

Latest news for our **Soldiers Care**

Hello Supporters,

Here is the **seventh** update for the First Baptist Church's **Care Package** initiative for our US Soldiers in the Middle East. Faithfully,

Joy Thomson, Coordinator

Current Point Leaders

- ★ **Spc Luis Barrera** in Korea
- ★ **PFC Gregory Miller** in Iraq
- ★ **1SG James Primo** in Afghanistan
- ★ **1058th Transportation Company of the Massachusetts National Guard** in Kuwait
- ★ **1Sgt Chuck Barney** in Iraq
- ★ **SPC John Hagerty** in Iraq
- ★ **PFC Miguel Ordonez** in Iraq
- ★ **Capt Gregory Hayes** in Afghanistan 

Current News:

★ **1Sgt Chuck Barney** emailed on July 2: *"First I would like to thank all the supporters in your community. It makes our jobs easier knowing that citizens are still outstandingly supportive of us. The packages we received were great and put to great use.*

"I especially enjoyed the article of Charlie (Goebel) asking for things to help support us for his 6th birthday. I am in the process of getting him some gifts as a way to show our thanks."

★ **1LT Richard A. Volp** is in the same unit as 1Sgt Chuck Barney (above). Ric is particularly involved with a local school that his unit has adopted. You first heard about this in the last Update. Ric has provided more information and photos so we can understand the magnitude of the children's world in "Ariana School." As you may appreciate, donations of pencils and papers are being accepted as well as general supplies for the Soldiers. Any school supply boxes will be marked and sent directly to 1Sgt Barney for distribution.

He wrote: *"First of all, thank your community and the rest of the First Baptist Church for your thoughts and prayers. It helps knowing that there are people back home that think about us. I think when people experience hard times they often either turn toward God or away from him. Hopefully your support will make some of those soldiers strengthen their faith.*

"I am sorry it took a little while to get back to you. Mail takes about two weeks and then I had to get approval to release pictures to you.

"The school that we are working with is called the Ariana School. It consists of mostly girls, first grade through twelfth. There are a few boys until third grade and then it is only girls. The school has approximately two thousand students. Attached are some pictures from the school.

"When we first went to the school I was struck by a few things. First, it is very clean. It is hard to describe Kabul to someone who has never been here. It is very dirty with children digging through piles of garbage on the side of the street. Trash and debris is common everywhere. The best way to describe it is a scene from a "Save the Children" commercial. While walking around the school I noticed there was no trash or garbage anywhere. They care very much about their school and take the best care of it they can.

"Second, it is an old school in the middle of the city. I forget exactly how old but I think 80-100 years. When we first came their well did not work and several classes were being taught in tents. The first grade had no tent and when it rained the children got wet. My team was successful in nominating it to have their well fixed and additional classrooms built.

"What we were unable to do was help fund their school supply budget. This is a public school and most of the children who attend are very poor. Typically students are required to bring paper and supplies to the school. Because the students are so poor, many are unable to bring paper etc.

"In Afghan culture, girls are considered second class. This was one of the reasons why we decided to work on this school. They get much less funding than the boy's schools around them. Until recently girls were not allowed to attend school and the Taliban would throw acid on their faces to keep them from going. I firmly believe the schools are going to make the difference for the coming generation. It is through education and knowledge that we will be able to win.

"I spoke with the principal of the school. She advised the things they needed the most are paper, pencils, and other school supplies. She also said she wanted children's books in English. She wanted first through third grade level to help the students learn English. If you are able to send anything it would be appreciated. I would have to ask that you stay away from anything with religious themes, however. This is because 99% of the country is Muslim and they are extremely sensitive to what they perceive as us trying to convert them. Religious freedom is not something excepted over here right now. Please let me know you got this email. I am anxious to hear back from you and would like to answer any questions you may have or tell you more about the school. Thank you and God bless you and your church and community.

"Sincerely, Ric (Lieutenant Richard Volp)"

NOTE: See evocative photos at the end of this email.

IDEA: When you are buying school supplies for your own children, buy an extra set of pencils or ream of school paper for the Ariana School.

★ **PFC Gregory Miller** writes: *"Thank you again for all the packages you've sent. People in my platoon absolutely love everything we've received, and it all goes quickly. We got a lot of packages from a lot of different places around the holidays, which was generous of people, but we appreciate that your church and the community continue to send things to us regularly. It's very nice, as well as helpful since we only have access to a store about once a month."*

★ **The Hingham Lions Club** made a significant contribution to Care Packages, **once again**. On June 26-27, they held a troop supply drive at the Stop & Shop near the shipyard. The public shoppers were very gracious with the amount of supplies that were bought at that store and donated to the Lions/Leos booth. The Hingham Lions are a dedicated group of men and women volunteering time and effort for community service. Many thanks to Janice Bosworth Dunphy who was the project coordinator.

Current Donation Requests:

We currently have a record number of Soldiers. Hygiene consumables are at the top of the list. All donations will be sent immediately.

For suggestions go to: http://www.firstbaptistchurchhingham.org/html/items_list.html.



NOTES:

The First Baptist Church will pack and ship items for you. Donations may be brought to the FBC Office in the building to the right of the church. There will be a donation box on the porch. The FBC is in Hingham Square on the corner of Elm and Main Street, 2 doors up from Loring Theater.

Our "Point Leaders" are soldiers who receive our Care Packages and always have a connection with Hingham. They distribute donated items to their unit, focusing on the greatest need.

For those who prefer to send a financial contribution toward postage instead of shopping for items, it will be gratefully accepted. Please make a check out to First Baptist Church Benevolence Account and note "Care Packages Postage" on the memo line. Mail to 85 Main Street, Hingham, MA 02043.

Following Photos of *Ariana School in Iraq*







