

2006 Shop with a Cop program more successful than ever

by Bend Weekly News Sources

The 6th annual Shop with a Cop program, sponsored by the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, was bigger and better than ever. This year, 110 children -- from kindergarten through 12th grade -- went shopping, purchasing gifts for 518 family members. Including the students getting something for themselves, 628 people had a little brighter Christmas this year. This was an increase from 2005, when 94 students went shopping and 576 family members were positively impacted.

The local program was started in 2001. That year, approximately 20 students went shopping, and the \$1500 in donations came from employees at the Sheriff's Office. Each year since then, the program has been funded with donations from local businesses and individuals. Public support for this year's program was outstanding; approximately \$25,000 was spent during the 2006 program.

Shop with a Cop is a program designed to help make the holidays a little brighter for less fortunate school-aged children and their families. It also allows local law enforcement officers the chance to spend some quality one-on-one time with these students.

The bulk of the students are recommended by FAN (Family Access Network) advocates located in each public school in Deschutes County. Other recommendations come from individual law enforcement officers, the COPY (Central Oregon Partnership for Youth) program and the community at large. The students go shopping at area Wal-Mart stores with officers from local law enforcement agencies. This year, officers from the Bend, Redmond and Sunriver Police Departments, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, Oregon State Police, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management participated.

According to Cpl. Neil Mackey, Community Policing Coordinator, "the Shop with a Cop program would not be possible without the generous support of local businesses and citizens, local Wal-Mart stores, McDonald's of Redmond and Bend-Sisters, the officers from local law enforcement agencies and the incredible support of our volunteers."

"Thank you so much for your support!" added the corporal.