



Saint Viator Students Send Holiday Cheer to Alum Serving in Afghanistan

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Army Staff Sgt. Scott Strahammer, a 1997 graduate of Saint Viator High School.

It has been more than a dozen years since Army Staff Sgt. Scott Strahammer walked the halls of Saint Viator High School, but he has not been forgotten. Students shipped off care packages to Strahammer and his platoon last week at their base in Afghanistan, where they have been stationed since July and expect to remain until June.

“The response from our kids was overwhelming,” says JoAnne Francis, student services director. “They really took it to heart.”

Members of the Interclass Council had appealed to classmates to help cheer Strahammer and his Army platoon of 75 men and 20 women stationed in the Afghan desert through the holiday season.

Through reading a blog updated by platoon leaders, students learned the soldiers lacked basic necessities, as well as some of the comforts of home.

Consequently, they packed the care packages with more than 150 letters written to Strahammer and his fellow

soldiers. They also included many of the items requested on the platoon’s wish list, from toiletries, games and cards, to packages of Skittles to give to the Afghan children.

However, they also packed some gifts specially for Strahammer, including soccer apparel from the Saint Viator soccer team, as well as a specially produced, four-page edition the student newspaper, the Viator Voice, updating him all of the changes in the school since he left.

While at Saint Viator, Strahammer was a standout goalie with the Lions. His senior year, he started on the 1996 team that took third in state. But he also played volleyball and wrote for newspaper.

His soccer career continued at Azusa Pacific University, located north of Los Angeles in California, where he played goalie on some of the school’s most successful teams.

Strahammer still holds some of the school’s records for fewest goals allowed and most shutouts, while he helped the team build a 14-game winning streak at away games and compile a 15-game unbeaten streak, all on the 2000-2001 team.

One of the people Strahammer continues to stay in touch with is Saint Viator Soccer Coach Mike Taylor. When he is home in Arlington Heights on leave, Strahammer assists with team practices.

“If not for the soldiers all over the world who put their lives on the line,” Taylor says, “we would not be able to live like we do with all the freedom and peace that we enjoy.”