



KIDS AND COPS:

A Community Initiative of Law Enforcement, Local Area Merchants [Fred Meyers and Wal-Mart] and United Way of Kitsap County

Background

United Way of Kitsap County and the Bremerton Police Department began a pilot program in November 2005 to assist children ages 17 and younger from low-income families who are in dire need of immediate assistance. The partnership focused on providing vouchers to community police officers and investigators to be used to purchase clothing, shoes, food, and possibly other emergency items for any child identified by community police officers or investigators as being in need.

It is the goal of this program to create a positive relationship between police officers and investigators who patrol the local neighborhoods as well as to make an immediate and positive impact in the community.

During the pilot, over 220 kids were helped with basic needs items. The average age of the children helped has been 8 years old. Because the test was successful, the United Way Board of Directors has authorized an additional \$10,000 towards the program. Target Corporation provided a grant of \$3,500 to be added to the proceeds of our First Annual Kids & Cops Golf Tournament and the proceeds from the First Annual Kids Expo.

We are happy to say that the Port Orchard, Bremerton, Poulsbo, Bainbridge Island Police Departments, and the Kitsap County Sheriffs are all part of this program. We look forward to adding more Law Enforcement Departments.

The Vision

Every day during the course of their duties police officers and investigators encounter children in dire need of assistance. At present the only resources available to them are referral services to governmental or community-based social service programs.

The focus of this initiative is not only to provide immediate assistance to help needy children ages 17 and younger in Kitsap County, but to create an environment where children see police officers and investigators as valuable community resources.

The Program

The *Kids and Cops* program has created a new community initiative by distributing vouchers to police officers and investigators who work or patrol the neighborhoods. These vouchers are to be used to purchase essential basic needs for children they encounter during the course of their duties.

United Way of Kitsap County (United Way) has a staff liaison who will work with the Police Departments. This person will make periodic visits or phone contact to service recipients where possible along with police officers or investigators to evaluate the program and prepare reports on outcomes of the initiative. Yet to be printed is a short questionnaire/comments sheet that will be used by the children's parents to provide the Police Department and United Way feedback. When available, this form will be self-addressed and franked so parents can just drop it in the mail.

The Police Department should appoint a liaison as United Way's point of contact. This individual will be responsible for keeping detailed control and distribution of the vouchers and submitting monthly reports to United Way. The United Way and Police Department liaisons will be responsible for educating police officers and investigators on the program's guidelines as to what constitutes a need.

Upon determination of an emergency, the police officer or investigator will escort, when possible, the child to the proper merchant for assistance. Otherwise, the officer would issue a voucher to the child, after indicating the

needed item(s) on the voucher and validating it with name and badge number. Only the item(s) listed on the voucher may be purchased, and the voucher must be presented within two days of the date of issue. The merchant will attach the receipt to the voucher and retain at the store.

United Way of Kitsap County, in partnership with Police Departments, originally recruited J.C. Penny, Target, Kmart and Wal-Mart (both Bremerton & Port Orchard) as participating merchants. In 2015, our new store partners are Wal-Mart (Bremerton, Port Orchard, and Poulsbo), and Fred Meyers (Bremerton, Port Orchard). These stores will accept vouchers in lieu of payment for purchases and then bill United Way on a monthly basis, attaching the sales receipt to the vouchers for verification purposes.

Vouchers

Assistance is distributed through a simple voucher system with the partner retail stores vouchers available in \$25 denominations. Each police officer or investigator would receive 5 vouchers to carry on each shift and distribute as needed. Assistance per child is limited to one voucher of \$25 per year.

Purchases made by voucher that total less than the face value of the voucher would receive no return change. In order to prevent the recipient from returning items for cash, the receipts for purchases are to be attached to the voucher and retained by the merchant until forwarded to United Way for reimbursement.

Funding

United Way of Kitsap County believes in the value of community relationships and continues to fund this program thanks to donations & initial grants.

Program Operation

United Way:

- Will provide vouchers to the Police Departments as necessary
- Will collect vouchers from partner businesses and pay businesses on a monthly basis
- Will collect the canary copy of the vouchers from Police Departments and enter data into the database
- Will run monthly reports on program operations to include (as needed):
 - ✓ Child Ages
 - ✓ Childs Zip Code
 - ✓ Reason for voucher
 - ✓ Officer Badge #'s
 - ✓ Store where voucher redeemed
 - ✓ Total cost of program per month

Police Department Coordinator:

- Will distribute United Way Kids & Cops vouchers to Officers
- Keep track of how many vouchers are distributed to each officer
- Collect the canary and pink copies of voucher
- Maintain a file of the pink copies of the vouchers
- Turn in or mail to United Way at the end of each month the canary copies of the vouchers

Police Officers:

- For each voucher handed out officers will fill out the information completely
- Give the white (top) copy of the voucher to the kid
- Ensure that only one voucher is handed out to a kid once per year
- Ensure that the Police Department Coordinator receives the canary and pink copies of each voucher

Partner Stores:

- Accept vouchers for the purchase of clothing, shoes and school supplies
- Collect vouchers and attach the sales slip to the voucher. Customer is not to be given the sales slip
- Submit all vouchers to United Way at the end of each month for payment