

13-Year-Olds Support Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon's Operation NJ Home Front

When Megan K., and Megan R. decided to spend a portion of their summer organizing a community service project, there was no doubt that they would do it together. For the two thirteen year olds, who have been friends since kindergarten, that was never in question. The more difficult decision was *which* cause to support. "There are so many good causes out there it was overwhelming," said Megan R. But when they came across the Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon website, their decision was made. "Our soldiers are working so hard to keep our country safe, we felt like it was our turn to give them something back and here was our chance," said Megan K.

The two eighth graders recruited a third friend, Nicole, also 13, and the three teens got busy. Using the list of suggested items that they found on the website, they designed a flyer requesting that donations be left on doorsteps on a specific date. They visited a local supermarket and asked the manager to donate 200 grocery bags. "We had to make an appointment to meet with him and we were really nervous," says Megan R. "But he was so friendly and was glad to donate the bags," added Megan K. The three girls distributed the flyers and bags to homes in their town and returned a week later to collect the donations.

They turned Megan K.'s garage into a makeshift warehouse where they sorted the donations and packed them up. "We got so much great stuff, people were really generous," said Nicole, "We made sure to deliver thank-you letters to everyone who donated."



The girls capped off their project by delivering the items they had collected to the Englewood Cliffs campus of Unilever, where they were given an enthusiastic welcome by Mercy R., one of Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon's supporters. "She was so nice and happy about what we had done," said Megan K., "It made us feel really good." Adds Megan R., "She gave us a tour and we got to visit the company store. She really took time out of her day for us." (See Photo of Mercy, Megan K. and Megan R. Above)

The girls feel great about how their project turned out, but are not inclined to accept gratitude for their efforts. "When you think about what they (the soldiers) are doing for us, this is nothing," says Megan K. "We're just glad we could do even a little bit," adds Megan R.