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QC group sends vets nearly 6,000 items

By Ellen Sussman
Special to the Green Valley News

It took a caravan of 17 vehicles to deliver the outpouring of generosity from The Women of Quail Creek's fifth annual clothing and household goods drive for the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Tucson.

Donations came from Quail Creek residents, Sonora Del Webb in Rancho Sahuarita and a chapter of Gamma Sigma sorority in Green Valley.

"Last year, we used eight cars to take the donations to the VA. This year it was 17," group president Peggy McGee said. "The VA was overwhelmed and I pity the guy who is going to have to figure out where to put all the stuff. There were boxes and bags lining the halls — and I hope no one plans to get a haircut for the next couple of weeks since the barber shop is filled."

The annual drive also netted six bikes for veterans who recently found housing and need transportation to and from work and for job hunting.

HUD-VASH Supervisor Danna Auriana sent McGee a note that said, "One of our veterans broke out in tears when he got one of the bikes yesterday. Very heartwarming for our veterans to feel the love and support of the community."

Jodi Frederick, clinical director for rehabilitation programs, said the bikes were a hit.

"We gave one to a HUD-VASH veteran who was walking everywhere for job applications and interviews. He will now have a bike that will make his trips easier," she said.

HUD-VASH is a joint program between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing.

Cash and checks totaling $665 were also part of the giving, and included $180 from Karen Baker, who leads an exercise group for veterans at Quail Creek. Fran Miller knitted 181 sweaters and hats for men, women and children.

McGee said the funds go to the VA's Voluntary Services division to help veterans buy furniture.

All told, 5,981 items were donated. There were an additional 333 pounds of toiletries and 22 pounds of notepads and greeting cards.

Genesis House, the local domestic violence shelter, received 517 items of clothing that weren't suitable for the VA.

McGee said she believes the overflow of donations is because donors knew the items were going to the VA and were not being resold.

Contact Green Valley freelance reporter **Ellen Sussman** at ellen2414@cox.net.

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MARGARET MORRIS, Ginny Post and Melora Mott sort clothing at the beginning of a two-hour clothing collection drive in Quail Creek.

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