

STATE CAPITOL POLICE
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CONNECTICUT

STATE CAPITOL POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Chief Michael J. Fallon announced that the State Capitol Police Department will be partnering with the Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC) and participating in the Safety, Training, and Recreation (STAR) program. Chief Fallon commented, "The STAR program allows us to give back to the most important people in the community... our children."

The STAR program was developed to benefit children who are sick or injured and require emergency medical treatment in the CCMC emergency center. The program allows for uniformed officers to visit the emergency center and interact with the children to mitigate the trauma of the event. Officers offer tips on safety, answer questions like, "Did you ever catch a bad guy?" and hand out donated stuffed animals and toys. In some cases officers will discover that parental guidance may be lacking therefore it's a great opportunity to have a positive impact on child's life. In a few cases it may be the only positive impact a child will receive...that's why the program is so important.

The program is designed so that officers can volunteer without impacting their agency. Usually before or after a shift. Times are not structured by design because as one hospital administrator stated, "*kids are always getting hurt and we always have customers...we'll welcome officers at any time.*"

The program has been implemented with great success by many police departments. Essentially the program relies on police officers to utilize their professional training, common sense, and life experience when dealing with the children and their families. Officers must have permission from a supervisor to participate and are provided with training by CCMC staff. Ms. Jackie Grogan of CCMC who conducts the training is very excited about working with the department.

The SCPD purchased 5000 Junior Capitol Police sticker badges for use both at the Capitol with youth groups and with the STAR program. Future efforts will focus on teddy bear and toy drives to support the STAR program.

Chief Fallon is enthusiastic about the program and is very appreciative of his officer's efforts to make a difference in the lives of children. [End]