

Palisades Teens Seek Support For AdoptaPlatoon Overseas

By SUE PASCOE
Staff Writer



Nicky Casalenuovo (left) and **Neal Connors** prepared St. Patrick's Day gift packages for service people overseas.

Thanks to Pacific Palisades residents, some deployed U.S. military receive a monthly reminder from home that they are not forgotten.

Palisadians **Neal Connors** and **Nicky Casalenuovo**, sophomores at Saint Monica Catholic High School, assemble monthly care packages for military personnel assigned overseas.

Connors became involved because his father, Brian, is a member of the **Sons of the American Legion, Squadron 283**, which sponsors various platoons through AdoptaPlatoon.

"It's a great feeling to know that I am helping to make the lives of some of our military men and women a little more tolerable by sending them these CARE packages," Connors said. "Even though they're just small tokens of gratitude, I think it's important to let them know that we appreciate their service to our country and they are not being forgotten."

The boxes include a variety of items such as snacks, toiletries, books and games. In the past few months, the two teens have packed holiday-themed packages that included Christmas stockings, Valentine "Hearts for Heroes," green-colored products for St. Patrick's Day and spring/Easter packages.

Often the boxes include morale-boosting cards and notes of gratitude from **both American Legion and Sons** members, along with cards from some Saint Monica students.

The platoon that the American Legion has been sponsoring is returning to the United States and the Sons have been assigned a new group that consists of 25 Marines from North Carolina who were deployed to Afghanistan.

The 20 men and five women of that platoon would be grateful if Pacific Palisades residents could supply a few new or slightly used **baseball mitts and balls** so they can enjoy a game of catch during off hours.

Donated items or funds can be dropped off at **Legion Post 283**, on La Cruz (next door to the old post office), or call (310) 454-0527. If the front door is locked, the back door is usually open during normal business hours.

"I will be asking for continued donations from the Sons and Legion members for future shipments," Connors said.

Anyone can participate in the AdoptaPlatoon program, from being a pen pal to adopting individuals or a whole platoon of up to 35+ members. Visit: adoptaplatoon.org.