

Edwardsville Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 244 brings Christmas to pre- selected children

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - The annual **Edwardsville Police Department**"Christmas with a Cop" program goes down each year as one of the most touching holiday events in the community.**Officer Rick Thompson**, who helps coordinate the program for

Edwardsville's Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 244, says often he believes the officers get as much joy out of the "Christmas with a Cop" event as the recipients, watching the smiles and overall happiness of the children.

During this holiday season, the members of Edwardsville's Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 244, will be sponsoring their seventh annual "Christmas with a Cop" program on Saturday, Dec. 17.

The "Christmas with a Cop" program enables officers and other volunteers to spread Christmas cheer while getting to know some of the citizens of the community, Officer Thompson said.

"The positive interaction that takes place between the officers, children, and their families is something that lasts a lifetime," he said.

The "Christmas with a Cop" program will begin at 8:15 a.m. at **Burger King** on Troy Road in Edwardsville where 20 pre-selected children will receive a free breakfast. Afterwards, the children will be taken to Target, where they are paired up with an officer and each given \$200 to spend on holiday gifts.

After all the gifts are purchased, the children will accompany the officers to a designated station where they will have each gift wrapped by Edwardsville Police Department's Explorer program members and other volunteers.

The Edwardsville Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 244 would like to extend thanks to the area businesses such as Burger King, Target, and Butler Marcus Realty Group, as well as, numerous private donors within the community to help them benefit more children in need.

"We serve the community every day as law enforcement officers and like to give back to the community," **Sgt. Matt Breihan** said. "This is another example of us giving back. We shop at the local Target and each officers talks to the kids about responsible spending. If they get a toy, they ask if they need clothes, a jacket or anything else."