

Schools Send Out Valentines For Troops

By Eliza Hallabeck



From left, front row, Respect, Responsibility, and Diversity (RRD) Club members Annie Davidow, Zoe Yllanes, Taylor McPadden, and Lindsay Dievert stand with, back row, Middle Gate Lead Teacher Susan Ruddock, RRD Club Advisor Brian Kowalsky, Hawleyville Postmaster Mark Favele, and Middle Gate Elementary School Principal Chris Geissler on Friday, February 3, with boxes the school prepared for this year's Valentines For Troops effort.

Students were busy in the past week, working under the guidance of volunteers and Hawleyville Postmaster Mark Favele at several schools in the district to send letters and collected goods to military personnel through the Newtown-based Valentines For Troops effort.

Valentines For Troops Chairperson Donna Monteleone Randle, a former US Army captain, Signal Corps, visited multiple locations as the individual efforts within the project were under way.

On Friday, February 3, Ms Randle was at Sandy Hook Elementary School as students stamped multiple boxes of written letters and goods to be loaded into a postal truck by Mr Favale before being sent to their designated locations.

"Beautiful job," said Barbara Sibley, PTA coordinator for the Valentines For Troops effort at Sandy Hook Elementary School to the gathered second grade students working to stamp the boxes for shipping. "Excellent."

Earlier in the morning, Mr Favale also stopped by Middle Gate Elementary School, where students in the Respect, Responsibility, and Diversity (RRD) Club were ready to also work on preparing their school's Valentines For Troops collections to be sent.

RRD Advisor Brian Kowalsky said the boxes prepared at Middle Gate will be sent to the USS Theodore Roosevelt Air Craft Carrier and to the USS Carl Vinson.

Many student groups across the district took part in the Valentines For Troops effort this year, according to Ms Randle. Hawley Elementary School is scheduled to send out its collection for the effort later this week.

Each year, volunteers with the Valentines For Troops effort work to find and list addresses of deployed personnel to send letters and care packages to, and later work to help proofread and pack the letters written by students and care packages for shipment overseas, to places like Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, Japan, and to ships at sea.

Anyone interested in volunteering with the effort or signing up to write a Valentine's Day card or creating a personalized package can contact Ms Randle by e-mail at ndrandle@charter.net or by calling 203-364-9772. The Valentines For Troops effort also has a Facebook page, Valentines for Troops Newtown CT.

Ms Randle also said community service hours can also be given to young people who volunteer with the effort.