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Shop With A Hero

DECEMBER 18TH 2012 BY DEE LOFLIN

Shop With A Hero

*Written by
Dee Loflin, SMT Writer*

Dexter, Missouri – On a cold, crisp Sunday morning this was perhaps one of the most touching scenes witnessed this holiday season. With so much sadness with the recent shootings in Connecticut, children in Dexter were excited to hold the hands of those who protect them each and every day of their lives. No, it was not Spiderman or Batman or even Superman, but real heroes.

Policemen, policewomen, firefighters, highway patrol officers, probation, parole and juvenile officers, and all types of emergency responders were dressed in their best uniforms as they drove their emergency vehicles to Wal- Mart to shop with a child who is less fortunate this holiday season.

These men and women took an oath to protect and serve. Perhaps shopping at Wal-Mart with hundreds of children was not first on their list; however as the children laughed and smiled, you could see how proud the emergency responders were by the expressions on their faces. They were absolutely delighted to participate in this heartfelt program. And as each child was assigned their "Hero", some were quiet and shy, others a bit more rambunctious began to run and pick out their toys for Christmas. It was an emotional moment for some of the emergency responders, some were grinning, some had a little tear in their eye, but each were happy to help the children who are so innocent in the struggles of every day life.

Even Santa Claus made an appearance. Children began to yell, "Santa!" as some ran to give him a hug. One little girl, Lesley, kept asking her mom if she could give Santa a hug. Each time Santa would take her by the hand and squeeze her as she giggled. Santa would smile and

proclaim, "Ho, Ho, Ho, Merry Christmas!"

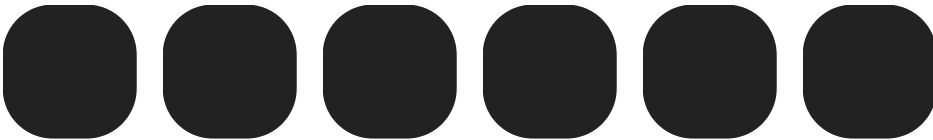
The Shop with A Hero program began 12 years ago when several emergency personnel from Stoddard County who decided to make Christmas a little brighter for underprivileged children in this area. There are many financial donations made each year by the community and lots of fundraising to help each child have a memorable Christmas. This year was no exception as each child was allowed \$75 to shop at Dexter Wal-Mart. Debbie Juden, Wal-Mart Manager, is a huge supporter of this worthy organization. She was also on hand Sunday helping the Wal-Mart elves at the registers.

If you would like to make a donation or have further questions, please call Carol Moreland at 573-624-9086.

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