

Thanks again North High Shoals and Oconee County!

In a follow-up to a very successful “Support our Soldiers” Christmas project, the Town of North High Shoals stepped up once again to show support for local servicemen. The soldiers we sent boxes of items to last December are serving stateside now but they encouraged us to help other soldiers who are currently overseas. Our local soldier this time is Marcus Barton who is now serving in Afghanistan. He is the grandson of longtime Oconee County and North High Shoals resident Ms. Myrtice Kilpatrick.

As in December, we were blown away with the contributions that many local residents and others provided. The two local Oconee newspapers and even the Athens paper helped to get the word out. A variety of items were donated including books, magazines, puzzles, spiritual materials, CD’s, DVDs, candy, food items, socks, snacks, toiletries and much more. Some folks sent cash which was used to buy other items including some specific things we heard that Marcus enjoys like Raman noodles, Pringles, and a few jars of mixed PB & GJ (that’s peanut butter and grape jelly)! Marcus might just have a few items to share with his fellow soldiers because once it was all packed up, 7 boxes were shipped off to him! But that wasn’t the end of the story.

We had such a great response, including once again, many items donated by Harriette Browning’s (Oconee County Tax Commissioner) office, that we filled 4 more boxes! We debated just a little bit about where to send those but settled on a good idea. LT. Brett Thomas (one of the soldiers we sent items to at Christmas) along with his unit of Georgia National Guard members, returned home a couple of months ago. LT. Thomas gave us the commander’s name for the unit that replaced his. He felt sure they would appreciate some “hometown” support as much as his group did. So, LT. Laura Cook and her unit of Vermont National Guard members now serving at Camp Phoenix in Afghanistan will soon receive those boxes of goodies from Brett’s hometown. We hope they’ll see it as a little southern hospitality.

Heartfelt thanks to all who donated! The blessings will go further than any will ever know. The soldiers will certainly appreciate the items but just realizing that folks back home are thinking and caring about them will likely mean so much more. Special thanks to Mayor Kraeling and Town Clerk Carolyn Pritchett for all their help packing boxes and filling out the dreaded custom’s forms! And thanks also to Ms. Bonnie at the High Shoals Post Office for all her understanding, assistance and encouragement.

And if you missed out on this opportunity to be a blessing, don’t despair as we plan to do it again in November just in time to honor Veteran’s Day and Thanksgiving.

Steve Arnold – North High Shoals Council