



the good news series

The Archipelago at Grand Island Senior High (GISH) and the Indra House have partnered to rework donated hotel and motel soap bars for veterans living at Victory Place.

The Archipelago is a pantry that takes in donations and collections of food, clothing, and hygiene items for students who may need them. Brian Whitecalf, who is part of the Grand Island Public Schools Families in Transitions team, is the community liaison at GISH and operates Archipelago.

"Many people stay at a hotel or motel and in their bathroom there is a complementary shampoo and soap bar," Whitecalf said. "Many folks collect all those over the months or years of traveling to different places, and they are usually small and for one-time use. After watching a video online, I thought about remaking the soap into larger bars but I wanted to have purpose and creativity."

Whitecalf said he spoke with Crystal Warner, special education teacher at the Indra House, on the project. The Indra House, located across from GISH, is used to teach students with special needs functional, independent living skills in a real environment. The house is also home to the transitional living program for special needs students ages 19-21.

Whitecalf and Warner thought it would be a good idea for their students to learn about soap making while also focusing on certain groups that are in need. The group of students decided on a patriotic theme and began experimenting. The students broke down the bar soap and reshaped it to make a new bar.

"The students at the Indra House program were crucial in making this project succeed," Whitecalf said. "I know many of them enjoy the disassembly and reconstruction of all those little soaps."

The students were able to deliver the soap to Victory Place when finished.

"I think the students did a fantastic job and hopefully it will bring about a greater awareness that we

can share, help and care about each other along with being wise stewards of our resources," Whitecalf said.

The hope is to collect more soap from the community and create interesting soap projects in the future.

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