

PRESS RELEASE



City of Seal Beach
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December 19, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Santa Cop – Community Outreach Event

SEAL BEACH, CA. – Santa Claus asked the Seal Beach Police Department to help him deliver holiday gifts to Orange County children.

On Tuesday, December 17th, the Seal Beach Police Department's Community-Oriented Policing (COP) Team visited CHOC Children's Hospital (CHOC) to participate in its first "Santa Cop" holiday season community outreach event.

In partnership with Target, the City of Seal Beach, and West Cities Police Communications, Seal Beach officers, dispatch and detention services personnel, and City employees went to CHOC to present gifts to children who are unable to spend the holidays at home or are staying in the hospital for an extended period of time. COP Team Officers Bruno Balderrama and Victor Ruiz came up with the idea of the Santa Cop event to give back and bring holiday joy to those children and families in need.

This event was especially important to Officer Balderrama. A family member of his was recently treated at the children's hospital. "The reason Officer Ruiz and I chose CHOC is because I have a personal experience there," said Officer Balderrama. "Their staff, their doctors and nurses treated my family and me wonderfully while we were there. We just want to give back to the community."

Over \$2,000 in donations were raised for Santa Cop which was spent on purchasing gifts and toys. These funds were donated by:

- The Seal Beach Target store,

- the City of Seal Beach Denim Day Campaign (a weekly event where City employees can wear jeans for the day in exchange for a donation to a local charity),
- the Seal Beach Police Officers' Association (POA) and the Seal Beach Police Management Association (PMA),
- and the West Cities Police Communications Employee Association.

After the gifts were purchased they were wrapped, transported, and presented to the children by the Seal Beach, West Cities Communications and Target employees. About 60 children and their families were given gifts or gift cards which were paid for by the generous donations from both Target and Seal Beach employees. "I am grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to bring joy to numerous children and their families. It was truly a memorable experience," Officer Ruiz said.

"We are so fortunate to be part of such a great community cause led by the Seal Beach Police Department," said Seal Beach Target Store Director Trenton Semple. "We look forward to our continued partnership with them and the community as we work to help all families discover joy in everyday life."

The Community-Oriented Policing Team plans on making this an annual event. The officers are working with Santa to find other needy charities for next year.

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