

Shop with a Cop was a big success

At 7 a.m. Dec. 16, in the foyer of the Bolton Walmart outlet, 50 OPP officers from the Caledon detachment, led by Inspector Ryan Carothers, introduced themselves to 70 ?buddies? ? youngsters identified as deserving this special treatment, and took them on a shopping spree.

Each pair had a gift card for \$113 ? \$100 plus taxes, with the funds raised in programs through the year, and support from very generous donors. Other than being required to purchase one gift for him or herself, the buddy determined how the rest of the total was to be divided. Though some tried, they were not allowed to buy anything for their new OPP friends.

When the purchases went through the cash registers, assisted by smiling and gracious Walmart hostesses, the money transactions were handled by members of the Caledon Optimist Club, since the police are prohibited from controlling funds raised for this event. Once the items had been paid for, they were labeled and bagged, to be delivered to some of Santa's elves, who were waiting at Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School, to provide decorative wrapping for those gifts. The elves were organized and led by Officer Colleen Moore.

Thanks to volunteer bus drivers, the young shoppers were themselves taken to R.F. Hall, for the rest of their morning program. They and their police officer buddies enjoyed a scrumptious breakfast, served by the school administrators, culinary teachers and 40 student volunteers.

Then there was a program of games, face painting and arm tattoos, movies and, of course, pictures with Santa. These activities were entered into with smiles and laughs from both youngsters and officers alike.

Mayor Allan Thompson attended and thanked everyone for participation in the spirit of the season, and Councilor Annette Groves was one of the shoppers, as well as indulging in the activities.

The program was organized by OPP Co-chairs Joe Brisebois and Tamara Schubert, ably assisted by Stephanie Hammond, and a host from the detachment, including almost all of the Auxiliary officers.

This event has become an annual tradition, greatly valued by our community. It shows that young people and police officers can enjoy some good times together while building mutual respect, and sharing best wishes for a happy, healthy, and safe 2018.

Ted Simmonds,

Caledon Optimist Club