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Schools

Pupils show concern for U.S. troops BY TOYNETT HALL Staff Writer

HOWELL - Members of the Howell Middle School North Student Council paid tribute to U.S. military forces on March 27 when they delivered 55 boxes of goods to the New Jersey National Guard Armory in Toms River.

Students filled the boxes with toiletries and snacks, and wrote thank you letters to U.S. personnel who are serving overseas.

The effort was the idea of Vice Principal Robert Henig, who has three children currently serving in the armed forces and said there was a need for this program.

Henig used the Internet Web site www.AnySoldier.com as a guide to help spearhead this program.

Henig said this program was a vehicle used to promote community service.

"This is not about whether they're for the war or against the war. There is a need to help other people who are doing a positive job for us," he said.

According to Kerry Lorenc, Spanish teacher and Student Council co-adviser, the council comprises about 50 students from the sixth, seventh and eighth grades spent almost a month collecting the items that will eventually end up in the hands of U.S. servicemen and servicewomen.

Lorenc said programs such as this promote the mission of the Student Council, which is to "serve the school, community, and to teach responsibility."

Besides learning the importance of civic responsibility, French teacher and Student Council co-adviser Elizabeth Johnson said the students had an additional special incentive.

"Our two vice principals, Dr. Henig and Mr. Leonard Cuppari, who are both bald, agreed to wear wigs on March 30 as an incentive to motivate the students to bring in items," Johnson said.

Vincent Oliver, 13, said it felt good to give something back to America's service personnel.

"It's good to send the things we take for granted over to the people who don't have it," Vincent said.

Eighth-grader Shannon Tull shared the same sentiment and said, "Simple things that we overlook like toothpaste and toothbrushes will make the day of the soldiers who receive these items."

Howell Middle School North Principal Joseph Isola said the program is one of many the Student Council sponsors. He said, "The council has played a major role in keeping this place alive."

"Whenever we can encourage kids to do good things it's a positive. It gets them outside of the routine and out of the classroom. It teaches them to have a broader base about what they think about community and themselves," Isola said.

Isola said because the students fully understood the importance and concept of giving something back to those who are serving the country, the collection of personal items was successful.

"We want them to be excellent students, but more importantly we want them to be excellent citizens," he said.

Next on the Student Council's agenda is a car wash scheduled for April 12. Members of council will visit the Howell senior center and wash the cars of seniors who drive to the center and the buses that bring seniors to the building.

April 11, 2007

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