

# HEROES AMONG US

As you know, I just love tanning folks who go above and beyond – who really hear the call of someone or something in need, and just get it done. I've talked about Heavenly Hair of Whitinsville, MA in a previous column, but there is more to their story and I was so uplifted by their good works, I wanted to share it with all of you.

While preparing a care package to send to their local unit in Iraq in April 2009, Brenda and Steve Couture contacted some of their tanning product suppliers for donations. They wanted to send Eye Pro's Fresh-Ease wipes, since the soldiers were out on recon missions for days at a time with no way to shower or bathe. Distributor Four Seasons, as well as lotion makers Supre Tan, Devoted Creations, Pro-Tan, Tan Inc. and Designer Skin, also donated products. Brenda wrote this in her Christmas letter to customers:

"Our United States Soldiers continue to sacrifice so we can live in a free country. In the spring, we started a project called SUPPORT THE TROOPS. We have been sending care packages containing supplies that we take for granted and they cannot get in the Middle East. To date so far, we have sent them over 200 care packages. We get to talk to all the soldiers we ship packages to via email. They want all of you to know how grateful they are for everything they receive. They call us heroes. We tell them, 'No, you are our heroes, we are just trying to make things feel a little more like home for our troops.' The soldiers tell us they are just doing their job!"

I wasn't the only one impressed by the huge efforts made by this small town hairstyling/eight-unit tanning salon. The Boston Celtics contacted Brenda and Steve and awarded them their "Heroes Among Us Award." Brenda excitedly explained, "During the second quarter of a Boston Celtics home game, we received our award on center court with Paul Pierce and KG! The announcer told our story about helping the troops and put photos of the troops on the Jumbotron. It was truly an amazing experience and one we will never forget!"

You would think that the Coutures had done enough, but they were just getting started! They adopted a homeless dog and then teamed up again with Paw Planet for a few



fundraising events. The first one was their 2nd Annual Dog Wash to benefit local animal rescues, including Animal Aid Foundation, Dog Orphans and others. "We 'cleaned up at the Dog Wash and raised a lot of money for our furry friends,'" Brenda explained. "Our second fundraiser was a 'Pictures with Santa' event to benefit Dog Orphans. Kristen and I had the honor of doing the Christmas backdrop this year and had a blast doing it and if I do say so myself, it came out awesome! It was a very successful event with more than 60 families and their furry friends coming to meet Santa!"

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— BRENDA COUTURE

What a fantastic salon! I believe that if tanning folks help others by doing things they're passionate about, it will be awfully hard for people to vote against indoor tanning or want our businesses out of their communities! Join the fun! If you'd like to share a great story about your salon's efforts to uplift someone, email [Brenda@eyepro.net](mailto:Brenda@eyepro.net). Let's save the planet, one tan at a time! ■



Tanning industry veteran Brenda Fishbaugh is president of Eye Pro, Inc., makers of disposable eyewear. She travels extensively training salons on the effects of UV light on vision.

