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FOR RELEASE: Immediately

CORNWALL GIRL SCOUTS HELP IRAQI CHILDREN AS PART OF SILVER AWARD PROJECT

Pleasantville, NY — Let's hear three cheers for four eighth-grade Girl Scouts: **Sarah Korykora, Isabelle MacDonald, Zandra Martellaro, and Sarah Miller**, who have recently completed work on the prestigious Girl Scout Silver Award! The girls are members of Cornwall Troop #76, Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson. Their project involved collecting school supplies and sewing school bags for over 300 children in a rural area of Iraq.

Martellaro's Dad is currently deployed in Iraq and the unit he is deployed with has been helping to establish schools in the rural southern areas of Iraq. Until recently, these areas have never had electricity or schools for children to attend. The U.S. soldiers have worked with Iraqi police and construction workers to complete school buildings; however, supplies were needed to get the classes going. When the girls heard about this they wanted to help!

"We can't imagine never going to school, or not getting an education," said the girls during a meeting. After communicating with Major Martellaro and SSG Ryan Wolfe in Iraq, they decided that they wanted to help the children. The supply drive was supported by the Cornwall Girl Scouts, Cornwall Middle School students, and Highland Falls Elementary School students. It branched out to local businesses and church groups in the area as well.

The girls were overwhelmed with the community support. Items collected included: 22,050 sheets of loose leaf paper, 2,046 pencils, 400 pocket folders, 140 marble notebooks, 1,030 erasers, 300 pencil sharpeners, 950 colored pencils, pencil cases, construction paper, and a wide variety of other items.

As a final tally, the four girls sent 750 pounds of school supplies and 300 school bags that they sewed for the children. Inside each bag there was a notebook, a bag of pencils, pen, eraser, and sharpener. They also made a "tic-tac-toe" game for each child. Supplies that were not placed in a school bag were boxed and given to the schools to use as needed in classrooms. The girls also put together several teacher kits with pencils, red pens, markers, and loose-leaf paper. Recently, the children in Iraq received the shipments.

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The girls, in addition, distributed some school kits to local organizations that have supported their project, to be used for students who are in need closer to home. In addition to collecting, sewing and shipping, the girls took the time to work with a third-grade Brownie Girl Scout troop to teach them how to cut and sew the bags. The Brownies were happy to have the older girls work with them and were even happier to make a contribution to children in need.

The girls will be honored as Silver Award recipients by Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. on Sunday April 13, 2008 in a council-wide awards ceremony. Because these young leaders have already made a difference in the lives of those in need; we know we have a lot to look forward to from them as the leaders of tomorrow!

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. serves 34,000 girls and 15,000 adult volunteers throughout its seven-county jurisdiction (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester). Its central administrative office is in Pleasantville, with regional offices in Kingston, Middletown, New City, Pleasantville, and Poughkeepsie.

Founded in Savannah, Georgia, on March 12, 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) strives to build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. Accordingly, GSUSA continues to be the world's pre-eminent organization for, and leading authority on, girls, with a membership of more than 3.7 million girls and adults.

For information about joining, volunteering, or making a donation to Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc., contact (914) 747-3080 or visit www.girlscoutshh.org.