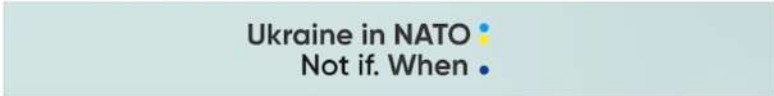


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# DC teen gives thousands of Valentine's Day cards for patients in nursing homes, hospitals

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14-year-old Patrick Kaufmann started the Valentines by Kids Project; he's pictured here with two other children making ...See full caption > Courtesy Valentines by Kids



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While most of us will stop by the grocery store to get flowers or chocolate for our sweetheart on the way home from work, one D.C. student has spent the last several months making sure thousands of strangers in nursing homes and hospitals get a very special Valentine.

Fourteen-year-old Patrick Kaufmann said his house has been overflowing with handmade cards for several weeks.

"Every place in my house had something to do with my project or boxes, cards, instructions. It was great. I love the experience," Kaufmann told WTOP.

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Kaufmann is a ninth grade student at the Washington International School and an avid hockey player. But he also spends a lot of his time collecting handmade Valentines.

Around four years ago, he started the [Valentines by Kids](#) Project while volunteering with [Food and Friends](#), a D.C. based non-profit which provides home-delivered, medically tailored meals to people with serious illnesses.

"One of the ideas by the group was to create Valentines to include in the meals, and we were only about maybe 30 people. So not everyone was going to see a Valentine," said Kaufmann about the first year of the program.

He then began enlisting schools, hoping to sign up as many students across the area to make at least one homemade card.

Last year, around 600 students participated. This year, the number swelled to over 16,000 students from over 60 schools from across the region.

And since so many students are participating, each card is one of a kind.

"They're personalized by each student. They have glitter, stickers, different colors and different backgrounds," said Kaufmann. "Everyone has a different design and a kind message."

Some of the cards this year have blown Kaufmann away with their details.

"One student made some flowers out of paper and each flower had a message on it," he continued.

Those Valentines will be delivered Tuesday along with meals from Food and Friends to nursing home residents, hospital patients and people with homebound sicknesses.

"I think it's really important for someone like that to receive a card and it could really make their week and it's really special for them," said Kaufmann.

"One of the nursing homes near my mom's school received cards. And their faces were just ... they were so happy. And they said that they had never received a Valentine. And it was just really special for them."

Kaufmann told WTOP he hopes to expand the project in the years to come by getting even more cards to send to police departments and fire departments across the D.C. region.

Any school interested in joining his project can visit the [Valentines by Kids website and sign up](#).

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**Luke Lukert**

Since joining WTOP Luke Lukert has held just about every job in the newsroom from producer to web writer and now he works as a full-time reporter. He is an avid fan of UGA football. Go Dawgs!

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