

Local Bowlers Helping American Troops Overseas



By Eric Gumble

Janet DeLuca (at left) and Matt Tardona (right) are spearheading the local effort to help servicemen overseas. The duo is working hand-in-hand with Wallenpaupack Bowling Center to give troops much-needed recreation time.

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Wayne Independent

Tue Sep 02, 2008, 04:25 PM EDT

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Hawley, Pa. -

Bowling is a sport which, according to statistics, is growing exponentially with each passing year in the United States.

Thanks to local efforts by two Wallenpaupack Bowling Center employees however, our men and women of the armed services can continue, or begin, participating while serving Uncle Sam. This program is called "Send the Troops Bowling" and is sponsored by the Bowlers to Veterans Link.

The idea was brought to Wayne County's attention by Matt Tardona, a member of the Pennsylvania State Youth Board of Directors and employee of the Wallenpaupack Bowling Center, who attended a conference this past summer in Kansas City.

The program's objective is to send kits to the Middle East. Each kit is complete with a single bowling lane, pins, and a rubber bowling ball.

Tardona joined forces with Janet DeLuca, the daytime manager of Wallenpaupack Bowling Center, who is currently a mother of a soldier who is stationed in Afghanistan.

"I was in Kansas City for the annual bowling convention and they gave a big presentation on it," explained Tardona, "and the first person I thought about was Janet's son."

The team wasted no time in developing methods of raising sufficient funds.

“We sold wristbands, 50/50 raffle tickets, accepted private donations, and raffled off a (specially designed, patriotic) Viz-A-Ball,” explained Tardona.

As with any fundraiser, goals do exist.

“(Our goal) is to be able to send as many kits to our soldiers as we can,” stated DeLuca, “so far we have raised enough to send two kits and are on the way for a third.”

The team did express that their encountered success would not have been possible without the public’s assistance.

“The general public has done their job,” said Tardona.

The team is still accepting donations and is still selling patriotic wristbands at Wallenpaupack Bowling Center. Those interested can stop by the center or send their donations to Wallenpaupack Bowling Center, Route 6 West, Hawley, PA 18428.