

## Make a difference

# A very special Valentine's gift

*Student delivers 1,111 cards to elderly*

BY SCOTT LEVINE

Herald Associate Editor

CLINTON — Alayna Geronzin wants unity in the community.

To do that, she's handing out something special for Valentine's Day.

Area senior citizens received a special gift this week thanks to Geronzin and Clinton elementary students. More than 1,000 Valentine's Day cards were delivered this week to Mobile Meals participants.

And the whole project started with a simple search for a scholarship.

"Basically I was looking online for scholarships and found [Dosomething.org](http://dosomething.org)," Geronzin said.

"They had a whole bunch of opportunities for good deeds to do in the community and this project was one of them." To apply for the \$10,000 scholarship, Geronzin needed to create Valentine's Day cards for elderly

SEE CARDS PAGE 2A



**Clinton High School senior Alyana Geronzin shows off her Valentine's Day card project. This photo will be submitted to [Dosomething.org](http://dosomething.org) as part of a scholarship application.**

Submitted photo

## Article Continued Below

---

See CARDS on Page A02

### CARDS

FROM PAGE 1A

community members and take a picture with the cards.

She had no goal in the beginning. Instead, she constructed all the cards by hand, until it became apparent this project meant more than just a scholarship opportunity.

This was about a community. And for the Clinton High School senior in love with arts and crafts, she could think of no better way to get the community involved in something constructive than this endeavor.

"People in our city tend to think Clinton isn't the greatest," Geronzin said. "But with just a few people bonding together, we can make a difference. People really care around here." To make that difference, Geronzin employed some help from people decades younger than the cards' recipients.

Local elementary students mixed in the card construction with their regular lessons to assist in creating 1,111 cards.

"Oohs" and "aahs" filled fifth-grade teacher Amy Grell's Jefferson Elementary School classroom when she explained the project.

"You could tell they were really into it," Grell said. "The entire room was silent for the 15 minutes that they were doing the project. They were very concentrated on making the card as best as they possibly could." Grell allowed the students to choose what kind of message they wanted to deliver. The seriousness by which they participated showed Grell the students appreciated the positive message the project portrayed.

"They took it away as doing something to make someone else's day a little better," Grell said.

Alverno Dietary Manager Valorie Armstrong, who assists with Mobile Meals, was caught off guard by the hundreds of cards, but was confident it would make the recipients' Valentine's Day.

"They might not have family and these may be the only ones that they receive," Armstrong said.

By the project's end, it wasn't only about receiving a scholarship to be used at Simpson College for neuroscience and biology for Geronzin.

The process of working together and what it meant for those receiving the cards was more valuable than the monetary reward.

"The further I got involved in the project, it became more about the kids and the learning process," said Geronzin, who created approximately 300 cards on her own. "I really wanted them to see what their efforts had done." There's no word yet on if she will receive the scholarship.

For her, the project's benefit has already made for a special Valentine's Day for all those involved.

"It only took 10 or 20 minutes of the day to make a card," Geronzin said. "But it made a really huge difference in the entire community.

"Simple efforts can make a difference. "

Powered by TECNAVIA

Copyright (c)2015 Clinton Herald, Edition 02/13/2015