



For Immediate Release:
Sept. 22, 2011

Contact:
Mark Ray, (540) 667-5705
mark.c.ray@usace.army.mil

“Building Strong” on the personal level

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers is building a lot of big projects in Afghanistan, which they hope will make a big difference in the lives of many Afghans. Many USACE personnel find ways to make a difference on a more personal level as well. Two USACE personnel at Forward Operating Base Farah took a personal interest in the children at a local orphanage, and made a big impression with some help from donations by their friends and families back home.

Goodwill came in the form of balls, pencils, notebooks and other toys and school supplies, when two USACE team members visited an orphanage in Farah Sept. 17, bringing with them donations from friends and family in the United States.

Ashley Kosmal, the senior civilian engineer at the Farah Resident Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District South, and Petty Officer 2nd Class Derek Brewer, the office senior non-commissioned officer, worked with family and friends in the United States for several months to gather the toys and school supplies.

“There are 170 kids at the orphanage, mainly boys,” Kosmal said. “They kept it very clean and the buildings were in nice condition compared with a lot of the buildings in the city.”

The children at the orphanage were surprised and happy when Kosmal and Brewer arrived with their security team and a photographer, the pair said.

“They were all sitting looking at the teacher with empty desks,” Brewer said. “They had no school supplies of any kind. They all eagerly raised their hands to get notebooks. And they were fascinated by our body armor and high-tech cameras.”

The team gave each of the 170 children a notebook, eraser, and pencil sharpener. They also distributed 400 pencils and 400 packages of crayons, along with coloring books, soccer balls, basketballs, footballs, Frisbees, and some clothes, Kosmal said, adding “We gave a lot of little knick-knacks for toys but we tried to focus on school supplies and toys they could play with together.

--more--

“It was such a good feeling to do something for these children. One of the reasons I was excited to go was to interact with the girls,” Kosmal said. “Knowing how difficult things can be for woman in Afghanistan, I was excited for them to see a woman as an equal with her peers. When I was passing out things to the kids, it was great to see them smiling and laughing and knowing that I was making a difference in their lives, even if it was just for one day.”

“It's great knowing you're helping to brighten a young child's future, with the necessary tools to do so,” Brewer added. “I do believe we are making a difference for the next generation of Afghans.”

Brewer and Kosmal are both leaving Afghanistan soon, but both plan to continue to work with charities at their home stations. And they will leave with the satisfaction of knowing that they have helped build the infrastructure that will make Afghanistan a more stable country and that they have made a personal difference to the children at the Farah orphanage.

-30-

USACE's Afghanistan Engineer District-South provides design and construction services throughout southern Afghanistan to support the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan. The work is carried out in Regional Commands South, Southwest and West with the goal of achieving counterinsurgency effects and bolstering the Afghan Government's services to its people.

Please visit <http://www.aed.usace.army.mil/AES/news.asp> for more news and features. Follow us on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Army-Corps-of-Engineers-Afghanistan-Engineer-District-South/199033262376>



Ashley Kosmal distributes school supplies to Afghan children at the orphanage in Farah, Afghanistan. Kosmal, the senior civilian engineer at the Farah Resident Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South, worked with Petty Officer 2nd Class Derek Brewer, the senior non-commissioned officer at the resident office, to collect school supplies and toys for children at the orphanage. *(DoD Photo by Senior Airman Alexandra Hoachlander)*



Petty Officer 2nd Class Derek Brewer distributes school supplies to Afghan children at the orphanage in Farah, Afghanistan. Brewer, the senior non-commissioned officer at the Farah Resident Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South, worked with Ashley Kosmal, the senior civilian engineer at the resident office, to collect school supplies and toys for children at the orphanage. *(DoD Photo by Senior Airman Alexandra Hoachlander)*