

From: Darin W. Powers

Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2011 10:47 AM

To: '640 WHLO'; 'Akron Beacon Journal'; 'Bob Gaitijens'; 'Dave OBrien'; 'Eric Mansfield'; 'Fox8'; 'Mike Sang Plain Dealer'; 'Mike Sever'; 'Plain Dealer'; 'Record Courier'; 'Rubber City Radio Group'; 'TV19'; 'TV3'; 'TV5'; 'TV5 tips'; 'TV8'; 'WKYC News'; 'WNIR'; 'WTAM'

Subject: Media Release: Follow Up on Shop With a Cop Phone Calls

On November 8, 2011, our department sent out information regarding phone calls our citizens were receiving asking for donations to our Shop with a Cop program. We wanted to let our citizens know that our department does not solicit for donations by phone and that people should verify who is calling for donations. Our department then opened an investigation into who was making these calls. Thanks to the help of some of our citizens who received the calls, we were able to track down where the calls are coming from.

A company called *Cops for Kids* is based out of North Kingsville OH and is registered with the state as a non-profit organization. *Cops for Kids* then makes agreements with police agencies to solicit money for their various programs such as Shop with a Cop and Buckeye Teddy Bear. They contract out to a telemarketing company called *Telcom Fundraiser* to make calls to residents all across the State of Ohio soliciting for donations which they say goes back to the agencies they have agreements with. Representatives for *Cops for Kids* and *Telcom Fundraiser* both say that the callers go by a specific script and do not deviate from that script. They are not supposed to use the name of a specific city, such as Streetsboro, when soliciting donations.

It does appear that the funds raised by *Cops for Kids* are going to police agencies to support these programs, however, it is possible and even likely that the funds are not going to the agency where the call is received. The Streetsboro Police Department **does not** have an agreement with *Cops for Kids* and **does not** receive any of the funds being raised by this company, even though they are calling residents of our city.

We would suggest that if citizens would like to donate to their local police agency for programs such as Shop with a Cop, make a phone call to your agency or stop in. This way they know where the donations are going. We would also like to suggest that if citizens receive phone calls soliciting for donations, ask specific questions and verify the legitimacy of the organization. Most police agencies do not solicit for donations by phone.

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