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**Statement by
The Honorable Jeff Denham
Before the
House of Representatives
Extensions of Remarks
On
September 21, 2012**

Mr. Denham of California: Mr. Speaker: I rise today to recognize and honor Miss Genevieve Florez, who organized a school-wide donation project to send care packages to our troops. At age 10, Genevieve is the youngest child of Susan and Steve Florez. She has attended Joshua Cowell Elementary School since kindergarten, where her mother is a teacher. The family lives in Twain Harte, and Genevieve and her mom commute to school daily - an hour and a half trip each way. While in the car she does her homework, reads, and talks with her mom about all of the things that fill the life of a 5th grader.

Despite the all time that Genevieve dedicates to her studies and long commute, she still finds the energy to help with a home garden, participate in summer drama productions, and take dance classes. She loves art and keeps a sketchbook of her own fashion designs. Not only is Genevieve bright, happy, thoughtful, and creative, but she is a highly motivated self-starter ready to make a difference in the world. In fact, her goal is to be the future President of the United States.

The care package project was inspired by Genevieve's admiration for her school principal, Ms. Bennett. Genevieve sent her the following letter: *You inspired me. I want to help and stop world hunger, no more bullies, say thanks to police, fire-fighters, and ladies and men in the military. I also want to say thanks to the teachers. I don't know how to help. That's why I ask you. This is money to help with anything.* Miss Florez had enclosed \$20 dollars.

After speaking with Principal Bennett about a variety of ways to reach out to people, Genevieve decided to pursue the idea of sending packages to soldiers overseas. Bennett put Genevieve in touch with the family of Corporal Charles O. Palmer – a United States Marine, who lost his life in Iraq on May 5, 2007. Corporal Palmer's family met with Genevieve to help her coordinate services as she prepared to send personal care packages to the troops. After organizing three school meetings to share her idea about the project, Genevieve had successfully earned the support of 70 students who wanted to participate.

On September 11, 2012, a school assembly was held to remember those who lost their lives during the attacks and to honor the heroes that emerged who protect us every day. The Palmer Family spoke to the students about the collecting of items to send to the soldiers. They talked about the personal healing that the project brings to them, and they thanked the students for their efforts. They finished by letting the students know that they were all heroes for making a difference at that moment. After sorting through all of the donations, the Palmer Family, students, staff, and volunteers were able to send out 65 boxes to our very deserving troops.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in praising Genevieve Florez for the significant contributions she has made to the people of the local community and for her honorable and faithful dedication to our service men and women of the United States of America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Denham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

JEFF DENHAM

United States Representative