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Shop with a Cop brings joy to Gladstone kids

Ten students from Gladstone's John Wetten Elementary participated in Shop with a Cop. Each child was partnered with a Gladstone police officer and given a \$100 Walmart shopping spree to choose gifts for family members, plus a gift for them.

"It's heartwarming to see that these children shop first for their family, before thinking of their own needs," said Principal Wendy Wilson. "I look forward to this every year."

The 13th annual event took place December, with the school counselor and administrators joining in the fun. Each child got to ride in a police car, and the whole group started their day with a hearty breakfast at High Rocks Restaurant. The Peace Officers Association, Gladstone police officers, and Gladstone/Oak Lodge Rotary contributed to the event.

"It made us feel good seeing so many smiles on children's faces," said School Resource Officer Eric Graves. "This is an opportunity to build a positive relationship with these kids, so they always know they can come to us for help."

PHOTO: Gladstone Police officers and school staff gather with 10 students from John Wetten Elementary who participated in the Shop with a Cop event.

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Classroom sponsors expand opportunities

The Gladstone Center for Children & Families raised \$5,000 for kindergarten programs thanks to contributions from 20 classroom sponsors. Each sponsor donated \$250.

"The added funds help support field trips, classroom projects, instructional supports, snacks, and incentives for positive behavior," said Principal Jere Applebee. "We are grateful for the enrichment this program provides for children in their first year of school."