

Big Flats girl collects more than 26,000 holiday cards

Jeff Murray , jmurray@stargazette.com | [@SGJeffMurray](https://twitter.com/SGJeffMurray) Published 2:11 p.m. ET Dec. 9, 2015 | Updated 4:21 p.m. ET Dec. 9, 2015



(Photo: PROVIDED PHOTO)

Big Flats youth Sophie Kartzman set a goal of collecting 15,000 holiday greeting cards for members of the military this year, and with a lot of community support, she blew right past that mark.

She is at 26,000 and counting.

Sophie, 12, the daughter of David and Denise Kartzman, of Big Flats, got her start two years ago when she and a friend made 50 cards each for the American Red Cross Holiday Mail for Heroes program.

She pushed down on the accelerator last year, leading efforts locally to collect 13,000 holiday cards for active military and veterans.

Sophie had planned to wrap up the collection of cards by Nov. 23 and focus on the delivery side, but cards keeping coming in, Sophie's mother said.

"It makes me proud of Sophie, of course, but it really makes me proud of our community and country and what we can do together for the greater good," Denise Kartzman said. "We need to continue to focus and highlight the good things in the world so they can outshine the sad things going on these days."

Local schools, civic organizations and other community groups contributed to the cause, and people from as far away as Louisiana heard about the effort and took part.

The cards are being shipped to armed services members all over the world, including South Korea, Japan, Afghanistan and even Antarctica. This past weekend, Sophie and others personally delivered stacks of cards to veterans at the Bath VA Medical Center.

A few more cards might trickle in in the next few days, and then Sophie will make her final delivery of cards to be shipped Monday at the Corning UPS office.

For more information on Sophie's project, go to dreambigsophie.org (<http://dreambigsophie.org>).

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