

Hot Dog! BC3 @ LindenPointe students help cops take a bite out of crime

“This is a first and we are very grateful,” patrolman says

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(Hermitage, PA) Recognizing the bite that a \$68,000 request would represent in the dog-eat-dog world of municipal spending plans, students at BC3 @ LindenPointe are working to help the Hermitage Police Department purchase the lucky dog that will become his force’s first K-9.

All student clubs at BC3 @ LindenPointe have volunteered to create “Dog Day Tuesdays,” in which they are selling a hot dog and bag of potato chips for \$1 at 3182 Innovation Way, Hermitage. The effort, held between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tuesdays, is to assist Eric Jewell, who after becoming Hermitage police chief in June realized he needed a backup to finance his idea of creating a K-9 unit.

“The high startup costs of this project in an already tight budget caused us to have to fund-raise,” Jewell says.

Patrolman Sammy Staples teaches courses in BC3 @ LindenPointe’s criminology program. He mentioned the proposed K-9 program to BC3 @ LindenPointe Secretary Alice DeBonis, who also serves as adviser to the school’s Book and Beautification-Gardening clubs.

“She passed the idea along,” Staples says, “and really got it rolling.”

It comes as no surprise to BC3 @ LindenPointe Director John Suesser that the Business, Film, Journalism, Phi Theta Kappa, Psychology and Social Work, and SADD clubs joined the pack.

“Students at LindenPointe seem to enjoy being a part of helping the various communities in Mercer County,” Suesser says, referencing donations and contributions to organizations and agencies such as the Salvation Army, food banks, March of Dimes and year-end holiday contributions.

“Dog Day Tuesdays” is a “clever way to promote the activity,” says Suesser, whose students are alone among regional colleges or universities to dig in and assist Hermitage police in this effort, say Jewell, Staples and Patrolman Eric Frampton.



Paige Cusick, a sophomore early childhood education major from Hickory, and fellow Journalism Club member Tiffany Vandersnel, sell hot dogs during “Dog Day Tuesdays,” which benefit the Hermitage Police Department’s effort to buy its first K-9 officer.

Students at BC3 @ LindenPointe won't call off the dogs until the end of the semester – or until the school “runs out of ketchup and mustard,” Suesser says.

“I really, really appreciate BC3 students getting involved”

Jewell acknowledges the challenge students face in balancing classes, school club obligations, jobs and other volunteer and personal commitments.

“So I really, really appreciate BC3 students getting involved to help us out,” he says.

As do Frampton and Staples.

“This is a first and we are very grateful to BC3's club coordinators and student members for making this happen,” Frampton says. “It speaks very highly to the quality of people at that institution. ... The focus on law enforcement has unfortunately turned so negative in our society. For these students to take time away from their own schedules to help is really exciting. I'm hoping that maybe this could help change the perception of the younger generation in regards to misconceptions that surround law enforcement.”

Adds Staples, who teaches crime and justice systems, criminal law, criminal procedure, and juvenile justice and corrections: “(The students') willingness to get involved is exciting and encouraging. It says that they are serious about a commitment to something, more than just a standard education.”

Maybe, Jewell says, “this will motivate others to lend a hand.”

Student: “I have a huge respect for the police”

Their efforts are hardly a pet project, Kenneth Findley and Paige Cusick say.

“I get that feeling of being a good person because I am helping to raise money for the Hermitage police to get a K-9 unit,” says Findley, a freshman mathematics major from Transfer and Book Club member who says his grandfather was a police officer and his father, a security guard.

“I have a huge respect for the police.”

Adds Cusick, a sophomore early childhood education major from Hickory and Journalism Club member: “We can all do something to help the community and the police officers.”

Jewell received authorization from the Hermitage Board of Commissioners to seek donations to fund the program, which would include the purchase of a specially-outfitted K-9 vehicle with an onboard laptop computer and emergency lights, body armor for the police dog – and the K-9 and its training, which alone could cost \$15,000.

His department patrols Hermitage, the boroughs of Clark and Wheatland, and certain properties owned by the Army Corps of Engineers at Shenango Lake. Officers on Friday sniffed around Shallow Creek Kennels in South Pymatuning Township, Mercer County, to consider their options.

“There are limited breeds that can do this type of work,” Jewell says.

The year-old K-9 that would ultimately live with Frampton would be used to collar escaped criminals or fugitives, detect narcotics and track lost or confused persons and runaways, Jewell says.

“I want to meet the dog in person”

Once the K-9 – which will already be named, but is being referred to as “Rosco,” jokes Frampton – begins its tour of duty, it will be introduced at schools, businesses and residences.

“I would like for everyone who played a role in us getting this dog to have the chance to see him or her,” Frampton says.

That would include VFWs and American Legion posts, Parent Teacher Organizations, foundations, charities, businesses and individuals – and students from BC3 @ LindenPointe such as Cusick, who admits to puppy love after seeing an image of a police dog shown on fliers distributed throughout the building.

“It is so cute,” she says. “I want to meet the dog in person. I like dogs.”

Customers will also like the hot dogs being served at BC3 @ LindenPointe which, Findley boasts, are “grilled, not boiled.”

“It’s a tasty hot dog,” he says.

Jewell agrees. While Frampton has twice had to turn around in the BC3 @ LindenPointe parking lot to respond to calls and miss the first two “Dog Day Tuesdays,” Jewell was able to help take a bite out of crime March 14.

The chief, who once downed 13 hot dogs in a single sitting as a teenager, says “Though many frankfurter connoisseurs say mustard is the only acceptable condiment, I’m a ketchup, mustard and onion guy myself.”

His take on the BC3 @ LindenPointe hot dog?

“Doggone good.”