



Search: Site Web

powered by Google

- Home
- Electronic Times News
- In The News
- Multimedia
- Featured Publications
- Subscriber Services
- Resources
- Reader Info

Classifieds

Home > Featured Story

Del.icio.us | Digg | Print Article | E-Mail Article | Change Font Size

Special delivery

By Roselee Papandrea / Times-News

November 25, 2007 9:27 PM

GRAHAM — A homeschool assignment put 13-year-old Jennifer Garner on a path to learn all she could about the war in Iraq.

She could have settled for Internet research, but the ninth grader decided she wanted to know more.

"I wanted a firsthand opinion," she said. "I started writing letters and sending packages to soldiers, and it just became a habit and now I do it all the time."

Since March, Jennifer thinks she has mailed five to 10 letters and packages a week. She uses her allowance and money she earns baby-sitting to keep the project going.

The teen's dedication to communicating with the soldiers in both Iraq and Afghanistan caught the attention of Heather Garner, who is both Jennifer's mother and teacher. Heather recently nominated Jennifer for the Spirit of Freedom Award.

Jennifer, who is one of three people to receive the award given by the Times-News, was selected in the Future of America category, which recognizes a successful young person who is already leaving a mark on the community.

"You don't find that many 13-year-olds that are that dedicated to helping other people," Heather said, regarding what prompted the nomination.

Jennifer didn't know her mother nominated her for the award.

"It was kind of a surprise," Jennifer said. "I'm honored and I'm touched."



Peter Schumacher / Times-News Jennifer Garner, 13, was selected as the 2007 Spirit of Freedom Award winner in the Future of America category. Since March, Jennifer thinks she has mailed five to 10 letters and packages a week to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Yellow Pages

Search: Enter name or type of business

Location: Enter city & state, or zip code

AP Video



The bigger honor is knowing that her decision to write letters and send packages has meant something to the soldiers who have received them.

"They tell me when I send a package it's like getting a Christmas present on Christmas morning, and they are excited to find out what they got," she said.

She makes sure each box she sends is packed tight, whether it is with personal hygiene items or snacks. From the beginning, Jennifer decided to go with what she knows.

"You just send them anything you would like," she said, adding that the most requested snack item is Pop Tarts.

AnySoldier.com has the names and addresses of more than 3,000 soldiers on it, along with short stories about who the soldiers are and what they do. Jennifer selects service members who have a background that's similar to hers.

"You pick the ones you feel you are close to," Jennifer said.

For example, Jennifer is part of a big family.

"I can relate to someone who has a lot of kids," she said. "I have seven brothers and sisters."

The recipients send letters, e-mails and pictures back to Jennifer, as well as a lot of thanks. She said she likes knowing she's made a difference.

"When people are in need, you help them," she said. "If they are tired, you let them rest. It gives you such a good feeling to know you've made somebody's day."

In addition to sending letters and packages, Jennifer stays busy with other community projects. In June, she won Teen Miss Global America 2007 in Myrtle Beach, S.C. While the youngster has participated and won pageants since she was a tot, this is the first national title she's held.

Like most pageant titles require, Jennifer must use her position to raise awareness about a charity. Considering her experience this year, AnySoldier.com seemed like a worthy cause.

"I use the title to promote AnySoldier.com, which is my charity of choice, and to support our troops," Jennifer said.

It's also enabled her to collect donations so she can send more packages out.

Her work with service members also earned her the Rising Star Award at the Microsoft USO Above and Beyond Gala, which she attended in New York this month. Microsoft doesn't usually give a Rising Star Award, but Jennifer received nominations in three separate categories — two from soldiers serving in Iraq — and was given the special distinction.

Giving to others seems to come natural to Jennifer, who follows the example her parents, Heather and Mark Garner, set. Both have worked to keep their children, who range in age from 16 to 4 months, involved in helping the community.

And while there is a lot of chaos and plenty of sharing that goes on when you belong to a big family, the Garners make sure they don't forget about others.

Jennifer doesn't know exactly what the future holds. While she's fairly sure she wants to be a fashion designer, model and actress, she's not certain what college she might want to attend.

Working with AnySoldier.com has taught her a lot, and she knows she's not ready to quit dedicating her allowance to that cause.

"I'm just going to keep doing it," she said.

Tag Cloud

What is this?

jennifer letters
soldiers featured times
award packages story blog iraq
send special stories garner heather
sports lot burlington people alamance
future family wanted delivery won
america reader editor teen site printable
week brent mascot thinks microsoft
category knowing spirit charged christmas
big service three missing received charity
fil accent mailed

Most Popular Stories

- Special delivery
- Love of music leads to choral Teacher of the Year
- Billy Victor Ray Sr.
- Stories from a sanctuary
- Two teens charged with assaulting Chick-fil-A mascot
- DWI
- Ms. Dorothy Long
- Mrs. Betty Walker
- Recovering lives
- Mr. Jeffrey C. Leach

Highest Rated Stories

- Burlington Times News Article : Featured Story: Fleischmann family, friends still have hope of finding missing Elon grad | fleischmann, search, charlotte
- U.S. Supreme Court won't take Alamance County teen sex case
- Burlington Times News Article : Featured Story: Recovering lives | mccauley, says, people
- Burlington Times News Article : Region: Two teens charged with assaulting Chick-fil-A mascot | teens, fil, charged
- Stories from a sanctuary

'Featured Story' Archives

Ads by Google

[Advertise on this site](#)

Jennifer Garner

Watch Leaked Celebrity Video They Don't Want You To See, Free!

ItsGottaBe.com/JenniferGarner

Esquire: Jennifer Garner

See Why She's One of the Women We Love. View Her Photos in Esquire.

www.Esquire.com

Support Our Troops

Foster a soldier - Boost morale Troops need baby wipes, lemonade...

www.TreatsForTroops.com

Pin-ups for the Troops

You can send and receive a book of pin-ups based on Gil Elvgren's work

www.forthetroopsonline.com

Click to vote

Recommend this story? **Yes** **No**

The online vote:

Add your comments

Please follow and enforce these guidelines:

1. No flaming. Do not be hostile.
2. No comments that are obscene, vulgar, lewd, sexually-oriented, threatening, libelous, or illegal.
3. No racial slurs or insults.
4. "Remove Comment" flags offensive comment for removal.

Verification Code: f1c12

Enter Verification:

Your Name:

Your Comment:

*By submitting this form, you agree to this site's **terms of service***

Search Our Site For More Related Stories

Ads by Google

Advertise on this site

<u>Jennifer Garner</u>	<u>Esquire: Support Our Jennifer Troops</u>	<u>Jennifer Garner</u>
--	---	--

Watch Leaked Celebrity Video They Don't Want You To See, Free!	<u>Garner</u> See Why She's One of the Women We Love. Read the Full Article Here. <u>www.Esquire.com</u>	Foster a soldier - Boost morale Troops need baby wipes, lemonade... <u>www.TreatsForTroops.com</u>	omg! on Yahoo! Exclusive Celebrity Gossip, Scandals, News, Pics & More <u>www.omg.yahoo.com</u>
--	--	--	---

Search: Site Web

powered by 

<u>ItsGottaBe.com/JenniferGarner</u>	<u>Love. Read the Full Article Here. www.Esquire.com</u>	<u>TreatsForTroops.com</u>	<u>News, Pics & More www.omg.yahoo.com</u>
--	--	--	--

Business Profiles



© 2007 Freedom Communications, Inc.

Site Map |  RSS Feeds | Privacy Policy | User Agreement | Advertise With Us