

(Continued)

Wichita Police Department North Patrol Reads to TOP North Kids

Once the story was over the children asked Officer Johnson questions like: “Why doesn’t the worm take a bath?” “How come he eats the homework?” and “Why does he eat the newspaper instead of read it?”

But then, things took a turn as the kids began to take notice of his uniform. One little boy made the comment, “My brothers have guns at home.” A little girl said, “My momma has gun.” And another little boy, listening to his classmates, asked, “Do you have a gun?” Officer Johnson replied, “Yes, in my holster, but I don’t ever reach for it or use it unless someone is in danger.”

Yet, another child asked, “Why [sic] you have a gun?” Officer Johnson said, “I need one to protect people. I had to go to school for a long time to learn to use it.”

A little girl in pigtails then said, “You can put your gun on people.” To which the officer responded by saying, “I never use my gun unless someone is getting hurt.”

These conversations were the real reason the Police Reading to Preschoolers program was started, said Center Director Tiffany Denton, who went on to say the program was the brain child of former TOP Staff Development Manager Jeannene Schweitzer before she retired.