

EMCC group collecting phones for soldiers

by **David Madrid** - Oct. 2, 2008 09:29 AM
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With more than 150,000 troops serving overseas, an Estrella Mountain Community College organization is collecting cellphones to connect them to families.

Cell Phones

for Soldiers has raised almost \$1 million in donations and distributed more than 500,000 prepaid calling cards to soldiers overseas. The non-profit organization also connects other branches of the U.S. military, such as Marines, airmen and sailors, to their families. Donations are tax-deductible.

Donation information	Organization facts	Why donate?
Residents can support the collection drive by donating cellphones at EMCC, 3000 N. Dysart Road (at Thomas Road), Avondale. Sponsor is the Beta Alpha Xi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society.	Teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist of Norwell, Mass., founded Cell Phones for Soldiers with \$21.	"For the loved ones of military personnel, hearing from their soldiers serving abroad is a comfort," Brittany said. "We're asking Americans to make a small sacrifice of support by donating their ... cellphones, providing families with a much-needed connection to their loved ones overseas."
Phi Theta Kappa members will collect phones and cash donations outside the Komatke A Security Office from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 18 and Nov. 15.	After reading about a soldier who ran up a huge phone bill calling home from Iraq, the siblings decided to help out.	"We have been overwhelmed by the generous support of thousands of Americans," said the teens' father, Bob Bergquist. "However, the need for support keeps growing as more soldiers are sent to the Middle East or asked to serve extended tours of duty."
Donations may also be dropped off at the security office from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays through Nov. 15.	Cell Phones for Soldiers hopes to raise \$9 million in the next five years for new programs.	"We're proud to show our support for the U.S. soldiers and to contribute to a worthy cause like Cell Phones for Soldiers," says EMCC Phi Theta Kappa Chapter President Annette Wilson.
ReCellular pays Cell Phones for Soldiers for each donated phone.	About half the phones are reconditioned and resold.	The goal is to give troops a way to call home for free. Information: www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com .

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