



Sunday November 25, 2007

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## Canon-McMillan students send gifts to soldiers

### Supplies of personal products, comfort items often fall short for troops in field

Sunday, November 25, 2007  
By Crystal Ola

The desks and chairs were stacked with snacks, drinks, magazines, books, compact discs, stationery, personal hygiene products and more. The space looked more like a storage room than a classroom, but it was a big day.

The students in Colleen Sciorilli's 10th-grade history class at Canon-McMillan High School were participating in the third annual event Nov. 16 for sophomores and some freshmen history students to box donated items to be sent to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Last year we did something like this but we didn't have nearly as much stuff," sophomore Mike Hull said.

Nearly 300 care packages were expected to be sent at the end of the day, Mrs. Sciorilli said. Requests were collected from the Web site [anysoldier.com](http://anysoldier.com) and provided to students, who spent two weeks donating the items for the care packages. Four teachers and about 450 students participated.

The students boxed the items and addressed the boxes and filled out the necessary customs forms. The packages were expected to take two to four weeks to arrive, just in time for the holiday season.

Sophomore Julia Wattick donated items including socks, hand sanitizers, trail mix and Christmas decorations.

"I think it's better for us to help out," she said. "I think everyone else should get as involved as they can."

Mrs. Sciorilli said she's proud her students. They do it out of the goodness of their hearts, she said. A bulletin board in her classroom displays thank you notes from soldiers who received packages in the past.

"I'm overwhelmed by my students," Mrs. Sciorilli said. "I am every year, by how generous they are ... I'm proud of them, they're like my kids. You just see the pride they feel on their faces."

The experience has inspired sophomore Emma Crichfield to participate in more charitable activities because

she thought the experience was "a lot of fun." She donated hard candy, iced tea packets, gum and snack cakes.

Emma said the requests for care package items made her realize the soldiers don't have as many things as she had thought.

"Some soldiers don't have any family and they need us, or anybody, to help them," she said. "They don't have a lot over there, so I'd rather help them more."

A few years ago, Mike Hull's cousin served in the Army in Iraq.

He's home safely now, but it gives the student more of a personal connection to soldiers.

Mike donated bathroom products, soaps, baby wipes, shaving cream and hand sanitizers.

He learned that in the hard reality of war, "beans and bullets" reach the soldiers, but supplies of personal products and comfort items often fall short.

"It's tough over there for them, so I just tried to help out as best as I can," he said. "They don't get everything they need."

Crystal Ola is a freelance writer.

First published on November 25, 2007 at 12:00 am

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