



Saratoga County Clerk's Office

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SARATOGA COUNTY CLERK CRAIG A. HAYNER ANNOUNCES 6th ANNUAL YELLOW RIBBON DAY DONATION DRIVE

Capital District County Clerks join collection efforts to benefit local troops serving abroad

BALLSTON SPA – Saratoga County Clerk Craig A. Hayner today announced plans for the sixth annual Yellow Ribbon Day Donation Drive to support the efforts of the Blue Star Mothers of America local chapter. This year, Rensselaer County Clerk Frank Merola and Albany County Clerk Bruce A. Hidley also will join the initiative, further expanding the reach of the drive.

The collection of personal care and food items will run from March 17 through April 6 and will be donated to the local chapter of the Blue Star Mothers of America, which will use the goods to put together “Freedom Boxes” and ship them to deployed military members who call the Capital Region home. The donation drive is held in conjunction with the annual celebration of New York State’s Yellow Ribbon Day, which takes place April 9 and is designated as a day to honor active-duty troops and their families.

In addition to the partnership with the county clerks, Hannaford Stores in Saratoga County also are participating in this year’s drive, serving as additional drop-off points for donations.

Saratoga County Clerk Hayner said he is excited to continue building on the success of previous Yellow Ribbon Donation Drive events. “I am thrilled to have the Albany and Rensselaer County Clerks joining our efforts this year to extend our outreach and support local troops serving our country overseas,” Hayner said. “Together, we can help even more troops enjoy a few comforts of home as they protect our freedom from many miles away.”

Albany County Clerk Hidley also pointed to the value of the regionwide partnership to gather donations for the drive. “It is truly an honor to partner with fellow County Clerks Craig Hayner and Frank Merola on such an important program,” Hidley said. “We have our service men and women to thank for protecting and preserving the freedom we value so much. This donation drive is just a small way to show them how grateful we are.”

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Rensselaer County Clerk Merola expressed his appreciation for the work of the Blue Star Mothers of America NY-2. "We owe the Blue Star Mothers much respect for all they do to support our local troops," County Clerk Merola said. "The drive is a wonderful way for people across the Capital District to express their gratitude to our deployed military members."

Frank McClement, director of the Saratoga County Veterans Service Agency, said he knows from personal experience the positive impact of receiving items from home while deployed overseas. "This donation drive does much more than simply provide snacks and personal-care items. The packages the Blue Star Mothers send also let our service men and women know how much we care and can boost morale. We hope everyone will join us in this effort to support our local troops," McClement said.

Donna Abare, president of Blue Star Mothers of America-NY 2, said the organization continues to send hundreds of boxes throughout the year, but their shelves are running very low. "We get many requests for 'Freedom Boxes' throughout the year, and as parents of servicemen and women, it's important to us to accommodate every request," Abare said. "On behalf of the Blue Star Mothers, thank you for supporting our troops and the Yellow Ribbon Donation Drive."

Abare said donations can include items like cookie and cracker snack packages, microwavable soup cups, fruit snacks, granola bars, and beef jerky, as well as personal care items such as insect repellent wipes, toothbrushes, body wash (small), deodorant, lip balm, puzzle books, and more.

Donated goods can be dropped off at the following locations during regular business hours:

- Saratoga, Albany and Rensselaer County Clerk's Offices
- DMV locations in Saratoga and Rensselaer counties
- Saratoga County Hannaford stores
- Various town and village offices in Saratoga County (Call to see if your local municipality has a collection box.)

Monetary donations are also accepted. As a reference, it costs \$18 postage to send each "Freedom Box". The cost to fill one box is about \$32, so a \$50 donation covers the cost of filling and sending one box. Checks can be made payable to Blue Star Mothers of America-NY 2 and sent to PO Box 243, Delmar, NY 12054. Please write "In honor of Yellow Ribbon Day" in the memo section. To donate through PayPal, go to www.paypal.com/fundraiser/hub and search "Blue Star Mothers of America-NY2".

All items collected will be presented to the Blue Star Mothers during a Yellow Ribbon Day Ceremony at 11 a.m. Monday, April 10, at the Veterans Memorial, 162 Route 236, Halfmoon. The public is welcome to attend, and donations also can be brought to this event.

For more information, please visit the Saratoga County Clerk's Facebook page, @saratogacountyclerk, which will be updated throughout the donation drive.

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