

LATEST NEWS for our **Soldiers Care.....**

Hello Supporters,

Here is the **ninth** update for the First Baptist Church's **Care Package** initiative for our US Soldiers in the Middle East.

Faithfully,

Joy Thomson, Coordinator

Current Point Leaders

- ★ **Capt Gregory Hayes** in Afghanistan
- ★ **Spc Luis Barrera** in Korea
- ★ **1SG James Primo** in Afghanistan
- ★ **PFC Miguel Ordonez** in Iraq
- ★ **SSG Jason Henley** in Afghanistan

Cumulative Stats

22 Point Leaders since 2005, some serving multiple times

\$12,000 raised from our Community since 2007

12,100 lbs of supply donations have been shipped since 2005

Current News:

Office memo: We are working on a Facebook page providing improved communications. We will keep you informed. We have also automated the processing of the Care Packages here in the office, producing labels and customs forms online and requesting USPO carrier pick-up right at our door. That is phenomenal for us but I know many of you will miss seeing Rev. Ludwig trundling down the street to the Hingham Square Post Office with his packages and a big smile.

We are including a rerun below of 1LT Richard A. Volp's email just in case you didn't see it the first time or details have slipped your mind. It explains his unit's adoption of the Ariana School in Afghanistan. The reason we are revisiting this is because we now have notes and photos of our efforts at the other end, in Afghanistan. It is an ongoing commentary so we can understand the magnitude of the children's world in the Ariana School.

★ **1LT Richard A. Volp** wrote: *"First of all, thank your community and the rest of the First Baptist Church for your thoughts and prayers. It helps knowing that there are people back home that think about us. I think when people experience hard times they often either turn toward God or away from him. Hopefully your support will make some of those soldiers strengthen their faith.*

"I am sorry it took a little while to get back to you. Mail takes about two weeks and then I had to get approval to release pictures to you.

"The school that we are working with is called the Ariana School. It consists of mostly girls, first grade through twelfth. There are a few boys until third grade and then it is only girls. The school has approximately two thousand students. Attached are some pictures from the school.

"When we first went to the school I was struck by a few things. First, it is very clean. It is hard to describe Kabul to someone who has never been here. It is very dirty with children digging through piles of garbage on the side of the street. Trash and debris is common everywhere. The best way to describe it is a scene from a "Save the Children" commercial. While walking around the school I noticed there was no trash or garbage anywhere. They care very much about their school and take the best care of it they can.

"Second, it is an old school in the middle of the city. I forget exactly how old but I think 80-100 years. When we first came their well did not work and several classes were being taught in tents. The first grade had no tent and when it rained the children got wet. My team was successful in nominating it to have their well fixed and additional classrooms built.

"What we were unable to do was help fund their school supply budget. This is a public school and most of the children who attend are very poor. Typically students are required to bring paper and supplies to the school. Because the students are so poor, many are unable to bring paper etc.

"In Afghan culture, girls are considered second class. This was one of the reasons why we decided to work on this school. They get much less funding than the boy's schools around them. Until recently girls were not allowed to attend school and the Taliban would throw acid on their faces to keep them from going. I firmly believe the schools are going to make the difference for the coming generation. It is through education and knowledge that we will be able to win.

"I spoke with the principal of the school. She advised the things they needed the most are paper, pencils, and other school supplies. She also said she wanted children's books in English. She wanted first through third grade level to help the students learn English. If you are able to send anything it would be appreciated. I would have to ask that you stay away from anything with religious themes, however. This is because 99% of the country is Muslim and they are extremely sensitive to what they perceive as us trying to convert them. Religious freedom is not something excepted over here right now. Please let me know you got this email. I am anxious to hear back from you and would like to answer any questions you may have or tell you more about the school. Thank you and God bless you and your church and community.

"Sincerely, Ric (Lieutenant Richard Volp)"

The response was heart-warming and we were able to ship over 30 boxes of school supplies to the children through Ric's outfit. Supplies for 16 of those boxes were donated by the Daisy Troop 74839. They maintained a collection drive, delivered their supplies, and then packed the shipping boxes



Daisy Troop 74839 bringing donations



A happy Daisy Troop after hard work



Showing Ariana School teacher the pics of the girls

themselves. They did a marvelous job and deserved the ice creams they all ate afterwards.

Along with the supplies in the boxes, we put pictures of the girls inside them which were given to the children in the Ariana School (see photo above right).

★ **1Sgt Chuck Barney** emailed after getting the news of our support: *That is great news about the school..... We have visited the school and it is getting a face lift. The construction crew is moving right along. I believe that Richard Volp will be sending some pictures along and I know the kids will really appreciate the help. Again, tell everyone how much we enjoy the support...*

His next email: *We will be delivering (our Care Packages) this week. I will take some more pictures. I also printed off the pictures you sent (of the Daisy Troop) and will be giving them to the principal.*

His next email: *There is a small story for you to share with the great folks. The link is:*
<http://www.ng.mil/news/archives/2010/11/111610-Kabul.aspx>

I really appreciate everybody's support for the school and us.... The kids were all very appreciative of the supplies.... I did give some pictures of the girls packing the boxes. The teachers thought that was cool. Again, tell everyone I said thank you.



Thanks to the many area supporters who donated school supplies and postage funds to get our donations to this school. Now that our soldiers are safely home, this project has successfully ended. We should feel warm inside that we could make such a difference.

NOTE: See photos at the end of this email.



More Big News: Did you see the Care Package Challenge in the Hingham Journal in December 2010?

An anonymous supporter of our Soldier Outreach Program offered to match all monetary donations to the program, up to \$1000, and received before December 31. The goal was met and exceeded hopes. **Gifts both large and small came in at \$4,125.00.** This is an answered prayer.



We would like to cite an article that was in the *Hingham Journal* recently, authored by Keith Jermyn re contributing to veterans charities:

"To the Editor:There are a number of private organizations raising money, which divert a substantial portion of your contribution to defray fund raising overhead expense. Thus, in many cases, much less than half of your contribution finds its way to the cause which you intend to support."

We want to assure everyone that FBC's Care Package Outreach is staffed by volunteers only, and 100% of your money goes to benefit our Soldiers.

Current Donation Requests:

Cough drops, gum, hand sanitizer, protein bars, air fresheners, cans of fruit (small), nuts. All donations will be sent as soon as possible.

For suggestions go to: http://www.firstbaptistchurchhingham.org/html/items_list.html.



NOTES:

The First Baptist Church will pack and ship items for you. Donations may be brought to the FBC Office in the building to the right of the church. There will be a donation box on the porch. FBC is in Hingham Square on the corner of Elm and Main Street, 2 doors up from Loring Theater.

Our "Point Leaders" are soldiers who receive our Care Packages and always have a connection with Hingham. They distribute donated items to their unit, focusing on the greatest need.

For those who prefer to send a financial contribution toward postage instead of shopping for items, it will be gratefully accepted. Please make a check out to First Baptist Church Benevolence Account and note "Care Packages Postage" on the memo line. Mail to 85 Main Street, Hingham, MA 02043.



Following photos of Ariana School in Iraq receiving our supplies







2010/09/19



2010/09/19

