

# Shop With A Cop builds relationships between community, Alton Police force

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer  
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**ALTON** - During the holiday season, those who are less fortunate may go without some of the luxuries that some children and adults take for granted.

Fortunately for the well-deserved kids and their families in the **Alton School District**, the **Police Benevolent & Protective Association Unit 14** was here to help make their Christmases a little more magical.

In its annual **Shop With A Cop** event at the Alton **Target**, around 50 children were nominated by their teachers and selected by school social workers for the special event. The kids were then paired with 15 hard-working police officers that helped them shop for gifts themselves or their family for Christmas.



**PB&PA Unit 14 President Pfc. Andrew Pierson** has enjoyed helping out at the event since he joined the force over eight and a half years ago.

“This is my favorite part,” he said, referring to seeing the kids interacting with officers. “Working with the kids and seeing them have a positive experience with police officers year after year. It’s always a good time.”

**Alton Store Team Lead Katelyn Lenhart** loves that her store and the **Alton Police Department** join together year after year to help out the community.



“I think my favorite part is how many people in the community actually come out,” she said. “It gives us the opportunity to meet the people within our community and create a great relationship with the Alton PD.”



With around \$120 to spend each, raised from Alton’s annual **Policeman’s Ball**, donations from **Heartland Baptist Church**, Alton School District’s faculty and staff and other sponsors and annual events, the police men and women were filled with Christmas cheer to see that, although they were suggested to shop for themselves, the children eagerly wished to buy gifts for their families.

“It’s still always surprises me,” Pierson said. “You would think that they want to buy for themselves, but they’re buying gifts for their family instead. It shows to their quality.”

**After the kids chose their gifts, the Alton Middle School eighth grade cheerleading squad volunteered their time to wrap the children’s gifts. The Alton High School Redbird mascot was also on hand to greet the kids and spread Christmas cheer.**

Video below -

[CLICK HERE OR LOOK BELOW FOR THE "SHOP WITH A COP" PHOTO GALLERY:](#)

