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Wednesday, August 31, 2005 - Page updated at 12:00 AM

## Young readers soldier on

By **EMILY SEFTEL**  
*The Arizona Republic*

When Caleb Pipes wants his father, Gregory, to read a story to him, the 2-and-a-half-year-old asks his mom to put on the video.

Pipes, an army captain, is stationed in Bagram, Afghanistan, thousands of miles from his family in Germany. Pipes didn't want the distance to stand between him and his children, so he started Read to Me, Daddy (or Mommy), a program where soldiers tape themselves reading a children's book; they then send video and book home so their children can follow along.

He set up a room where soldiers were guaranteed privacy. A camera and monitor were installed. All Pipes needed was the children's books. That need would be filled by Theresa Killingsworth, a fourth-grade Phoenix teacher.

Killingsworth visited [anysoldier.com](http://anysoldier.com), where soldiers post messages and requests, to find those in need of the items. There she found Pipes.

"I looked at his post and read about how he was trying to set up a read-to-your-kids program," Killingsworth says. "I included a note in his care package that I would look through kids' books in the classroom and send him whatever I could find."

Killingsworth contacted Sandra Carpenter, a Phoenix-area marketing manager at Borders Books and Music, and they developed a local book drive.

"It's too cool," Carpenter says. "[Pipes] is so wonderful to have even dreamed this up. To be able to read to your kids when you're so far away is just amazing."

### Information on the Web

Accommodates messages to and from soldiers serving abroad : [www.anysoldier.com](http://www.anysoldier.com)

The program has two goals, Killingsworth says. First, organizers want to collect at least 600 books, which Pipes feels would be sufficient for his company. Second, the program will promote reading to children, showing how important it is even under seemingly impossible circumstances.

"Here you have a situation where it's very hard for people over there to be able to read to their kids, and they're going above and beyond," Killingsworth said.

"[The children] have overwhelmingly responded to my videos," Pipes wrote. "We recently obtained the use of some Webcams and I got to see my kids for the first time in four months. My wife said that after that day, my son, Caleb, has wanted to watch the Daddy videos over and over again. That proved to me that these videos are truly a link

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