale – 5530 N. Port Washington Rd.

Verlo Mattress Factory Stores of Kenosha – 7214 Green Bay Rd.

Verlo Mattress Factory Stores of Menomonee Falls – W176 N9348 Rivercrest Dr.

Verlo Mattress Factory Stores of Racine – 2510 S. Green Bay Rd.

Verlo Mattress Factory Stores of Third Ward – 201 N. Water St.

Verlo Mattress Factory Stores of Wauwatosa – 801 N. 108th

About Verlo Mattress Factory Stores

Headquartered in Fort Atkinson, Wis., Verlo Mattress Factory Stores is the nation's largest Craftsman-Direct® mattress retailer. Offering the only franchise opportunity in the \$7.7 billion-a-year sleep specialty industry, Verlo Mattress Factory Stores earned a spot in *Entrepreneur Magazine's* 27th Annual Franchise 500 in 2006. Verlo's business model sustains the retail framework for custom-built mattresses, ornamental design beds, futon mattresses, assorted futon covers, futon frames, bolsters and pillows.

Currently, Verlo has a highly concentrated retail presence in the Midwest with stores expanding as far west as Colorado and as far south as Florida and Texas.

Visit www.verlo.com or www.verlofranchise.com.