

# Postcards from Iraq



***Martha Coley shows off the contributions received from Millington for Baghdad's children.***

## My Direct Contribution to the Iraqi people

***Martha Coley, Resource Management Analyst,  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers***

As a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) employee since 1989, I have always been proud of serving with an organization that contributes so much to the quality of life for people worldwide. I read articles of the Corps programs and projects for Operation Iraqi Freedom, and decided that I wanted to contribute in some way. I began collecting and sending donations to the Corps' Baghdad Division for the hospitals, orphanages, and schools from my home in Millington, TN. I became interested in a more direct involvement, applied for a position, and was thrilled when I was offered an opportunity to participate in Operation Iraqi Freedom as a Staff Accountant in Baghdad.

One of the first things I learned was that flexibility was a must in this work environment. I am always willing to learn new things, and I was challenged by being assigned duties as a Program Analyst soon after I arrived. Working directly with the construction funding and contracts was a new arena for me, but what I have learned has broadened my awareness of the scope of the Corps' mission, and has greatly enriched my professional knowledge.

Even though there are extended work hours, I have been able to devote time to the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Committee and to assist with sorting the donations that come in here and then are given to the Iraqi people. I was so pleased at Christmas time to receive a box of swaddling clothes from the USACE Finance Center Travel Division, the office I worked in before deploying to Baghdad! These items were combined with some other donations received for infants and sent to our newest birthing center facility that the Corps is building in Fallujah.

My six-month temporary assignment will end soon, and I will return to Millington with fond memories of the people I have met and worked with here. I have made some lasting friendships in this short time with a diversity of people, and will go home with a broader perspective of the kinship of the human race.

I encourage anyone who is considering a tour in support of this noble and historic mission to accept the challenge. This has been one of the most rewarding and enriching experiences of my lifetime!



***General David Petraeus greets Millington's Martha Coley.***