

FUNDRAISER

CHS students collect treats for troops

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CLINTON — During Clinton High School special-education instructor Andrew Carbajal's tenure as a medic in the United States Army, there were many times when he and his fellow soldiers felt lonely, particularly during the holiday season.

Now seven years retired from the Army, Carbajal and others have launched an initiative that aims to ensure current deployed troops that they remain in the thoughts of Americans everywhere.

The "Treats for Troops" program recently completed by Carbajal and many others at CHS has accounted for the collection of more than 300 pounds of Halloween candy, set to be delivered to deployed troops through the Operation Gratitude project, which coordinates deliveries of care packages to soldiers across the globe. Carbajal teamed with district librarian and media specialist Emma Folland, as well as the school's Boys Tennis Team and the school's Castle Program for the project.

Carbajal served from 2005-2009, and was

deployed in Iraq in 2006 and 2007.

In total the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes at CHS collected 328.21 pounds of candy. The schoolwide project will benefit the troops who receive the packages, but Carbajal says it will also serve a purpose for the students who participated.

"Now that I have my own classroom, I feel like it is extremely important to give back," Carbajal said. "Today, I have been retired for seven years, and I feel like we don't do enough for (the troops), so I'm trying to do our part. This is also a great learning lesson for the teenagers in our school."

The freshman class dominated the donations, collecting a whopping 176.5 pounds. Sophomores brought in 41.16 pounds, juniors donated 57.04 pounds, and the senior class collected 53.51 pounds of candy. The winning freshmen received a trophy, according to Carbajal, that represents CHS and will motivate classes to beat the winning mark next time the collection is held.

According to Carbajal, the project will hope-



Submitted photo

From left, Brandon Messmer, Seth Johnson, Autumn Schroeder, teacher Andrew Carbajal and Kaden Ottens sit in front of some of the candy collected as part of the CHS "Treats for Troops" project. Students collected 328.21 pounds of Halloween candy, set for delivery to U.S. troops serving all across the globe.

fully serve as a word of thanks to the soldiers who receive the packages, along with the letters that were also collected at

CHS — a simple task that never goes unappreciated, Carbajal says.

"When you have intrinsic motivation and find

people to help you, like Emma Folland, no task is too hard," Carbajal said. "A 'thank you' can go a million miles and still

be worth the world to someone. I think society forgets this and this is what I'm trying to teach our students."