

22 September 2004
Mosul, Iraq

Dear Friend of the “Adopt an Iraqi Village” Project:

For some of you, this letter is the first notice you have that I have indeed received your donation. For others, this letter serves as an update from a previous one I had sent to you.

Either way, let me begin by saying that your collective generosity has allowed for this project to become something far greater than I had ever imagined. Through the combination of various means (emails; newspaper articles; fundraisers; or good old fashioned “word of mouth”) what started out as a simple idea, has truly turned into something that I can honestly say, has improved the lives of many Iraqis out here. As it stands, I have received well over 1,000 packages (I stopped counting when we hit the 1,000 mark back in July) from hundreds of donors large and small. Some of the donors have been churches, schools (from nursery schools to high schools), businesses, fire and police departments and civic organizations. Others have simply been caring and concerned individuals or families. While most of you are from New England states, I have also been surprised to receive packages from as far away as California, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida and other states. In fact, the response has been so far-ranging and varied that I can think of only two things we all have in common: (1) very few of us know each other; and (2) all of us want to do all that we can to improve the lives of the people in Iraq.

For those of you that have followed on our website, www.adoptaniraqivillage.org, you know that we have had the opportunity to visit many villages and communities in northern Iraq to deliver donations. I have had the privilege to attend each of these visits and can say, without a doubt, that they will always be among the most enriching experiences of my life. Through your generosity, children have new shoes; schools have supplies; and families have received many valued items for their homes. Equally important, our actions have reinforced to many of the Iraqi’s that our greatest wish as Americans is for the Iraqi people to better their lives. You have been a big part of that effort and I thank-you.

As a final note, though we are not sure when we will return home to Maine, I am asking that you not send items to me past December 1, 2004. If at some point I am able to coordinate a replacement willing to accept packages after I leave, I will forward his or her name and address to you. Otherwise, if you don’t hear from me again, let me say what an honor it has been for me to be a part of this program. Your efforts have truly made a difference. Thanks again.

Yours sincerely

**Adam R. Cote
Platoon Leader, Bravo Company 133d Engineers
Maine Army National Guard**