

Shop-With-A-Cop

Alaina Hoover / Staff Writer

With the holiday season approaching, some families struggle to afford gifts. Summit County's Shop-with-a-Cop event gives children the opportunity to get presents with community funding.

On Dec. 14 at 8 a.m., 13 police agencies around the area, and a few military members, met at the high school with families selected by their children's school counselor. There was breakfast provided in the commons including fruit, sausage, donuts, muffins and more. There were also coloring books provided at the tables, as well as a list of ideas for a game of charades.

Characters such as Disney princesses, superheroes and Santa walked around and took photos with families. Children shared tables with parents, siblings and officers.

Girl Scout Troop 7270 and Boy Scout Troop 270 also attended the breakfast, where they helped set up and kept trays of food full. The boys have attended the event for years, and the girls tagged along with them for the first time this year.

"Our former scoutmaster's sister is involved with the Stow police department, so they got us into the event. We help set up, clean up and get everything stocked," Trooper Lee Reising explained.

After eating, the children were given Shop-with-a-Cop t-shirts and assigned a police officer. Everyone was

then escorted in police cruisers, SWAT vans and army vehicles to Target in Stow. Every kid was supplied with \$100 to spend on themselves, family and friends.

Gift cards were provided with money from a community ticket raffle, where citizens could purchase them for five dollars and win a prize. The prizes were a free dinner and hotel stay, golf foursome and dinner, Playstation 4 and a Malley's gift basket.

Cuyahoga Falls police officer Frank Costerman, has attended the event for five years now. He is a reserve captain, so he helps with the traffic of the event. He also likes to come to see the kids enjoy their time and go shopping with them.

"It helps the families that don't have the money. It lets their child go out and feel special because they are buying the gifts for their loved ones... It gives them a sense of pride and fun since it is the holiday season," Costerman stated.

Once the kids and officers arrived at Target, several kids raced to the toy isles with their assigned officers. Others shopped for clothes, technology, video games and room decorations.

Target remained open to the public; however, it was



A member of the military helps a child shop at target for the annual Shop with a Cop event. Shop with a Cop helps children buy gifts from money raised by the community

flooded with police officers and children left and right. There were signs posted on the doors informing the public about the traffic of the event. The shopping was from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

In the end, the event was helpful to families who may be struggling and helped children get excited about the holidays. This event has been a tradition for years and plans to continue for years to come.



Photo courtesy of Samantha Crayle

Payne's Abnormal Psych class gets many opportunities to do hands on learning within the class. While learning about psychological disorders and homelessness, they have an opportunity to visit the Haven of Rest.

Productive Projects

Molly Richards / Copy Editor

Abnormal Psych, a new class to Stow this year, is giving students the opportunity to participate in the hands on experiential learning offered through the class, one of those opportunities being volunteering at the Haven of Rest.

Laura Payne and all of her Abnormal Psych students took a field trip to the Haven of rest on Sat, Dec. 4. On this field trip, the students toured the facility and then spent some time volunteering for the shelter.

Haven of Rest is a non-profit homeless shelter in Akron. This shelter helps those in need, provides shelter to the homeless and food to the hungry.

This shelter's efforts are towards breaking the cycle of homelessness in our community and changing the lives of those struggling.

"We have been studying psychological disorders and homelessness in vulnerable populations, so that is why I scheduled the field trip," Payne said.

Students made beds at

the facility so the residents could have a break--97 beds in total.

Payne plans on scheduling more of these volunteer opportunities in the upcoming winter months as well.

"I feel like sometime with seasonal affective disorder, and how gray and dreary it is in Ohio, it makes you feel better to go and do something kind for somebody else," Payne said.

When there, students also filled bins next to the beds with a towel, they folded pajamas and put the pajamas in the bins so the men coming in that night would have clean clothes to wear.

There have already been two opportunities for the abnormal psych students to participate in this activity, both in school and out, and Payne plans to continue scheduling these trips for her students.

Payne hopes this opportunity will give students a hands-on learning experience with the homeless and psychological disorders, and also show others what students can do to help.

'You Matter week' provides the opportunity to promote mental health

Cailah Nguyen / Staff Writer

"Speak up, speak life, prevent suicide, you matter," a new saying being advocated throughout the entire student and teacher body. Mental health is becoming more prevalent in today's discussions. Many people struggle with handling their mental health but do not speak about it.

Student council teamed up with HAPPY, and took months to plan a mental health awareness week called 'You Matter Week.'

From Mon, Dec. 9, to Fri, Dec. 13, the library hosted different resources in which students could participate to learn skills on self-care and therapy during lunch periods.

At the beginning of the week, students had home room to gather for a presentation on the purpose of 'You Matter Week.' A video was also shown to students of high school counselors giving the message of "You Matter" and how they are here to help.

"Mental health should be just as important as sleeping, eating, breathing and staying healthy," school psychologist Cassidy Mason emphasized.

Struggling with mental health shows in dif-



Source: Stohion/ Cailah Nguyen

Students interact with therapy dogs in the library, one of the many resources provided for the week. Many high school students are ridden with anxiety or stress, with which therapy dog owners hope to help.

ferent ways for different students. Results from anonymous surveys taken in class, shows there are many students struggling with stress, anxiety, depression and many other different illnesses.

According to the Association for Children's Mental Health, "Over 50% of students with emotional and behavioral illnesses ages 14 and over, drop out of high school."

Many students struggle with anxiety and depression but do not know how or when to get help. Social media affects the discussion around the stigma of mental illness drastically. Hotlines and resources outside of school are being provided to students and school faculty and are an outlet for students to speak to someone.

Mental health awareness in the high school is a student-led initiative. Students recognized the need for the change of the amount of talk around mental health. The committee in charge of 'You Matter Week' involved the mayor, teachers and other clubs in order to come up with ideas to reduce the stigma around mental health.

"I think [mental health awareness] is changing in the right direction, but it is a slow change," Mason added.

Sophomore student council members Sarah Ghumrawi, Nolan Ruth and Stella Boris came up with the idea of the new movement for mental health in the high school, hoping to reach out to many students that need help but do not know where to get it.

"We hope that this week helps people realize that they don't have to be afraid to talk about their mental health, and they could share how they are feeling," Ruth emphasized.

A strong support group from family and friends gives an outlet to talk about feelings.

Even after 'You Matter Week,' school officials are hoping to continue to promote awareness and hold events carrying on the message they hope to spread. The goal is to make speaking about mental health more comfortable and easier for students.

As students head into a busy season filled with stress and drowsy weather, Mason wants others to remember "it's okay to not be okay."

"I think [mental health awareness] is changing in the right direction, but it is a slow change," Mason added.