



Sharing Ohio's Best Program

Recognizing Outstanding Community Policing



Agency of the Month

Vermilion Police Department

April 2020

Did the Right Thing Program. . . .

The idea came from other departments that were giving rewards to children found wearing a bike helmet. With some modifications, Sgt Scott Holmes created the "Vermilion Police Department Did the Right Thing Program" (DTRT). Scott is also the President of the Local FOP Lodge #125, which co-sponsors the program. "I wanted to give our officers a method of having positive contacts with the community, particularly our children. I developed the program to give officers the opportunity to reward the children for good behavior, and to give the officers latitude on what they believed was 'good behavior'. I contacted our local ice cream stand, Romp's Dairy Dock, and petitioned the owners to co-sponsor the program with the FOP. The owners of the Dairy Dock



were immediately supportive of the program. I then created our DTRT 'Golden Tickets', the tickets reflect what the program is all about and on the back of the ticket there is an area for the officer to indicate the child's name, what that child did that was considered 'the right thing' and the officer's name. The 'right thing' is commonly things such as; wearing a seat belt or bike / skate helmet, using a cross walk, calling 911 during an emergency, and for the VPD it is most common for wearing a life vest while on a boat. On the back of the golden ticket is a voucher from the Dairy Dock that is good for a \$2.00 credit for ice cream, which is enough for a small ice cream for the child."



Vermilion is the largest small boat harbor on Lake Erie and has the Vermilion River running through the center of town. Boating is a major part of the community. The VPD Marine Patrol Unit has golden tickets on board and are quick to issue the tickets to any children who are wearing their life vests. Parents have thanked them for the program, stating that they used to have to argue with their kids to wear the vests on their boat, but now the kids insist on wearing the vest because they know that they may be seen by the VPD Marine Patrol and issued a golden ticket. While on boats, kids encourage their parents to drive closer to the VPD boat so that they can be seen and "stopped". The officers have also found that issuing the tickets to children on boats that have been stopped for a law enforcement action has lessened the negative aspects of that stop for the parents.



The program has been a huge success. It was initially developed for a (2) two year trial, 2017 and 2018. It was so successful, the program was continued for 2019 and 2020. The Dairy Dock has been more than willing to continue to provide 200 tickets at \$2 vouchers each (\$400) total to sustain the program. It has an added benefit for the Dairy Dock, as it brings the child to get ice cream for the \$2 voucher, but also brings other family members with them. . . .and who can go to an ice cream shop and not get an ice cream? Vermilion Police Officers are encouraged to be involved in the program by issuing these tickets and to ask the parents for a quick photo with the kids. Those photos are then posted on the agency's social media platforms for public relations posts. The costs for the program are nominal, the printing of the 200 golden tickets costs \$50 at the local printer.

