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June 24, 2007

Donation to help poor get good night's sleep

By Alvin Benn

Volunteers from Dalraida Church of Christ were out of bed early Saturday to help collect beds for the needy in one of the world's poorest countries.

They assembled at Faulkner University to load mattresses, springs and other bedding supplies onto a tractor-trailer headed for Charleston, S.C., for shipment to Somalia.

"Members of our church got together for this humanitarian aid shipment and we feel pretty good about it," said John Kachelman, who is a prosecutor in the Montgomery County district attorney's office.

Kachelman was joined by several other members of the church to load the items into the truck driven by Joey Morton, who arrived earlier in the morning.

Costs for the shipment were paid for by the federal government, said Kachelman,

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who lifted and carried some of the heavy items to the truck.

Faulkner spokeswoman Leigh Brannan said the university was happy to donate the bedding from two dorms -- Baldwin and Burton -- to the people of Somalia.

Kachelman said his father, who is a minister in Arkansas, helped arrange the donation.

"The State Department will be paying for it, and it's up to us to make sure it's loaded and on its way to Charleston," said Kachelman.

He said the mattresses and springs will be put to good use in a country where U. S. helicopter troops were killed and dragged through the streets of the capital city more than a decade ago.

"That's one reason we want to do this," said Kachelman. "We want to show them that there are some good feelings toward the people of Somalia. There is a lot of unrest over there at this time."

In addition to dozens of mattresses and beds, Kachelman said, other contributed items included medical equipment, four hospital beds, desks, chairs and discarded equipment that can be used for other purposes.

"Members of our church also donated towels, wash cloths and other things," he said. "We've got thousands of wash cloths in bags to send over there. This is something that we really wanted to do."

He said Faulkner University's decision to donate the bedding items was "much appreciated" and estimated that the total value of everything could approach or top \$100,000.

Kachelman said another relief group would receive the items in Somalia and make sure the beds get to "the right hands."

"From our understanding, these items will not be sold on the black market (but) given free and clear to the people who really need them," said Kachelman, whose wife, Monica, stood near the truck with a clipboard to check off each item.

"This is a wonderful cause because we're helping people who can use these items the most," Monica Kachelman said. "That's why we're here this morning."

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John Kachelman gets help Saturday morning from Tim Hatcher as they help load a trailer with bedding supplies from Faulkner University. The shipment is bound for Somalia, where it will be distributed to needy families.

-- Alvin Benn

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Faulkner Univ. Mattress Drive



ALVIN BENN

Bill Sanders heads for a trailer with a mattress as he and other members of the Dalraida Church of Christ help the people of Somalia. Alvin Benn/Montgomery Advertiser

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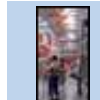
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ALVIN BENN

Monica Kachelman keeps track of bedding items Saturday morning at Faulkner University. Alvin Benn/
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ALVIN BENN

Joey Morton is ready to head for Charleston, S.C. with a load of bedding material for the poor people of Somalia.
Alvin Benn/Montgomery Advertiser

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Montgomery County prosecutor John Kachelman led a group of Dalraida Church of Christ to Faulkner University Saturday morning to help move bedding items for shipment to Somalia. Alvin Benn/Montgomery Advertiser

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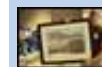
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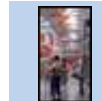
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Faulkner Univ. Mattress Drive



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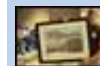
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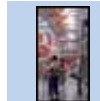
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ALVIN BENN

Charles Hitt wore his American flag T-shirt with pride Saturday at Faulkner University where he helped load supplies for the poor people of Somalia. Alvin Benn/Montgomery Advertiser

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