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### Helping troops, honoring vets

By: Melissa Hayes, Staff Writer

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### Students collecting items for soldiers.

South Brunswick High School Corrine Gaylord knew she wanted to do something to honor Veterans Day at South Brunswick High School and when she came across Any Soldier Inc., she knew she had found a project to take on.

"I teach a course called the Vietnam Era, it's a new course this year and I have two sections of it and we spend a lot of time talking about how the time period affected people and we talked about veterans," she said. "We were trying to think of a special way to honor veterans and the idea just popped up."

Ms. Gaylord said she came across <http://anysoldier.us>, which was started by the family of Army Sgt. Brian Horn to send necessities to the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. The site provides a list of needed items as well as specific contact to send them to.

Ms. Gaylord said packages must be sent to specific people, and those listed on the Web site have agreed to distribute them to their fellow soldiers.

Her two classes began bringing supplies in on Nov. 9 and were able to collect 75 shoe boxes worth of items by Nov. 15, the last day the site recommends shipping them in time for the holidays.

"It was just phenomenal," she said.

"I think they got so much out of the experience they feel that they're contributing and it really was personal for them," Ms. Gaylord said. "You put something out there sometimes and don't know how they're going to react and they rose to the occasion."

She said the students were extremely enthusiastic and each wrote several letters to be included in the boxes.

"It was a really cool experience," Caitlin Zadek, a senior, said. "I think it's appropriate for Veterans Day. We can't do much for the veterans but there are people there we could help."

Caitlin said it was surprising to find out that the troops needed things like flip-flops so they could take showers.

"I think it was a good experience because if I was a soldier over in Iraq I would want to know that there's appreciation from back home," Adam Feinstein, a senior, said.

Senior Tim Arora is going into the military after high school so he especially appreciated the classes efforts.

"I'm going to college then I'm going on active duty for three years," he said.

Tim said that if he participated in something like this again he would send more batteries and masking tape, things he felt were essential.

Tom Zientek, a senior, said "it felt good" to participate in something like this.

"I brought lots of food, comfort food, breakfast bars and good stuff," he said.

Tom said he also brought in instant breakfast. Breakfast foods are some of the most needed items, according to Any Soldier Inc.

Senior Ronnie Ulshafer said he brought in beanie babies.

"They want them to give them to children," Ronnie said.

Patrick Sciallis, a senior, said it was an interesting project to participate in.

"It would have been better if I knew someone in the military," Patrick said.

Ms. Gaylord said she told students that if they knew anyone in the military, they

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should bring in addresses so some of the packages could be sent to them.

The two classes were able to box everything and wrap it in only two class periods, which is about three hours.

Senior Ann Alexandrowicz said everything was set up like an assembly line.

"We had it set up so you could grab shampoo and a magazine and food," she said.

After Ms. Gaylord's first class packaged everything in boxes, her second class was able to wrap everything and label it.

"The packaging was pretty hard," Colin Stephenson, a senior said, explaining that the class used brown paper bags to wrap the boxes.

Ms. Gaylord said they sent the packages to groups in each branch of the service and tried to pick divisions with both men and women in them.

She said she included a cover letter with the packages explaining that it was two classes that decided to send all the boxes.

"Hopefully we'll hear back," she said. "Hopefully it will brighten their day."

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