

Stepping Up to the Challenge: Alton High Student Council Donates \$5k to Godfrey Firefighters

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GODFREY – After seeing training for an active shooter in their high school, the Alton High Student Council decided to do something.

The training was conducted between the Madison County Sheriff's Office and the Godfrey Fire Protection District (GFPD) last month at Alton High School. The training incorporated student actors and simulated the consequences and situation occurring with a single shooter using a shotgun. Alton High Student Council President Betsy Papin was part of that training and read media coverage following the drill. At a meeting of the GFPD Board of Trustees, Papin pledged \$5,000 from the student council to get the GFPD ballistic protection equipment.

Firefighters are often sent into “warm zones” following mass casualty events, meaning the situation has been somewhat remedied by police and at least one person has been disarmed. Many departments across the country have proper protection at such scenes. The GFPD does not have such equipment, nor is there space for it in its budget.

A check for \$5,000 was presented to the GFPD Wednesday by Papin and her fellow student council members. During the GFPD trustee meeting, Papin issued a challenge to local businesses, churches, schools and volunteer organizations to match that donation. Godfrey Emergency Management Director Chris Sichra said the cost to get ballistic protection for four people at each station could be double Papin's donation.

“The GFPD still needs community support in order to get their goal for the equipment they need,” Papin said following the donation. “We know there are several Alton High School organizations that are working hard to help. Now is the time for our Godfrey churches, private schools, businesses and Lewis and Clark Community College to step up and help our fire department.”

The motion to donate the money was approved unanimously by the Alton High Student Council's Executive Board, which includes Torre Simon, Maddie Wilkins, Olivia Dickson, Carsen Freeman and adviser Kristi Doering.

“I was thrilled that Betsy and the executive board voted unanimously to give back to our community by helping the GFPD,” Doering said. “I am extremely proud of the officers and all that they have accomplished. All of us at student council are looking forward to partnering with the fire department in the future.”