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PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

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Soldiers await care packages from home

By Genea Webb
FOR THE TRIBUNE-REVIEW
Thursday, February 28, 2008

Blue bins soon will be placed around Whitehall, giving residents the chance to donate to American troops serving overseas.

The bins, which will be available until Memorial Day, are part of borough Councilwoman Linda Book's Diamond Outreach's Any Soldier Campaign.

"Our goal for the campaign is to inform the public of the needs of our soldiers who would greatly appreciate receiving needed items from home," Book said. "I don't think most citizens are aware of how they can communicate with our soldiers on a one-to-one basis.

"As a veteran myself, I know what it is like to receive mail when you are stationed out of country and away from family. It brings you closer to home and a great feeling knowing you are not forgotten."

story continues below

Learn more

For more information on the Any Soldier campaign, contact Book at 412-885-5831 or visit anysoldier.com

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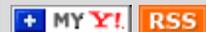
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This is Book's second try at finding ways to help the troops.

"I tried two years ago to collect and ship items on behalf of our soldiers," Book said. "The roadblock I encountered was that the military requires specific names to where we are shipping the boxes. I approached the recruiting offices for names but due to privacy issues they could not release the names to me."

Resident Marilyn Pfaff wanted to lend her help to Book's cause, and referred the councilwoman to the anysoldier.com Web site.

The initiative was started in 2003 by Army Sgt. Brian Horn of LaPlata, Md., an infantryman who came up with the idea to distribute items to soldiers who didn't receive any mail. A year after its start, anysoldier.com expanded to include any member of the Armed Forces. It claims to have helped more than a million troops.

"The anysoldier.com Web site has made it easy to help our soldiers," Book said.

Requested items for the soldiers include microwave popcorn, gum, powdered drink mixes, canned fruit, books, computer games, golf balls, Frisbees, disposable cameras, shampoo, body wash, toothbrushes, retractable ballpoint pens, pencil

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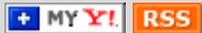
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sharpeners, notebooks, loose-leaf paper and letters of support.

Bin locations include the Whitehall Public Library and the Whitehall Borough Building.

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