

The ROCKWOOD Miller

Thanks from Afghanistan

Students at Rockwood Centennial School did not expect a formal thank you for the 40-plus care packages they sent to soldiers in Afghanistan before Christmas, but they were sure impressed to receive a plaque and heartfelt letter from the commander at Kandahar Airfield, thanking them for their kindness.

The packages were sent to reservist Rick Moyer, a high school teacher in Orangeville who is on leave, serving in Afghanistan. His wife, Andrea Moyer, works at Centennial and helped orchestrate sending the care packages to the NATO members. Moyer's tour of duty began in October and he will return home mid-May.

Teacher Susan Curvan said the plan developed after Mrs. Moyer mentioned that the soldiers could not get some of the things they need – treats, toiletries, magazines – be-

cause they sell out quickly at the base store.

"Talking to Mrs. Moyer about what the soldiers miss from home, we decided to do a food drive, and thought it would be a quick and impromptu so they would get there before Christmas," Curvan said on Thursday, adding the plan grew to include the entire school community.

Students collected food, items like shampoo and soap and Tim Horton's gift cards and sent them to Moyer, who distributed some to Canadian soldiers and some to American forces who shared their care packages with the Canadians when theirs were not delivered because of a diplomatic flap. Thanks to Canada Post, they did not have to pay postage for the boxes and were able to put all of the money donated into buying items for the care packages.

"When all these pack-

ages began to arrive at the little post office at Kandahar Airfield, they told Rick (Moyer) to bring a truck and a work crew because there were so many. He said he felt a little like Santa Claus," Mrs. Moyer said.

Curvan said it was a wonderful learning experience for the special education students, including Riley Patterson. "I wanted to help the soldiers. I feel pretty good that we helped," he said.

Student Emi MacMillan said she helped collect items because she wanted to help people. "Helping the army men was important to me, and when they received something it felt really good that they got it."

In the letter, Unit Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel M.J. Stalker said receiving the packages boosted moral, and reminded the soldiers of the support they receive from citizens, like those in Rockwood, that makes their jobs easier.

Curvan said the exercise gave the students a deeper understanding of what it means to think of others. "They also got a better understanding of what some of Canadian soldiers, men and women, are doing overseas and it's not what it looks like when they are playing their video games and what they see on TV," Curvan said, adding the students were really excited to receive the thank you letter and plaque to let them know that they made a difference in someone's life.



FIREFIIGHTERS FEED: Guelph/Eramosa part-time firefighters demonstrated their skills and fed their supporters at the first annual spaghetti dinner/open house for Township politicians and staff, and the media, on Monday night at the Rockwood station. The kitchen crew included, from left: Firefighters Jeff Simms, Alex McCullogh, Ryan McTaggart, Adam Osborne and Kole Simm, 14.

— Frances Niblock photo

Firefighters feast

Part-time fighters in Guelph/Eramosa Township demonstrated their life saving and their culinary skills on Monday night as they hosted the first annual spaghetti supper at the Rockwood station.

Invited guests, including top Township staff and councillors, tried their hand at using fire extinguishers, checked out bunker gear and other life saving equipment before being treated to supper, cooked and served by members of the Guelph/Eramosa Firefighters Association.

Chief John Osborne said the dinner was an oppor-

tunity, in a relaxed setting, to meet the people who would be at the table in the event of an emergency or major event.

"We can now put a face to the people we've talked to, and it's an opportunity to show the new councillors what we are spending their money on," Chief Osborne said.

He thanked the politicians and staff for their support and for the camaraderie among local emergency service providers and Township Council, which he called "one big family."

"It really should be us

thanking you for the good work you do and the service you provide and the (public) education," said Mayor Chris White.

Several paramedics who share the Main Street fire station were among the guests, and the OPP was invited, but sent regrets.

The Guelph/Eramosa Fire Department, which has 30 part-time, pager-carrying firefighters, answered 256 calls last year, down slightly from 2009. Almost half were medical calls and there were 39 false alarms and one house fire fatality in Eden Mills.



THANKS, FROM AFGHANISTAN: Rockwood Centennial School students who helped collect items to send in care packages to NATO forces in Afghanistan received a plaque and letter of thanks from a base commander. The students included, from left: Riley Patterson, Luke Shaw, Olivia MacGinnis, Paige Lizzotte, Nathan Arsenault, Emi MacMillan and Jamie Graham.

— Frances Niblock photo

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