



G.A.P.S. Newsletter

Gerrish Alternative Policing Strategies

"Community with Police...Caring & Sharing Together"

JANUARY 2022



Our 20th Annual SHOP WITH A COP Program went off without a hitch last month. We would like to thank all of the community members, businesses and groups that made donations to the program and also to those donors that dropped off wrapping paper during our Wrapping Paper Drive!

ACT NOW and the Gerrish Twp. Police Officers partnered together to assist 7 full families for the 2021 SHOP WITH A COP Program. This included 18 children and 9 adults. Approximately \$4,000 was spent on gifts for these families that found themselves in need during the holidays. We were also able to provide \$400 in gas gift cards for two families that have extra travel expenses due to some special circumstances.

One child from each family went shopping with our Officers and afterwards were treated to dinner at a drive-thru restaurant of their choice. The gifts were all wrapped by volunteers from ACT NOW, GTPD and the community. The gifts were delivered to the families by Gerrish Officers on December 23rd. To date, our SHOP WITH A COP Program has assisted 155 local families, 548 children and 258 adults, donating over \$76,600 through the program since 2002.

ACT NOW BOARD POSITION OPENING

The ACT NOW Executive Board is currently seeking a volunteer to fill a vacancy on the ACT NOW Executive Board. The position that is open is the Membership Chair with the following duties and responsibilities:

- Promote the growth of ACT NOW
 - Maintain records and roster of membership
 - Promote and market the goals of ACT NOW
 - Research and schedule programs of interest
 - Assist with events, fundraisers, community programs and projects
 - Meet once a month (usually the 1st Friday of each month at 10:00 am at the Gerrish Twp. P.D.)
 - May be asked to serve on smaller project committees
- THIS IS A VOLUNTEER POSITION**

ACT NOW is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization that works in cooperation with the Gerrish Township Police Department to promote the preservation, appreciation and improvement of the physical, social and aesthetic qualities of all Gerrish Township neighborhoods through benevolent actions.

"Neighbors With Police... Caring Together for Our Community"

If you are interested in serving ACT NOW in this capacity, or would like further information, please contact Julie Hill at (989) 821-5207 Ext. 291 or send an email to jhill@gerrishpolice.org.

2021 ACT NOW ANNUAL REPORT

Last year, ACT NOW held five major fundraising events that raised a total of \$12,782.31. These events were our Annual Golf Outing, Glow Golf, Law Enforcement Torch

Run, Shop-With-A-Cop Stuffed Animal Sale and our Scrap Metal Project. ACT NOW donated over \$18,690.00 back to the community through different events, groups and organizations such as our Scholarship Program, Adopt-A-Highway Road Clean-Ups, Annual Picnic, Trunk or Treat, Kids Helping Kids Foster Christmas Program, Shop-With-A-Cop and more!

For a complete copy of the ACT NOW 2021 Annual Report go to www.gerrishpolice.org/act-now/fiscal-year-report/

UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS:



JANUARY 7th

ACT NOW Executive Board Meeting

10:00 a.m. @ Gerrish Twp. Police Department

JANUARY 22nd

Food Truck Distribution @ Roscommon Area Schools

Bus Garage (10:00 a.m. until food is gone)

Job Opening - Gerrish Police Department

Gerrish Township Police Department, not unlike other police agencies throughout the State and across the Country, is experiencing constant officer shortages not due to the COVID pandemic but for several other reasons. 86% of law enforcement departments across the U.S. reported staff shortages in 2020 and they continued into 2021.

The few recruits that are coming through academies in Michigan have job offers before they even graduate. A lot of agencies are sponsoring cadets by paying for their academy and paying them a salary to ensure their commitment to their agencies after they graduate. There are fewer and fewer men and women interested in law enforcement as a career due to several reasons such as:

- There are better paying jobs in the private sector compared to public service jobs
- There is a lack of trust and an intense scrutiny of law enforcement in general
- The potential stress of negative media reports is outweighing the dangers of the job
- Inability of applicants to pass background checks

Many agencies have had to get creative and more competitive in their recruitment and retention processes. Chief Hill did an area wage and benefit analysis last year and found that our Department was quite a bit behind in not only salaries but in the length of time it was taking to "top out" on the wage schedule. It was taking our officers six years to top out where other agencies it was taking 3-4 years maximum to be at the top of a wage scale. Chief Hill presented a new wage schedule to the Gerrish Township Board to reflect a change to make our Department more competitive and they approved the change which will be effective on April 1, 2022.

Overdose Epidemic

Our Nation's drug overdose epidemic has worsened during the COVID pandemic and in Michigan opioid-related overdose deaths have gone up by 18-20 percent from January 2019 through October 2021. One prevailing theme is the fact that the epidemic now is driven by illicit fentanyl, methamphetamine, heroin and cocaine often in combination or in adulterated forms. Overdoses related to prescription opioids also remain high.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services developed an Opioid Strategy in 2021 to include promoting prevention, education, treatment, recovery and proper disposal of unused medications.

Proper drug disposal is important because it helps protect human health and our environment. Did you know that there are over 500 collection sites for unused and unwanted drugs in Michigan and we have one here at the Gerrish Twp. Police Department located just outside our front door. We accept any medications, controlled substances in either solid or liquid form. There is no need to remove the pills from the containers or remove the labels as only one of our officers has the key to the drug box and is in charge of emptying, weighing, storage and packaging in preparation for proper incineration disposal twice a year.

You can access our drug drop box 24/7, 365 days a year. If you have a large quantity or something that will not fit in the chute, just ring the bell outside the door and someone will take those items through the lobby window Monday-Friday between 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. In 2021, we disposed of 159.4 pounds of drugs/medications!!

