

Helping community is an Olympian feat for Edwardsville/Glen Carbon Police Departments

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Many law enforcement agencies across the state support the Special Olympics in some fashion.

On Thursday, July 27, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., the Edwardsville and Glen Carbon Police Departments will be acting as greeters at the Edwardsville Texas Roadhouse location, located at 6640 Edwardsville Crossing Dr. During that time frame, police officers from each department will be acting as greeters at the restaurant, which itself is a large corporate sponsor of the Special Olympics. Diners during that time will receive a free lunch in exchange for a donation to the Special Olympics.

Organizer, Lieutenant Mike Fillback of the Edwardsville Police Department, said the police were going to be there to greet people and inform people why they were there. He said the food and service will be handled by the staff at Texas Roadhouse.

"As a police department, we want to look for ways to touch the community outside our normal routine," Fillback said. "Our union conducts shop with a cop every year, and we are very big into our D.A.R.E. program, but this is another form of outreach we have adopted. Law enforcement in general has taken this on as a way to help with the community."

Fillback said he hopes the police presence at Texas Roadhouse Thursday will provide a "good impression" on the community. He said people could associate the police with enjoying a nice dining experience instead of solely getting a ticket written or being arrested.

Later this summer, Fillback said the Edwardsville Police Department would also be involved with another Special Olympics fundraiser at Shop N' Save, which is another corporate donor for Special Olympics of Illinois.

From Aug. 24-27, officers will be greeting people as they enter and exit the supermarket, asking for donations, explaining why they are there and selling unique Illinois Special Olympics shirts. Fillback said the police department and Shop N' Save have been working together for more than 15 years to support the Illinois Special Olympics. He said Shop N' Save also works to benefit the Missouri Special Olympics.