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Monday, May 14, 2007

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## Afghan doctors benefit from book drive

**Press, Jordan**  
Local news - Monday, April 30, 2007 @ 12:00

Doctors in Afghanistan will soon have text books from which to study, partly due to donations of used books from students at Queen's and universities across the country.

Queen's students will ship about 350 medical texts to Afghanistan, books that a developing country and school couldn't normally afford, said Ryan Gallagher, who helped organize the book drive.

Gallagher said most of the information in the books is still current even if the edition is out of date. A new edition of a text book could be printed if the author makes minor changes.

"The idea was these very relevant text books could be beneficial in Afghanistan," Gallagher said in a telephone interview from his hometown of Calgary.

Twenty-eight boxes will be shipped overseas in June along with thousands of other books donated by medical students across the country. There have been enough books collected to stock the shelves in three libraries, said Gallagher, a 21-year-old who graduated from Queen's life sciences program this year.

The nationwide project, known as Books with Wings, ships textbooks and lab equipment to developing countries. Medical students at the University of Manitoba started the program in 2003.

This year, Books with Wings will send equipment and supplies to schools in Herat, Afghanistan; Jimma, Ethiopia and Kep, Cambodia, according to the Books for Wings website for the University of Toronto chapter.

At Queen's, the drive to get text books wasn't easy. Gallagher said there were only four to 10 students working on the project - depending on the

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time of year. The small group, and the fact the club was in its first year of existence on campus, made for low expectations.

However, Gallagher said he sees the Queen's chapter's maiden effort as a major success.

The students sent e-mails, used the social website Facebook to contact friends and passed along information through word-of-mouth to get donations, he said. Students also put up posters around campus.

In January, the students set up a wall of books in the common grounds of the John Deutsch University Centre. Students passing by were asked to add their old text books to the wall and it worked, Gallagher said.

The group hopes to conduct its campaign on a yearly basis. [jpress@thewhig.com](mailto:jpress@thewhig.com)

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