

## District kicks off fund-raiser for veterans

Telegraph staff report | Posted: Friday, September 6, 2013 6:00 am

EDWARDSVILLE — A local grade-school teacher is pulling together a plan to raise money for recent war veterans.

Columbus Elementary School teacher and Illinois Army National Guard officer candidate Matt Maddox will work with all elementary schools, Liberty and Lincoln Middle Schools' FIT and GO organizations, and Edwardsville High School's Student Council, National Honor Society and class officers to raise money for the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America Association.

The project will kick off on Wednesday, Sept. 11.

The vets association is the first and largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. It has more than 200,000 member veterans and supporters nationwide. IAVA strives to build the New Greatest Generation. IAVA programs empower its community online and offline, and include health, employment, education and community resources.

Maddox created this district-wide fund-raiser to support the veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan; it will begin on Wednesday, Sept. 11, at all schools and continue through the remainder of that week at the middle and high schools.

"After the tragedy of September 11th, America began the War on Terror, which ultimately led to the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. The veterans of these wars, many with multiple deployments, are returning home with the scars of war and as modern-day heroes. It is important to remember their sacrifices and support them upon their return home. This fund-raiser is a way to say thanks for your service, and we are here to support you," Maddox said.

Edwardsville School District Superintendent Ed Hightower said he "wholeheartedly" supports Maddox's efforts.

"What better way to say thanks to our veterans by recognizing them on September 11th, the anniversary of an event that precipitated our nation's ongoing War on Terror, and again on Veterans Day," Hightower said.

Hightower said the district's goal is to raise \$10,000 as a means of saying thank you to all of those who have made sacrifices for each of us.

"It is my hope that this will be the first of an annual event for our students and the community," Hightower said.

Elementary parents and students interested in participating should bring their donation to school on

Wednesday, Sept. 11, and submit it to the classroom teachers. Middle school and high school students should check their school announcements and websites for further information about the fund-raiser.

A district-wide carnival will be held from noon to 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 2, at Edwardsville High School. Attractions will include carnival games, inflatable obstacle courses and bounce houses, entertainment and concessions. All proceeds will be donated to the vets association.

The culminating event will be a Veterans Breakfast at Edwardsville High School on Tuesday, Nov. 5. Student representatives from each school will attend and make a check presentation to the vets association.

In addition to the school fund-raisers, the following local businesses have pledged to support this effort: Cassens Transport, Edge Bank, Taplin Defense Firm, Buffalo Wild Wings (donating 10 percent of their sales on Sept. 11 from 6 to 9 p.m.), Water Works Swim Club, J. Blanquart Jewelers, Pfund Construction, Day and Night Solar, Simmons Law Firm, and RP Lumber Co. and the Plummer Family.

Anyone else wishing to support the effort should make checks payable to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America Association and send the check to 708 St. Louis St., Edwardsville, IL 62025. See [www.iava.org](http://www.iava.org) for more information.