

# Shoes

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the principals and others helping out,” she said. “It’s been cool and inspiring, the people who give of their time on a Friday afternoon.”

YHS girls basketball coach Doug Pesicka said he was pleased to accept Specht’s invitation to volunteer for Friday’s shoe distribution.

“Taylor was part of our basketball program, and I considered her our student assistant coach during her senior year. She was a great member of the basketball team,” he said.

The Gazelles players benefited from Friday’s project as much as the young shoe recipients, Pesicka said. The young women met families struggling with financial difficulties in their community, he said.

“I was always looking for something for our girls to do beyond basketball, as a way of giving back,” he said. “I always tell our Gazelles basketball team that it’s not what you do between the lines on game night, it’s what you do behind the scenes. Here, you are part of something bigger than yourself.”

Gazelles Kelsey Butler and Kelsey Fitzgerald said they found the experience offering some real-life lessons.

“I am really into kids. I want to be a teacher, and I’m a first- and second-grade assistant to my Sunday School teacher,” Butler said. “I love working with kids and seeing the smiles on their faces. It blows my mind that there are kids in my community that need shoes.”

Fitzgerald appreciated the opportunity to help families in need.

“This is an amazing experience,” she said. “We are doing it for the kids and seeing how happy it makes them, to see them smiling.”

Yankton native Denise Blomberg, now with the state chapter of Fellow of Christian Ath-



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

**Dozens of pairs of socks and shoes await their new young owners during Friday’s distribution at the Yankton Middle School gym. Yankton native Taylor Specht raised about \$3,000, which was forwarded to the “Samaritan’s Feet” organization for shoes sized to fit pre-registered children.**

letes (FCA), said Friday’s project was about more than comfort. She noted a volunteer brought the new pair of shoes, so the child and person washing the feet didn’t lose their personal connection.

“This isn’t just about handing out shoes or washing feet,” she said. “It’s about exhibiting hope, love and compassion. It’s an act of service and leadership.”

Manny Ohonme described the joy of getting his first pair of shoes in Nigeria, where a worker makes a dollar a day.

“At age 9, I was selling water to kids. The missionaries came over to where I was selling water, with a big orange basketball,” he said. “They were teaching basketball and held a shooting contest. They were giving away a pair of tennis shoes, and everyone’s face lit

up. I won the contest and the pair of shoes. I felt like I was walking away with a new car. I was the first person in my family to own a pair of tennis shoes.”

For many people around the world, shoes become a matter of life and death, Ohonme said.

“More than one million people are infected with parasite and other foot-borne disease because they don’t wear shoes,” he said. “In fact, we have a link that’s called ‘Dying Without Shoes’. And these are all preventable things.”

Friday’s project brought hope as well as footwear, Ohonme said.

“I want to the message to be, when all you see around you is poverty, God of the universe doesn’t forget you,” he said.

Chris Specht, Taylor’s father, also volunteered for the project.

“Taylor is a 19-year-old kid, yet she sees beyond herself,” he said. “You’re seeing it with all the young people here today. It’s what every parent wants, to see their child giving back to their community and to the world. They see some obligation to give of themselves.”

One mother stood to the side, her eyes tearing up with joy as her children wore their new shoes.

“I’m a single parent and I’ve lost my job. It’s tough to see the bills get paid,” she said. “It’s wonderful that they offer this (shoe distribution). It’s great to see the smile on the kids’ faces.”

The woman said she hopes to see the program keep going.

“A lot of kids need this. These kids just keep growing and wear their shoes until they wear out,” she said. “Their parents can’t afford new shoes. For them, it comes down to the next meal or something to wear.”

For more information on the shoe distribution program, visit online at [www.samaritansfeet.org](http://www.samaritansfeet.org).

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at [twitter.com/RDockendorf](https://twitter.com/RDockendorf)

# Pentagon: Budget Crisis Could Hurt War Effort

BY ROBERT BURNS  
AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Afghan war effort eventually would be harmed by across-the-board budget cuts, even as the Obama administration intends to shield the military’s combat mission from the reductions, the Pentagon’s No. 2 official said Friday.

“There will be second-order effects on the war,” Ashton Carter, the deputy defense secretary, said in an interview in his office with a small group of reporters. Deferred maintenance on weapons and other equipment, for example, will eventually erode the combat fitness of military units deploying to Afghanistan, he said.

The U.S. has about 66,000 troops in Afghanistan, with an undetermined number of withdrawals expected this year and in 2014.

The administration holds out hope that Congress will come up with a deficit-cutting mechanism to replace the across-the-board spending cuts due to take effect March 1, but Carter suggested that hopes are not high.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have repeatedly warned that the threatened defense cuts, amounting to about \$50 billion this budget year, would hurt national security. Carter said he feared that the message has not been heard widely enough in Congress and across the country.

If the cuts take effect in March, hundreds of thousands of Pentagon civilian employees will face furloughs and reduced paychecks by April, Carter said. They would lose one day of work per week for the remainder of the budget year, which ends in September, he said.

“This is painful to us,” Carter said.

The Pentagon has about 800,000 civilian employees; they have not yet been officially notified of furloughs. Carter said the furloughs would be expected to save \$5 billion. No military positions will be cut, he said.

Carter said the Pentagon already is eliminating all 46,000 of its temporary civilian workers in anticipation of budget cuts.

## Geithner Sees US Economy Strengthening Gradually

WASHINGTON (AP) — Outgoing Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner thinks the U.S. economy will strengthen this year — as long as Congress avoids cutting spending too deeply in a budget deal and Europe’s economy gradually improves.

In an interview Friday on his last day in office, Geithner told The Associated Press, “The economy is stronger than people appreciate.”

He said he agrees with many private forecasters that growth will accelerate this year, in part because the U.S. economy is no longer being held back by oil shocks and Europe’s debt crisis has subsided.

Asked about his future, Geithner ruled out the possibility that he would return to Washington as chairman of the Federal Reserve next year, when Ben Bernanke’s term ends, if asked by President Barack Obama.

Geithner has been viewed as among the front-runners for the Fed job. He has been close to Obama, and before joining Obama’s Cabinet as Treasury secretary, he had led the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

“There are lots of people more qualified than me,” Geithner said.

Obama last week nominated Jack Lew, his chief of staff and formerly the White House budget director, to succeed Geithner as Treasury secretary. Lew’s nomination is expected to win quick approval in the Senate.

Geithner was the last remaining original economic advisor to Obama. He served during a turbulent four years in which the administration had to confront the worst U.S. economic and financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

In a wide-ranging interview, Geithner made these other points:

— A move by House leaders to postpone a deadline for raising the government’s borrowing limit for nearly four months is encouraging. But it must be followed by action to remove the threat of a first-ever U.S. government default from budget talks. “It’s just a simple rule of negotiating: If your threat is something that you can never carry out because default is unthinkable, then it doesn’t give you any leverage,” Geithner said.



# KIDS FIRST

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## PRESS & DAKOTAN

# 2013 Beautiful Baby Contest

Chance To Win Prizes!

We will be featuring our annual “**Beautiful Baby Contest**” in print and online on **Wednesday, February 27, 2013**. If you or someone you know has a child we would love to include them in our feature!

To enter, simply submit your photo and entry form with a \$10 submission fee by **Monday, February 18**.

First place winners in the following categories will receive a framed winners print and prizes from the following sponsors: Photography by Jerry, LilyCrest and JCPenney.

- 1) 0-12 Months
- 2) 13-24 Months
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- 4) 4-7 Years
- 5) Multiple Births

### Beautiful Baby Contest 2013

Category # _____	Age: _____	Date of Birth _____
Child’s Name _____		
Parents Name _____		
Address _____	Phone _____	



Winners will be selected by the staff of Yankton Media Inc. Employees and family members of Yankton Media Inc. are ineligible to win.  
\*Submission of this form authorizes the publication of child’s photo in this contest in print and online at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).  
Submission fee (\$10) must accompany entry form to be valid.

Submit Entry To:  
Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan  
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**Entry Deadline:**  
Mon., Feb. 18, 2013

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Avera Heart Hospital Dietitians  
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