

# A HELPING HAND



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Skyla Aversa (in red), 10, along with (clockwise) Abriella Guertin, 9; Hailey Crowe, 9; and Isabella Piacente, 10 in front of the 1,036 items they collected.

## Hopkins Hill students organize drive to collect items for local vets

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COVENTRY— Students at one Coventry elementary school recently banded together to collect personal hygiene items for local veterans who may need a helping hand.

Principal of Hopkins Hill Elementary School Kathryn Tancredle explained that because the school is a Feinstein Leadership School they do different good deeds throughout the year.

In November, she said, they did an event in honor of Veterans Day and Operation Stand Down and during that time, a fourth grade student wrote her an anonymous letter.

“It was right around that time the girl asked if they could have pajama day,” she said. “So I met with the fourth grade and found what girls wrote it and we talked about the fact that it would be a good idea to earn the pajama day by

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doing something.”

Abriella Guertin, 9, explained that her brother, who attends Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School, was given a pajama day after his class brought in canned goods.

“So I thought why shouldn’t we try it and do something for the community,” she added. “Then when I came to school I asked my friend Izzy [Isabella Piacente] to help.”

The non-profit organization the students donated to works to assist homeless and at-risk veterans throughout the state by providing them with a roof and numerous other services including intensive case management, food and clothing assistance and employment training.

Since 1993 the organization has been building homes throughout the state, with a total of seven in existence; one of the homes is located on Providence Street in West Warwick.

Because they had just done an event for Operation Stand Down, Tancredelle said she suggested the students collect trial size hygiene items for the veterans living in the stand down homes.

Four fourth-grade girls began publicizing the fundraising event before Christmas by creating flyers and announcements to inform the student body. They also set a goal of 500 items and by the end of the collection date they had received 1,036 items.



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The 1,036 items collected by Hopkins Hill students will be donated to area veterans courtesy of Hopkins Hill Elementary School students.

“They said if people go on vacation they could collect trial size items from the hotels,” Tancredelle said. “The school was really receptive to the idea and the students usually brought in more than one. Some kids told the hotels they went to on vacation what they were doing and they came back with big quarter cases of different trial size bottles.”

The four students were ecstatic about the amount of personal items collected for

the veterans; Skylia Aversa, 10, said it was “awesome” and Hailey Crowe, 9, said she felt “proud.”

“Doing this teaches the students to give back and it teaches them that they can make a difference,” Tancredelle emphasized. “They can do something positive for the community even though they are young. They do like giving back; they like knowing there are things they can do that they have control over.”