# G.A.P.S. Newsletter

**Gerrish Alternative Policing Strategies**

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

Wishing you all a
Happy New Year
2024
Stay Safe and Healthy!

## SHOP WITH A COP PROGRAM

Our 2023 Shop-With-A-Cop Program "wrapped" up on December 18th when 17 volunteers showed up to help wrap presents for the five families that we adopted for Christmas.

Thank you to all of the donors who support this program each and every year...this would not be possible without your generosity! One child from each family went shopping with our officers and purchased gifts for their entire family. They were treated to lunch or dinner after shopping and they all enjoyed spending some positive, quality one-on-one time with the officers.

Our Officers along with a couple of members from our ACT NOW board delivered all the gifts to the families on December 20th so that they would have them in time for Christmas.

We started the Shop-With-A-Cop Program in 2002 and to date we have assisted 168 families, 583 children and 279 adults. The program involves an application process, vetting of the applicants to make sure they fit the criteria and are experiencing financial difficulties. The ACT NOW board authorizes the spending and is the fiduciary agent for the program. We do not assist the same families each year and repeat applications do not qualify.

Our program is different from Shop with a Hero that also takes place every December and is organized by the Michigan State Police where the child is selected and has an allotted amount of money to shop for themselves, or someone else in their family if they choose. These are both wonderful programs hosted by law enforcement to bring holiday cheer to our communities!

## Scrap Metal Project

ACT NOW and the Gerrish Police Department began their Scrap Metal Project in 2008 and over the past 16 years have raised over $31,500.00 from this project!

Besides the purchase of the original scrap metal trailer in 2010, maintenance expenses for the trailer and some mileage reimbursements to the haulers, all of the other funds raised have gone toward the many community programs and projects sponsored by ACT NOW and GTPD. We would like to recognize and thank Stanley Baysdell and his scrapping partner Dave Blazejewski for their years of dedicated service in sorting, loading and hauling the scrap metal to the recycling center every couple weeks during the season. After 16 years of volunteering for this project, they are officially retired as of the close of the project in October 2023.

They have been single-handily responsible for this community fundraiser since its inception and we cannot thank them enough!! Carlos Jean-Francois began helping them out this past summer and has agreed to take on the job of heading up this project as we move forward.

The Scrap Metal Project runs annually from April 15th - October 15th and items can be dropped off to the trailer behind the Gerrish Police Department next to the fence.

If you are available and interested in assisting Carlos with the sorting and hauling of the scrap metal every couple of weeks during the season, please contact us at Gerrish PD.

**JANUARY 1st** HAPPY NEW YEAR 2024

**JANUARY 5th**
ACT NOW Executive Board Meeting
10:00 am @ Gerrish Twp. Police Dept.

**JANUARY 27th**
Food Truck Distribution @ Roscommon Area Schools
Bus Garage (10:00 am until food is gone)

# Drug Drop Box

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day was October 28, 2023 and the Gerrish Twp. Police Department sealed up seven boxes (93.4 pounds) of drugs that were taken to Petoskey Department of Public Safety for transport to Grand Rapids for proper disposal as part of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council's environmental program. We collected a total of 161.8 pounds of unwanted and unused medications at our Drug Drop Box which is located just outside of our front door and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

On November 7, 2023, Lt. Eric Muszynski assisted with taking a trailer full of boxes filled with drugs to a Grand Rapids incineration plant, which in turn burns all of the items and safely turns the waste to steam which then provides heat to the side walks and streets to parts of Grand Rapids. During this drop, there were 1.76 tons (3,520 pounds) of drugs turned into the plant which represented 17 counties in Northern Michigan that were collected in a six-month period!! We would like to thank Officer John Wybraniec who is our Drug Drop Box Officer who makes sure our box is emptied on a regular basis and that the drugs are securly stored and accounted for until they are turned in for disposal.

## Officer Alexander Cole

Welcome to the TEAM

Alex was born in Anchorage, Alaska and spent the first eight years of his life in the Southern United States. He moved to Michigan with his family when he was 9 years old where he lived in Davison. He then moved to Hartland, MI where he did the majority of his public schooling and finished school at Grayling High School graduating in 2022. During his time in school he participated in lacrosse, cross country, downhill skiing, and track and field. After graduation, he attended Kirtland Community College with the intent to go into Law Enforcement. While at Kirtland, he made the Dean's List in 2022 and ran cross country with the KCC team. He also took classes to become a certified Firefighter and a licensed EMT and is also a member of the Gerrish Twp. Fire/EMS Department.

Alex was hired by the Gerrish Township Police Department in August of 2023 as a sponsored Cadet in the Kirtland Regional Police Academy and graduated from the Academy's 57th Class on December 8, 2023.

Chief Hill gave Alex his Oath of Office immediately following graduation and he has begun his Field Training Program with Sgt. LaBonte. We welcome Officer Alexander Cole to the GTPD team and look foward to his service to the community under badge number 17-8. During his free time, Alex enjoys spending time with his family and hobbies such as jiu-jitsu, running, lifting, and outdoor activities. He states, "I look forward to serving this community that I call home."