



PALM BAY AND WEST MELBOURNE POLICE FULFILL CHRISTMAS WISHES FOR LOCAL CHILDREN

Palm Bay- Dozens of Palm Bay Police and West Melbourne Police Officers and employees will answer a different call for service on Thursday, December 15th when they escort over 150 children through the aisles of Wal-Mart for a unique Christmas shopping experience dubbed Operation Reindeer Run. The event begins with a free breakfast for the children provided by Golden Corral on Palm Bay Road followed by the arrival of some "special guests" including Santa and some of his friends, which will be escorted by the Palm Bay Fire Department.

Following breakfast, police officers and department employees will escort the children through Wal-Mart as they each have a \$75 gift card to purchase anything on their Christmas wish list. The children were selected through a partnership with the local schools and were identified as being most worthy of the program. The funding for the Reindeer Run is through use of the Law Enforcement Trust Fund which is money acquired through the forfeited assets of criminals, along with a \$2,000 donation from Wal-Mart to each police agency, to help purchase the gift cards. "It's all about making a difference in the lives of as many children as possible," said Chief Mark Renkens. "It is extremely rewarding for us when we see the smiles on their faces."

The Reindeer Run begins at 8 a.m. at the Palm Bay Road Wal-Mart.