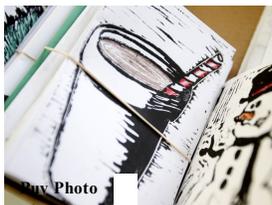


Many hands make lofty holiday card drive goal possible

Kelly Gampel , kgampel@stargazette.com | @theSGphotos Published 12:29 p.m. ET Nov. 16, 2016 | Updated 4:51 p.m. ET Nov. 16, 2016



A goal to send 30,000 holiday greetings to active-service members and veterans has nearly reached its halfway point.

Though 30,000 is a lofty goal, the service project was never fully just about the numbers. Since she founded the card drive in 2013, Horseheads eighth-grader Sophie Kartzman dreamed of inspiring others to give back. And so they have, this year specifically to the 2016 Casimir "Cas" J. Krolak Holiday Card Drive.

(Photo: Kelly Gampel / Staff Photo)

Over the past three years, almost 40,000 holiday greeting cards have been donated to the American Red Cross' Holidays for Heroes campaign, from students centers and senior living centers, families and individuals. This year's project broke away from the Red Cross campaign and is now a standalone drive named after Sophie's friend, the late Casimir Krolak.

Mary Theetge has intertwined education and acts of service in her art classes. She, along with the other Horseheads art teachers, have created lesson plans around card-making.

Buy Photo



Horseheads seniors Lauryn Martin, left, and Amanda Hayth work on their winter scenes for their screen printing project. The class is pairing a lesson on screen printing with making cards for the Casimir "Cas" J. Krolak Holiday Card Drive. (Photo: Kelly Gampel / Staff Photo)

"It first started out as a competition that I wanted to win, but then as I started making more I realized that there are veterans out there that don't have family at home giving them cards, and so I wanted to give them more than just 100 cards," Horseheads sophomore Susan Dong explained.

Sophomore Nichole Bixby has family members who are veterans and are currently serving.

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS: Holiday card drive kicks off

<http://www.stargazette.com/story/news/local/2016/10/19/supporting-our-troops-holiday-card-drive-kicks-off/92412016/>

"I know how hard it is sometimes for the veterans out there who don't have family," Nichole said. "So, I decided to help (Susan) with it to give some of them something they don't have."

The pair of friends have set out to complete 1,000 cards through an ink-printing process.

On Nov. 15, students in Theetge's class carved winter and holiday scenes from linoleum before applying ink and transferring the image. Theetge estimates around 1,000 cards will be made in her class by the Nov. 30 collection deadline.

Each student is required to complete at least 10 cards and write messages in each. Theeetge has written so far and the quota like Nichole and Susan.

Gallery Card making for military members, veterans

Junior Alicia LaCorazza is one of them, too.

As of Tuesday, she has single-handedly made 450 cards in her free time, during lunch and art class. Alicia estimates she's put more than 10 hours into creating holiday greetings. And just like other students, she does it to give veterans and service members something they may otherwise not receive.

[Buy Photo](#)



Sophomore Autumn Grove cuts linoleum away from her snowflake designed stamp Nov. 15 in Mary Theetge's art class at Horseheads High School. The class is making screen printed cards for the Casimir "Cas" J. Krolak Holiday Card Drive. (Photo: Kelly Gampel / Staff Photo)

The card collection goals have always been met — and exceeded — by the many hands of the community.

"When we first started this with our goal of 100 cards, it was just me and my friend and we would go out to Panera Bread and ask some people there to help out with the cards," Sophie said. "And then it started expanding into my school ... high school ... it was really expanding when (everyone) wanted to get involved."

Nov. 30 marks the deadline for collecting cards, which can be handmade or store bought.

Collection sites are as follows:

- Corning Chiropractic Associates, 75 W. Pulteney St., Corning
- Star Gazette, 310 E. Church St. Elmira
- Big Flats Community Center, 476 Maple St., Big Flats
- Horseheads Central School District, 1 Raider Lane, Horseheads (South Wing of the high school)
- Jubilee Foods, 2898 Westinghouse Road No. 504, Horseheads
- Save A Lot, 308 William St., Elmira
- Save A Lot, 420 Bolivar Road, Wellsville
- The Corning UPS Store, 85 Denison Parkway E., Corning
- Bethany Nursing Home Courtyard, 3005 Watkins Road, Horseheads

For more information, visit [DreamBigSophie.org](http://dreambigsophie.org) (<http://dreambigsophie.org/wp-content/uploads/Dream-Big-Sophie-Event-Schedule-2016.pdf>).

Follow [@theSGphotos](https://twitter.com/thesgphotos) (<https://twitter.com/thesgphotos>) on Twitter or on Instagram [@kelly.gampel](https://www.instagram.com/kelly.gampel/) (<https://www.instagram.com/kelly.gampel/>)

Read or Share this story: <http://stargaz.tt/2fZ5fOm>