

*November 10, 2010 | Mike Sakal, Tribune*

In honor of Veterans Day, more than 100 residents of Tempe's Friendship Village - many who are veterans themselves - are seeking the public's help in providing donations of everyday items for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Beginning at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, more than 100 residents of Friendship Village along with their families and friends will begin collecting donations of items such as soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, sunscreen, wet wipes, candy, trail mix, crackers, decks of cards and more. People can bring donations to the Friendship Village Recreation Center, 2645 E. Southern Ave.

The event also will honor those who have served in every branch of the military with patriotic music being provided by Coast Guard veteran Bob Albrecht and Navy veteran John Kleinbach. Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action also will be remembered.

The event gives the opportunity for veterans to continue serving their country long after they are out of the military.

And, while the trend of donations for various organizations has dropped the last couple of years because of the economy, donations for the military have remained steady at Friendship Village for more than a decade, said Susan Vosdoganes, marketing director for the retirement community.

"Veterans Day always hits home with the community here since many of our residents are veterans themselves," Vosdoganes said. "When it comes to donations, they always go above and beyond. The veterans overseas need as many donations as they can get."