



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SARATOGA COUNTY CLERK CRAIG A. HAYNER ANNOUNCES 7th ANNUAL YELLOW RIBBON DAY DONATION DRIVE

Collection will help Blue Star Mothers send packages to local troops serving abroad

BALLSTON SPA – For U.S. troops serving overseas, getting a care package can be a bright spot amid difficult conditions. To help the local Blue Star Mothers of America fill and ship boxes to deployed military members who call the Capital Region home, Saratoga County Clerk Craig A. Hayner today announced plans for the seventh annual Yellow Ribbon Day Donation Drive.

The collection of individual-size personal care items and snack foods will run from March 15 through April 7 and will be donated to the Blue Star Mothers of America NY-2 to put together and send “Freedom Boxes” to local troops serving abroad. 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 municipal locations across the county, Hannaford Stores in Saratoga County are again participating, serving as drop-off points for donations.

Saratoga County Clerk Hayner said the impact each package can have on the military member who receives it reinvigorates him for the launch of every Yellow Ribbon Day Donation Drive. “Our troops serving overseas make great sacrifices on our behalf every day. By contributing to this effort, we can provide members of our military with a few comforts of home as they protect our freedom from many miles away,” Hayner said. “I hope this year we can really ramp up the donations and ensure the Blue Star Mothers can meet and even exceed the demand for these special care packages.”

Donna Abare, president of Blue Star Mothers of America-NY 2, said the prices of everything have gone up, and they currently have very little inventory on hand. However, the demand for “Freedom Boxes” is still high. “It has become much more difficult to fill boxes, but the need is still so tremendous,” she said.

She said the Yellow Ribbon Day Donation Drive is incredibly important to the Blue Star Mothers because it typically enables them to do a large-scale packing in May. They hope this year’s drive will help them meet their goal of sending 300 boxes.

“Somebody’s child is out there putting their life on the line for us to be able to continue to enjoy the freedoms we have today. The least we can do is to support them in a small way,” Abare said, adding that

when it comes to donating, no effort is too small. "It's about caring enough to contribute in some way. Our military members love getting everything we put in the boxes, but what they love most is knowing that they are not forgotten."

Frank McClement, director of the Saratoga County Veterans Service Agency, said he knows from personal experience what receiving a package while deployed far from home can do to boost morale. "What the 'Freedom Boxes' do for our troops goes way beyond providing snacks and personal-care items. The packages also send a message to our service men and women that we care about them and value their service," McClement said. "Please join us in this important effort to support our local troops."

Donations can include non-perishable 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, body wash (small), lip balm, puzzle books, and more.

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

- DMV offices in Saratoga County (located in Ballston Spa, Clifton Park and Wilton)
- Saratoga County Clerk's Office, 40 McMaster St., Ballston Spa
- Veterans Service Agency, 2144 Doubleday Ave., Suite 15, Ballston Spa
- 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 \$45, so a \$63 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 during the drive will be presented to the Blue Star Mothers during a Yellow Ribbon Day Ceremony at 11 a.m. Tuesday, April 9, 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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