

MCO Beyond the Walls : Shop with a Cop

The new uniform ordering system is here..!

by Brent Kowitz

Uniform ordering has been troublesome to say the least for several years. With the introduction of this new ordering program, jointly developed between the MDOC and MCO, we believe that those days are behind us.

Facilities are working with chapter leadership to set-up and install the new ordering programs which will allow officers to order on their hire date anniversary.

This new system has many functions build it that will allow the member to track his/her order from beginning to end. Some key features to remember:

- Member order history - members will be able to see all approved or denied orders
- Special requests/NOT in your anniversary month - Warden e-mails are programmed into the system in order to handle special requests from MCO Members.
- Sizing kit locations - Each facility has assigned a person responsible for the kit. Under "size kit location" you will find contact information and times the kits are available.

Please remember that this is a learning process for everyone and nothing is perfect. We have already been fielding calls about some problems a few facilities are having and have been able to resolve them in a timely manner. Please report any issue you are facing to:

Uniform Committee Chair
Brent Kowitz
acfpres@sbcglobal.net

or

Committee Staff Member
Dustin Drabek
dustin@mco-seiu.org
517.485.3310

Mark your Calendars!

February

- 4 - Ionia Town Hall
- 11 - MCOY Interviews/Selection
- 18 - Kinross Legislative Meeting

March

- Watch for Crisis Fund Events
- motorcycle run
- raffle tickets
- MCO Scholarship Applications

December, to Officer Matt McShane and his band of volunteers, means the culmination of year long work to bring holiday cheer to local kids in need. Officer McShane, a Corrections Officer for the MDOC, spearheaded the introduction of the "Shop with a Cop" program to the Mansitee community four years ago. In that time, the group has worked hard to expand (because there is always another kid to help) by reaching out to partner with the local Sheriffs, police, and fire departments. They pour their hearts into preparing for this one special day and gladly give much of their spare time to do so.

Planning starts in early January when the fund-raising events are determined. This year teams stepped onto the basketball court in the "Shop with a Cop" 5 on 5 basketball tournament to fight it out for the top team in the state. New this year was a Battle of the Bands competition which played to a sold out crowd cheering everyone on.

Shop with a Cop is not only about helping kids in need celebrate the holiday (when they might otherwise not be able to) but also spending some positive time with law enforcement and community role models. As the tough economy lingers, more and more of our community members struggle. We are fortunate to have a job, warm home and food on the table and this is our chance to give back. Few things are better than facilitating the pure joy of a child at Christmas.

This year the kids gathered for a meal and met with Santa before heading out with their partner to shop for their families. Each child was provided with \$50 to spend on presents for their family members. They return for cookies and hot chocolate and volunteers work hard to wrap the presents.

A special thanks to all those who participated in this year's "Shop with a Cop" event. It was a great success, and we helped 35 families have a brighter holiday.

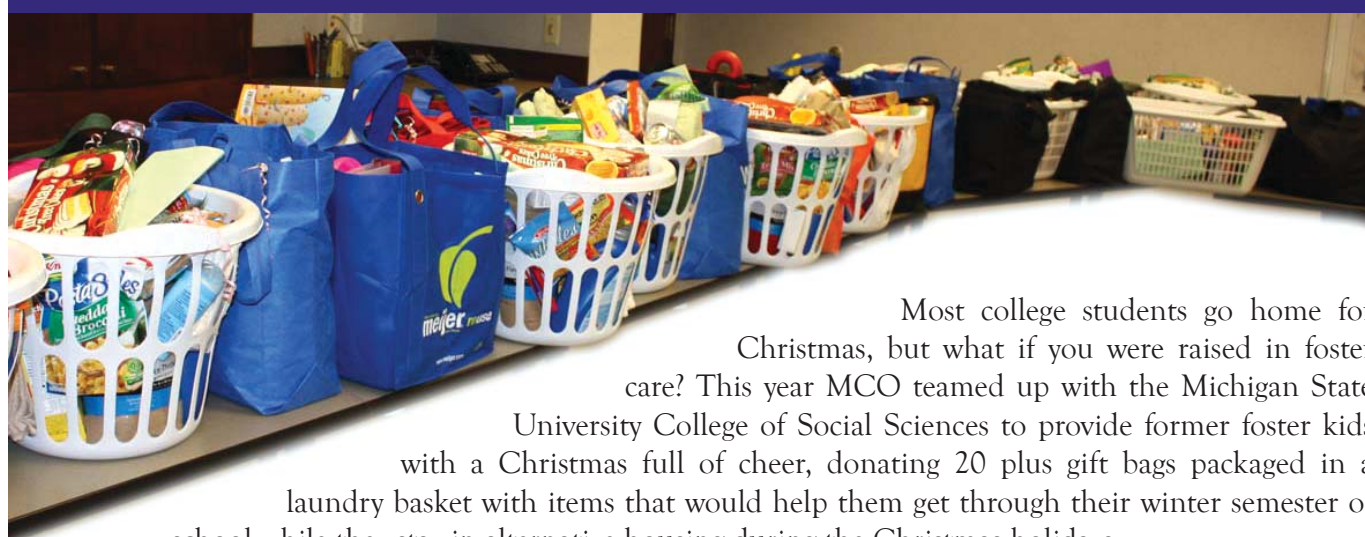
If you would like to volunteer or need help starting a program in your local area contact Matt McShane at 231-510-1710. Have a great new year and stay safe.



photo courtesy of the Ludington Daily News

As MCO members we work behind the walls, unseen. With the recent state budget crisis, now more than ever, the public struggles to understand what it is that we do, let alone the dangerous and critical role we play in keeping our communities safe. But we are more than just corrections officers. We are coaches, church group leaders, Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Because of where we work we see where the wrong circumstances or the wrong decisions can lead. Many of us as a result are driven to volunteer in our communities and with the youth to make a difference. These acts, therefore, are how we can shape the public opinion about the character and quality of our state COs. If you know a group of volunteers or individuals who are involved in their communities and would like to nominate them for a "Beyond the Walls" article, contact Dustin Drabek at MCO.

MCO teams up with MSU to support former foster kids



Most college students go home for Christmas, but what if you were raised in foster care? This year MCO teamed up with the Michigan State University College of Social Sciences to provide former foster kids with a Christmas full of cheer, donating 20 plus gift bags packaged in a laundry basket with items that would help them get through their winter semester of school while they stay in alternative housing during the Christmas holidays.

While many of our state foster care children go on to college, many people don't know that after the age of 18 these kids age out of the foster care system and no longer receive help from the state. Starting college careers without family or state support, they find themselves without the basic necessities that many of us take for granted such as toothpaste, towels, and school supplies.

We would like to thank MSU for letting us help out with such a wonderful cause and we look forward to partnering with them again in the future to help out our local community.

Would you like to help out? Or put together a fundraiser for foster kids in your area? Contact Dustin (info below) and we'll help get you going!

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Questions about something you've read in this issue? Need more information? Contact me! 517.485.3310 or dustin@mco-seiu.org

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