

Police Department Anticipates 19th “*Gifts from the Heart*” Holiday Assistance Program



The Oshkosh Police Department’s 19th annual *Gifts from the Heart* holiday assistance program will be underway in November. Working in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Head Start Program and the community, we anticipate providing holiday gifts to over 400 children and youth from more than 150 families this year.

Head Start is a federal pre-school program that provides school readiness, family support and services to children with special needs. All families who enroll children in Head Start meet strict income eligibility guidelines. Head Start operates 8 learning centers and has served the Fox Valley region for more than 30 years. The children served by the Gifts from the Heart program are Oshkosh-area residents.

In October, Head Start parents will create wish lists for each child in their family. The Police Department then invites community members to call Santa’s Hotline to sponsor one or more children by purchasing the wish list items as holiday gifts. The Santa’s Hotline number will be published closer to the date it begins operation. Wish List items included clothing, shoes and boots, outerwear, bedding, personal hygiene items, toys, hobby items, electronic games, bicycles and sporting goods. Businesses, schools, organizations and individuals and families are invited to purchase the gifts for specific children. Other individuals may choose to donate undesignated items like board games, books, clothing and toys. Nearly 100 volunteers including the Police Auxiliary and many community and student groups are expected to help wrap and deliver the gifts on Saturday, December 10.

“Each person who calls to sponsor a child expresses great concern about purchasing just the right things and are careful to get as many details as possible about the needs of each child. It is clear that each gift is purchased with care,” reports Dorry Wilner, Community Programs Coordinator for the Police Department. “But beyond the gifts and wrapping paper are a myriad of wonderful stories from families, co-workers and students who find creative ways to participate in this project. All of these stories demonstrate a meaningful sense of community that goes far beyond shopping.” The Police Department thanks the community for helping to make this event a success for the past 18 years and extends wishes to all for a wonderful holiday season.

For more information or to make a donation contact Dorry Wilner, Community Programs Coordinator, at 920 236-5714 or dwilner@ci.oshkosh.wi.us