City of Benson
City Council Communication

Regular Meeting **September 22, 2014**

To: Mayor and Council Agenda Item # 2

From: William D. Stephens, City Manager

Subject:

Discussion and possible action regarding sponsorship of the Benson Shop with a Cop program

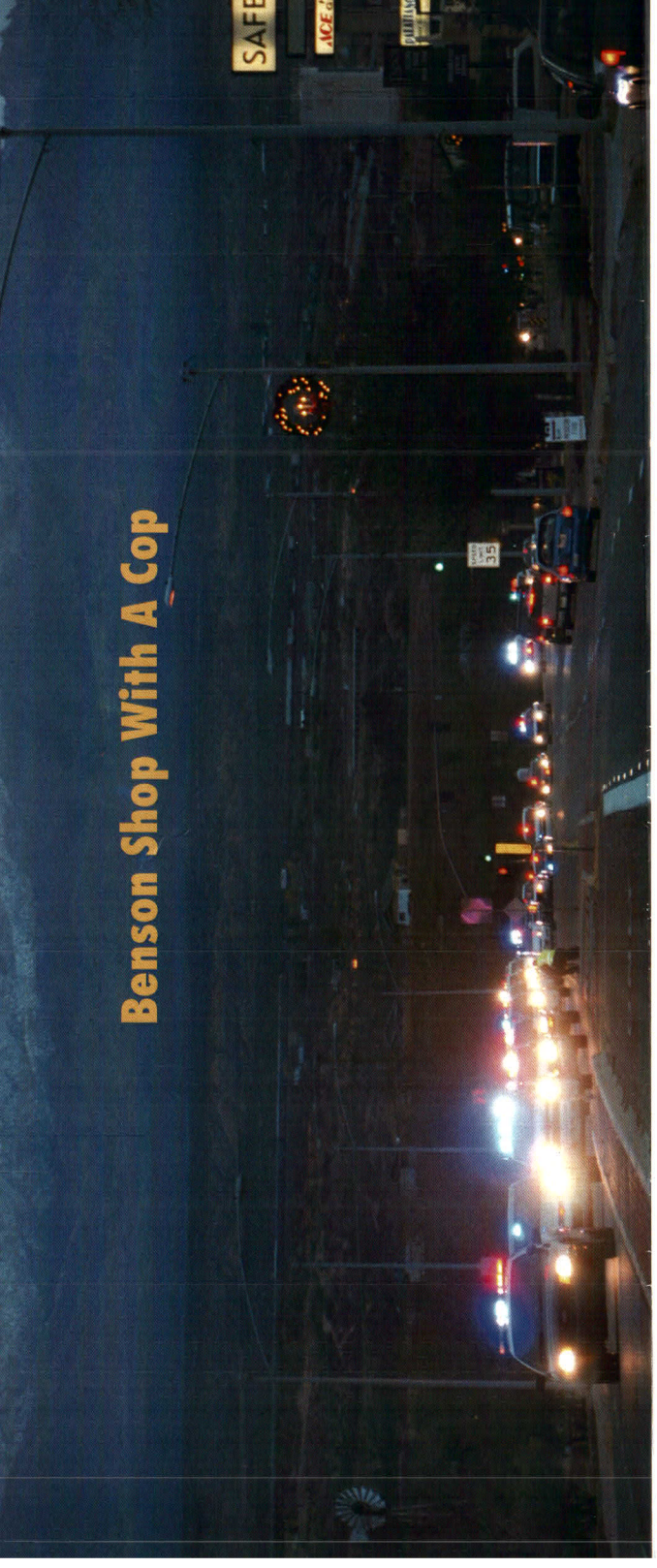
Discussion:

During the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 budget process, Council included a line item in the Community Enrichment section for the Shop with a Cop program in the amount of $500.00.

Ms. Denise Celentano of the Benson Shop with a Cop program is asking for the distribution of this expenditure.

Staff Recommendation:

Council pleasure



Benson Shop With A Cop

Our Purpose

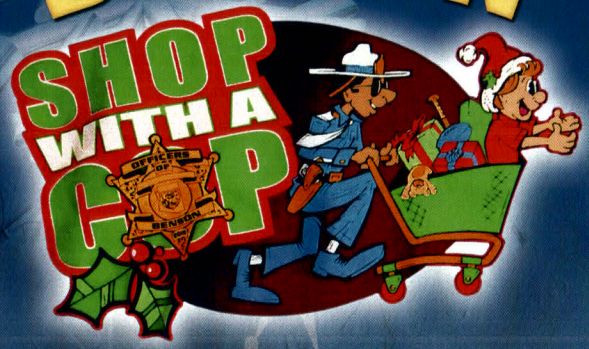
To have the children in our community experience a positive relationship with members of law enforcement while shopping for themselves and family members in a safe and secure environment.

Mission Statement

To create positive life-long memories for children that have experienced hardship, whether emotionally and/or financially, through interaction with law enforcement officers.

We do not distribute donor lists. BSWACP, Inc. is a 501c3 not-for-profit. As with all gifts and donations, please consult with a tax advisor regarding tax deduction eligibility.

BENSON



A Positive Experience

Between Children And Officers

Find us on Facebook

Phone: 520-940-0247
Fax: 520-586-4369
www.bensonshopwithacop.org

Benson's Fourth Annual Shop With A Cop was held on December 14, 2013 at LDS Church Pomerene Ward.

Volunteers served a hot breakfast to 35 at risk children along with "their" officer. Benson's Lawley Automotive continually supports with a donation of two bikes

The scene on Fourth Street was nothing short of spectacular Saturday morning as 35 law enforcement vehicles traveled down Benson's main drag, with lights flashing and sirens piercing the early morning air. With carts rolling up and down the aisles, the officers and children went shopping for Christmas gifts for the children as well as family members. After shopping they went back to the church hall to wrap gifts. With the help of the Escape Youth Group Community Bible Church and the officers, the children had a joyous experience. Officers established a positive relationship with the children by playing the very important role of mentor, and that morning many hearts were forever touched.

Selection of the children comes from the referrals of schools, ministers, officers, and other agencies. Preference is given to those who may have had, or witnessed, a negative contact with law enforcement officers through a parent or sibling's involvement with the justice system. SWAC is run by volunteers utilizing donations from the community. We understand there are many wonderful organizations helping others during the holidays and hope you will please consider donating to a worthwhile program such as Shop With A Cop December 13, 2014.

Law enforcement agencies include: *Alcohol Tobacco Firearm and Explosives, Benson Police Department, Cochise County Sheriff's Department, and Department of Public Safety.*

Benson Shop With A Cop Program
P.O. Box 1355
Benson, Az 85602

www.bensonshopwithacop.org

Donations for SWAC are accepted by mail, online at www.bensonshopwithacop or at Southeastern Arizona Federal Credit Union. Account # 28194.

Benson Shop With A Cop, Inc

PO Box 1355, Benson, AZ 85602
520-940-0247 bswacp@gmail.com
www.bensonshopwithacop.org

In December of 2010, after helping 18 Benson area children have a special Christmas, I stood here and thanked the Council for believing in our program and I was humbled by Chief Moncada's impression of how he and his fellow officers came away from the event overwhelmed by the emotions the children created for them. Our 'motto' is ~Where life long memories are made. Benson's Shop With A Cop program was created with the hope that the children would see law enforcement agencies as the good guys not the bad guys. I now believe this is also a motto for our participating law enforcement officers and agents. Each year the returning officers enjoy themselves and the newbie's look forward to the next year. This tells me that we are all doing what we had hoped to accomplish with the children on that special day. The officers are mentoring, they are being buddies, and they are making a POSITIVE impact – before the gangs have an opportunity to influence the children in a different way.

2014 will be our fifth year and we hope to again help at least 35 at-risk children as we did in 2013. This was held at the LDS church- Pomerene ward, and after a hearty breakfast and 6 bike raffles, including pictures with our town Santa and Mrs. Claus (the Hinskey's) the children rode with their officer with the lights flashing and sirens blaring down 4th street. I was told by many folks setting up Christmas On Main Street that they were touched, knowing who was in the car and why. The children arrived at Walmart not only excited to spend their dedicated $125.00, but from the thrill of the ride. After buying their gifts, they rode back to the hall with their officer and then they paired up with the Escape Youth Group from Community Bible Church who helped wrap their gifts. The morning ended with the children excited to share with their parents or guardians what they had purchased and what they had experienced that day.

Every child that develops a positive attitude regarding the role of Law Enforcement Officers is one less child that the City and County will need to deal with in an adverse situation in the future. Investing in their future is investing in the future of Benson. Mr. Mayor and Council members, I thank you for your previous investments, and I respectfully request that you continue your financial support of the Benson Shop With A Cop Program. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Denise Celentano

Denise Celentano, Executive Director

Benson Shop With A Cop, Inc

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520-940-0247 bswacp@gmail.com
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Dear Law Enforcement personnel;

Please consider joining our event this year scheduled for December 13, 2014. We are so honored that you or your fellow law enforcers have the heart to be involved with bringing lifelong memories to the children we "SERVE".

Benson Shop with a Cop is its own 501c3 entity. Even though the concept of SWAC has been in existence for over 25 years, 2010 was Benson's first undertaking. Benson's Shop with a Cop Program has a 501(c) 3 status and intends on being part of this community for many years to come. Last four year's success was contributed to the community donations, along with Walmart and the City of Bensons financial donation. The Lion's Club and Valley Vista RV Park was very instrumental in the design of the first event. Volunteer officers from ATF, Arizona Rangers, Benson Police Department, Department of Public Safety, and the Sheriff's Department created lifelong memories for the children they escorted. Thank you for those that ***SERVED*** *the last four years! We look forward to Border Patrol joining us this year.*

Most SWAC programs are run by organization like the FOP or community groups such as the Rotary Club. We have a board and advisory group of civilians dedicated to BSWACP. After our event, I shadow our mentors from POSA (Police Officers of Scottsdale Association). They accompanied 300 kids and volunteer officers (ea) to our 35 last year- so this has been quite an experience to bring back ideas for our growth.

Referral forms for the children will be sent to elementary schools, churches, and area agencies. These referrals will be reviewed by a panel of 7 for both economic and those ***which children who may have had, or witnessed a negative contact with law enforcement officers through a parent or sibling involvement with the justice system, also economic issues are reviewed for other families.*** *The range of age is six to twelve; this age span has proven to be best served by officers. They are chosen in hopes that any negative feelings or fears they may have can be replaced with something positive. The officers are the child's mentor for the event. If they don't mentor at risk kids, the gangs will, we hope to build a communication bridge between officer and child. You also can print out an application from web page.*

Our board and those needed to expedite the day in an orderly and enjoyable day are all volunteers and funded by donations. Please review the webpage and feel free to contact me if you have any desire to help out on the day of the event or donate. There is an account set up at Southeastern Arizona Federal Credit Union or a check can be mailed to address above. There is also a need for Christmas gift wrap, bows and tags. These items can be dropped off at the Super Lube Plus 1040 W.4th St, Benson (Tues-Sat).

We are asking that you take a few minutes to Google the You Tube videos that have been created by the successful Shop with a Cop events. See the joy in the children's eyes and yes the officers also. Be part of something amazing and extremely heartwarming for the child that goes shopping with their "officer."

Thank you,

Denise Celentano, Executive Director

YOUR referral (Child Application) is very important to the reason we do this for the Children.

Benson Shop With A Cop, Inc
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December 2014

Last year's Shop with a Cop success was contributed to the community donations, along with Corporations financial donation. Volunteer officers from Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Benson Police Department, Department of Public Safety, and the Sheriff's Department created lifelong memories for the children they escorted. Benson Shop with a Cop has its own 501(c)3 entity along with a volunteer board and advisory committee and a group of volunteer workers.

Children are selected who may have had, or witnessed a negative contact with law enforcement officers through a parent or sibling involvement with the justice system. They are chosen in hopes that any negative feelings or fears they may have can be replaced with something positive. The officers are the child's mentor for the event.

*Our board and those **needed** to expedite the day in an orderly and enjoyable day are all volunteers. Please review the **webpage** and feel free to contact me if you have any aspiration to help out on the day of the event or to donate financially or product. Any contribution is greatly appreciated. There is an account set up at Southeastern Arizona Federal Credit Union #28194 or a check can be mailed to the address above. There is also a need for **Christmas** gift wrap, **bows, tags** and tape & scissors. These items can be dropped off at the Super Lube Plus 1040 W.4th St.*

Thank you,

Denise Celentano

Denise Celentano, Executive Director

Please print out an application from website if you have a child you may feel will quality. Only qualified will be notified.

Benson's Shop with a Cop Program

Children will be escorted by Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosions, Benson Police Department, Cochise County Sheriff's Department and Department of Public Safety volunteers to Walmart in December to shop for Christmas. Although "Shop with a Cop" has happened in cities throughout the nation, this will be our fifth time in Benson. Please donate so we may benefit as many needy children as law enforcement volunteers can accommodate. Last year 35 children created memories for a lifetime. www.bensonshopwithacop.org

An account at Southern Arizona Federal CU has been set up to accept donations; checks are to be made out to **BSWAC.**

The account number is **28194** at SEAFCU.
Or mail to **SWAC PO Box 1355, Benson, AZ 85602**

As with all gifts and donations, please consult a tax advisor regarding tax deduction eligibility.
Any questions call Denise @ 520.940.0247 or bswacp@gmail.com

MERRY CHRISTMAS

SHOP WITH A COP