

People & Places

UNSUNG HEROES

Helping troops stay connected

By Darcy Clinton

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Name: Shannon Saitowitz, 14

Residence: West of Boca Raton

School: Eighth-grader at Donna Klein Jewish Academy

Family: Parents Hadley and Ruth Saitowitz; sister Samantha, 17; and brother Adam, 9.

Cause: The Boca Raton branch of Cell Phones for Soldiers, a national program where volunteers collect old cell phones, recycle them and use the proceeds to provide prepaid calling cards to soldiers serving overseas.

Q. Why do you volunteer?

A. I've learned that life isn't always about getting things or how much you have — it feels better to give than to receive. Volunteering gives me a sense of accomplishment that feels good in my heart. I can't imagine my life without volunteer work.

Q. How did you choose this organization?

A. I'm a member of the National Junior Honor Society at Donna Klein Jewish Academy. As a group, we chose the Cell Phones for Soldiers program after listening to the founder of the Boca Raton branch talk about losing her son in the war.

Q. Describe your volunteer work.

A. We put up collection boxes at our school and asked our friends and



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family to donate old cell phones they weren't using. Some people donated phones, others donated prepaid calling cards. Once we collected the phones, we sent them to a company that recycles all the usable parts that can be sold for future uses. The money raised through recycling the phones is used to purchase prepaid phone calling cards.

Q. What have you accomplished?

A. We've collected approximately 150 cell phones and will continue the cell phone drive through the end of the school year.

Q. Do you participate in any other volunteer activities?

A. I do a lot of volunteer work with my family. My favorite is visiting a woman living at JARC [Jewish Association for Residential Care]. She's blind, so I read to her when I visit her each week. We have a very special bond. She feels like part of our family.

Q. Who are your heroes?

A. My mom and dad are my role models, heroes and my inspiration. Everything I learn is from them. They teach me to be humble about everything I do, and none of what I do would be possible without them. They are all anyone could ever ask for and more.

For more information about the Cell Phone for Soldiers program, visit www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com.

To donate to the school's used cell phone drive, call Jane Neubauer at 561-558-2122.

If you know a Palm Beach County resident who deserves recognition for volunteer work, fax the information to 954-429-1207 or e-mail to darclynncClinton@yahoo.com. Nominations should include volunteer's name, city of residence, a contact name and phone number, and a brief description of why this person deserves special recognition.