



Alton Police Department to Participate in Shop With a Cop Again This Year

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - The Alton Police Youth Camp nonprofit will once again sponsor “Shop With a Cop” for local kids.

At 8 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023, Alton police officers will take on Target with approximately 50 students from the Alton Community Unit School District #11. Sergeant Andrew Pierson, union president, explained that the kids will have roughly \$200 to spend on whatever they want for the holidays.

“That’s what our nonprofit is all about, you know?” Pierson said. “It’s very great. Some of the kids come prepared with lists they’ve made and they know what they’re doing. Some of them just wander through the aisles. And you see a lot, too, of the kids wanting to give to their siblings or their mom or their dad or grandma or whatever.”

The police union hosts an annual golf tournament that funds Shop With a Cop. They also receive donations from several local businesses, OSF, Alton Township, the school district and others. All of the money goes to the Alton Police Youth Camp, which organizes the shopping day.

Pierson said the school district selects students who “could really use it this year” to participate in Shop With a Cop. The kids are paired up with officers and can buy whatever they want with the money.

Shop With a Cop is a national initiative that aims to support underprivileged kids during the holiday season. Pierson explained that the program also encourages positive relationships between the community and law enforcement. The Alton Police Department has participated in Shop With a Cop since the late 1980s.

“It’s everything,” Pierson said. “It’s the one chance that a kid could have a positive interaction in their life with law enforcement where they’re not showing up to Mom and Dad’s fights or a car accident or something else that is troubling to them at the time. It’s just to have give back and be a part of growing up and having that outlook on law enforcement. It’s pretty good.”

The Alton Police Youth Camp and police union will also distribute food baskets this month, and Pierson said they regularly help with youth programs and community outreach projects. Shop With a Cop is one of their biggest events.