



(Shopping News Photo by Donald Reese)

Many soldiers serving our country in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq will have something to smile about this Christmas as a result of the generosity of Blue Ridge Communications and Pencor offices who embraced the Keystone Military Families' Stockings for Soldiers project. Keystone Military Families, a non-profit organization, founded by Kyle Lord (a military mother of a soldier who served 5 tours of duty) began the project in 2002. This year the goal is to send 10,000 stuffed stockings from our communities to the dedicated troops who will not be able to enjoy the comforts of home during this holiday season.

“We appreciate your support for our troops and for Keystone Military Families,” stated Kyle

Lord. "I would like to thank the Pencor family for their amazing efforts. Every year you show your commitment to those serving this great country and this community continues to support our efforts to show as many military members as possible that they are not forgotten. This project would not have happened without you. The employees and donors at Blue Ridge Communications are very special volunteers every holiday season. Their enthusiasm and dedication to our project was unparalleled. This is a true display of the wonderful things that can happen when a community comes together to show their support for our friends and neighbors away from home. These gifts will surely convey the spirit of Christmas and the warmest wishes of the holiday season to every military member who receives them. Thanks so very much for the incredible support again this year. It is wonderful and many more troops will be smiling come Christmas morning." Lord also went on to state, "I hope that this collection will remind people of those who serve our country throughout the year. It is amazing that in this day and age, there are so many troops who do not receive any personal mail! This initiative seeks to solve that problem and we will never turn away a soldier, sailor, marine or airman (service member) who needs our help!"

Cindy Mellinger, Marketing/Community Relations Coordinator for Blue Ridge Communications, stated, "This year our collection weighed in at over three (3) tons in donations including food, hygiene and other requested items, over 15,000 signed cards and \$25,000 raised for shipping. Thank you to everyone who embraced this project. I can't thank everyone enough. A special acknowledgement goes to the many churches, civic organizations, schools (Cocalico and Ephrata School Districts), Hershey Elementary School fourth grade and PTO, Paradise Elementary, Build A Better Future (Ephrata High School program), individuals (including: Dee and Claude Lynch, Dennis and Louise Headington, Andrew Murphy, and Sandra Akers), and many businesses in Ephrata who opened their doors to us, offering us a wonderful location to have a community card signing party for our soldiers), the Red Rose Veterans Honor Guard, Cub Scouts Pack 132 Denver (Tanya and Lesley Bashore), Kathy McCullough - Lititz VFW Post Auxiliary to Post 1463 and Trail Life Troop 316, Cindy Gensemer-representing Ephrata AMVETS Auxiliary to Post 136 and Ephrata Ladies of the Elks Post 1933, Keystone Apple, Inc. (R.D. Frye), Applebee's of Ephrata (Joel Fenstermacher, GM), Members 1st Federal Credit Union (Ephrata-Erin Treese and Mechanicsburg), Thomas Davis, Members 1st Federal Credit Union Outreach Coordinator, and Danielle Shumate (coordinator for the charitable efforts by the Reinholds VFW Post 6759 Ladies Auxiliary, staff and volunteers) who took a personal interest in making the holidays brighter for this dedicated group of men and women. In addition, DEI, Inc. and the Winters Memorial committee generously supported and donated to the program, allowing us the opportunity to ship more stockings this year! I apologize if I have not been able to acknowledge everyone individually, but you mean the world to me and to this project." Mellinger continued, "I have been privileged to be the project coordinator for this endeavor for the past eight years and each year I continue to be amazed by the overwhelming compassion shown by the Blue Ridge Communications' viewing area. Due to your generous support, our

service men and women will receive a loving reminder from home over the Christmas season. These gifts will serve as powerful messages of joy and hope to our men and women serving around the world, as they are so appreciative of the outpouring of kindness. Thank you!"

Following the collection, Lord concluded by saying, "I am truly honored to be able to work with such loving, giving people. Every year the support and enthusiasm grows bigger than the year before and more of our troops know that they are loved and supported back home. Thank you so very much for your continued support for our military & their families."

Shown in photo: Dennis Headington, Ephrata FUM Church; Andy Murphy, Navy Club USA, Lancaster Ship No 166; Judy Dengler, Volunteer (Adamstown Elementary); Sherri Stull, Business Manager Cocalico School District; Angela Marley, Denver Elementary Principal; Louise Headington, Stocking Coordinator Ephrata First United Methodist Church; Sallyanne Frank, President Sinking Spring VFW Post 6150 and members of Sinking Spring VFW Post 6150: Muriel Brookins, Deborah Scieurca, and Linda Wolf; Tony Cerase, Red Rose Veterans Honor Guard; Cindy Mellinger, Blue Ridge Communications Marketing/Community Relations and Central PA Stockings for Soldiers Area Coordinator; Erin Treese, Members 1st Federal Credit Union Branch Manager II; Kyle Lord, Founder Keystone Military Families; Linda Martin, Ephrata Borough Council Member and representative for State Rep. Mindy Fee (37th District); Tanya Bashore and Lesley Bashore, Cub Scout Pack 132 Denver; Kathy McCullough, Lititz VFW Auxiliary to Post 1463 Sr. VP; Kathy Wiker, Lititz VFW Auxiliary to Post 1463 Treasurer; Kathy Yocum, Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 Job Trainer; Patrice Laboranti, Build A Better Future Teacher and Staff; Project Build A Better Future Program students: Zach Bartens, Logan Hochreiter, Noah Mowery, David Schwartz, Chrissy Sensenig, Scott Thomas, Miranda Watts, and Josh Zimmerman; Casey Martin, representative for State Rep. David Zimmerman (99th District); and Karen Hummel (representing EARS).

