



DJJ kids open their hearts to U.S. troops in Iraq & Afghanistan
NSD youth make holiday cards & write letters to soldiers stationed overseas

Juveniles in DJJ's non-secure group homes took time to recognize the men and women of the United States Armed Services during the 2009 holiday season. More than 120 kids in detention opened their hearts to our nation's defenders, making cards and writing heartfelt letters to U.S. soldiers stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Most of the cards and letters written by detained youth were filled with admiration and respect for the sacrifice made by the soldiers, as well as empathy and concern for their safety and well being.

"When this letter reaches you, I hope you're in the best of health," Angel, a juvenile resident in non-secure detention, wrote to a soldier. "I think what you're doing is very brave."

Many of the children identified with being away from family and friends during a normally festive time of year, and acknowledged that it is must be much harder for the soldiers whose families are an ocean away, instead of being separated by just a few miles.

Chelsea wrote, "I look up to you and thank you for all you've done and still are doing for me and my family's freedom."

The juveniles were extremely enthusiastic about the project, with many writing lengthy and insightful messages. The hope expressed by many of the young correspondents was that the letters would brighten the spirits of our nation's soldiers, bringing a bit of cheer while they spend this holiday season in a challenging and uncertain part of the world.

