

Army in Alaska helps share the love

with his special valentine | Photo by Jenni Ragland
Ryan



Maldonado, age 11, with his special valentine | Photo by
Jenni Ragland

The Salvation Army participates in a Valentine Fair for military families.

Approximately 300 people attended a Valentine Fair for military families at JBER (Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson) Feb. 9 in Anchorage, Alaska.

Deborah Bonito, wife of U.S. Senator Mark Begich from Alaska, asked The Salvation Army to participate in the event. Coordinated by Major Nila Fankhauser, Army representatives—including Jenni Ragland and Danielle Maldonado—set up a craft station for children and parents to create homemade valentine cards.

“This was the first time we participated at the event,” Ragland said. “It’s always wonderful when we have the opportunity to do something special in appreciation of the dedicated service of our military families.”

Several other organizations and businesses participated, offering cookie decorating, a bounce house, Froot Loop bracelet making, a cake walk and tic-tac-toe game creation. The military moms enjoyed free popcorn, flowers and chocolate-covered strawberries.

“It is amazing when the civilian community comes together to show their appreciation to our men and women serving in the Armed Forces and the families that support them,” Maldonado said. “For military families, it develops a stronger sense of ‘home away from home.’”

According to Fankhauser, everyone had a wonderful time. “It was especially touching to see some moms helping their children make a valentine for their father who was deployed,” she said.

For Maldonado, the event had special significance. “As a military spouse it brought me great joy being a part of the The Salvation Army team and being able to actively show my support to our military community,” she said. “Being a part of what brings the community together, creating awareness and showing support is a truly rewarding experience.”