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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Operation 4-H for The Troops Delivers More Than Just Food**

**"I pledge: ... my hands to larger service... "**

These words may sound familiar to you they are part of a pledge more than 400 Ulster County youth make who participate in 4-H annually, but to members of Ulster County's 4-H MuttMasters, these simple words translated into a call for action.

As 4-H members youngsters are encouraged to develop and practice skills to become helpful or useful in their club, community, country and world. Several months ago, the Ulster County 4-H MuttMasters, a group of 25 youth ages 8-19, collected personal hygiene, food and entertainment items for our troops stationed in Iraq. At the suggestion of Major Floyd Burgher of Saugerties, whose unit has been stationed in Iraq, the 4-H members also included Beanie Babies, dolls and assorted toys to be handed out to the Iraqi children.

Dubbed *Operation 4-H for the Troops*, teen leader Jaime Churchill made arrangements to have the items delivered. Now, much to the surprise and delight of the 4-H club, a note of thanks has arrived from Major Burgher along with photos of the items being delivered to the local children.

The Iraqi children loved the Beanie Babies!! wrote major Burgher. There were some dolls in there too that the older girls loved!! You can see they don't have much. I have a few more Beanie Babies, I plan to finish them up dropping them from our helicopters as we fly over.

4-H community service projects allow youth and adults to work together and to help others at the same time. Club members were moved by the photos and found it to be a very rewarding experience. For more information about *Operation 4-H for the Troops*, please contact Jennifer Burkins at 845-340-3990. For more information about 4-H clubs in Ulster County please contact Patti Zelmer, Cornell Cooperative Extension, at 845-340-3990.

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