

Crisp Packets into Sleeping Bags; Cambridgeshire Cadet Helps Homeless People Prepare for Winter

Wednesday 16 December, 2020

A sixteen-year-old Army Cadet from Cambridgeshire, Cadet Sergeant Rhyder Cameron-Wickes, is completing the Volunteering aspect of his Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award by making sleeping bags from empty crisp packets to help homeless people.

This idea, called the Crisp Packet Project, was invented by Pen Huston in 2019 as a means of providing cost effective protection from the cold to homeless people.

Foil lined packets are melted together with an iron, on low heat, to form large sheets. These are then covered with plastic sheeting, also ironed on to form Bivvy bags. These are large sized outer bags which will fit around a regular sleeping bag, together with personal possessions.

Cadet Sgt. Cameron-Wickes said; 'Everything is made out of crisp packets and plastic that is melted together. Because crisp packets are made from foil, they keep a lot of heat in, which makes them really good to give out to help the homeless. I started doing this because it helps me give back to the community while also passing my volunteering section of the DofE Award.'

Rhyder has advertised for crisp packets on the Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force Facebook page and on other community pages. This has resulted in more than 300 crisp packets already being donated.

Each sleeping bag will be packaged up with a donation of gloves and hat and distributed to food banks and other charities where they can best reach those in need.

150 packets are needed to make one sleeping bag, meaning he will require many more. He added: 'As of right now there is no target for how many bivvy bags I want to make, but I am aiming to continue making them to the end of next year.'

'I'm feeling good about the project, there has been a positive response from the public saying that they are willing to share it around, support it and send their crisp packets to our drop off points and it's also a rewarding way to spend any spare time I have.'

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an important aspect of Army Cadet Force's activities, as it teaches important skills and builds self-confidence. It also fits perfectly with Army Cadet Values and Standards, one of which (clearly demonstrated by Cadet Sgt Cameron-Wickes) is Selfless Commitment.

Army Cadet Instructor Ros Whyall said; 'DofE has been very challenging during lockdown. Cadet Sgt Cameron-Wickes has excelled himself during these difficult times, not only by completing his Silver Certificate of Achievement but progressing onto his Gold award and set about this brilliant idea. Not only is he helping those that are less fortunate in the community, but he has also asked other cadets enrolled on their award to support him, should they need to complete their volunteering section. This is a great project and I wish him the best of luck in completing it.'

Empty crisp packets should be cleaned and flattened before posting or delivering to the FACT charity located at 5 Martin Avenue, March PE15 0AY.

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