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**Curves Supports Soldier Adoption Program**

By: [Melissa Sande](#)

08/16/2006

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**Julie Clifford, owner of Curves in Bethlehem, sorts through an overflowing box of food and toiletry items which have been donated by Curves members over the past couple of weeks to be sent overseas to their most recently adopted soldier. The Bethlehem Curves Adopt a Soldier project has adopted four female soldiers so far. (O'Brien photo)**

BETHLEHEM - When talking to a member one day in June, Julie Clifford, owner of the Bethlehem Curves, on Route 61, discovered something fun and rewarding to do for female soldiers in Iraq. She decided to adopt soldiers from the [www.ansoldier.com](#) website.

"It's fun to do; it makes us all feel good," Ms. Clifford said of the project.

Any Soldier, Inc., started as a family effort to help Army Sgt. Brian Horn, who was one of the 1,000 soldiers who parachuted into northern Iraq on March 26, 2003.

Knowing that Brian's unit was living under rough conditions, his parents sent Brian care packages as often as they could.

Brian's father, a 20-year Army veteran and the president of Any Soldier, Inc., started the website that year, asking his friends and neighbors to help by sending troops their support. From there, the idea caught on.

The site, where soldiers put up posts about themselves and what they need or would like to have, has been contacted by more than 2,450

people volunteering to help.

Ms. Clifford started by putting up posters in Curves, asking members to donate food and toiletry items to soldiers. Members said yes right away, she told Voices.

Originally focused on choosing soldiers from the area, Ms. Clifford decided to pick soldiers that never received packages, telling members, "Let's just help anyone that needs it."

After picking a soldier, Ms. Clifford requests their address and spends the next two weeks collecting donated items from her members.

Two boxes, one for food stuffs and another for toiletries, pens and other items are sent to each soldier they adopt.

"The more people we get to do this, the better," said Ms. Clifford, who has dedicated a wall at Curves to biographical information on each soldier and a list of their requested items for members to see.

The first two boxes were sent to Emilyanne on June 15.

Emilyanne, a mother of two and an Army medic working in the Troop Medical Center for 12-hour days, noted that she lives in a "can," the word used for her small room, and wrote that her biggest request was for "smelly stuff" - creams, perfumed lotion and anything that would make her feel like a woman again.

After receiving their care packages, the soldiers make a post to their adoptee within 60 days.

"There was a major response from members. They've been very generous," Ms. Clifford said.

One member donated many phone cards enabling Ms. Clifford to provide each soldier with at least a \$20 card.

SPC Diana noted how much she missed beef jerky, coffee creamer and Splenda. She also asked if shoes, clothing and candy could be sent for the Iraqi girls.

"That will be the next project - sending over clothes and shoes for the children there," Ms. Clifford noted.

A PFC named Kimberly, stationed with the Army until April 2007, requested normal items like socks, books, puzzles and deodorant, but put a large emphasis on receiving some chocolate cookies.

"The thing they all want is chocolate," said Ms. Clifford.

The Curves ladies have provided chocolate sauce, pudding, cookies and other items that hopefully will not melt in transport.

Rosa, a CPT working in the ICU of the 47th Combat Support Hospital, wanted body wash, trail mix, cereal and pens.

She is the latest adopted soldier and her two boxes lay overflowing in the middle of the exercise room days before Ms. Clifford shipped them out.

Iced tea mix, junk food, toothpaste, socks and other staples are always donated in addition to the specific requests of each soldier.

Those seeking additional information about the donations for soldiers may call Curves at 203-266-7877.



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