



Newport News Sheriff's Office

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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE: **IMMEDIATE**

DATE: **December 18, 2006**

Deputies Play Santa for NN Senior Citizens

Safety for **O**ur **S**eniors (S.O.S.) is a program that was started by the Newport News Sheriff's Office at least six years ago. Seniors enrolled in the program get a wellness call every weekday morning. Deputies and staff with the Civil Enforcement Division call the seniors each M-F. If the senior fails to pick up the phone after a few attempts, a deputy is immediately dispatched to their residence. The criteria for enrollment is simple: Senior citizens who live alone, are in poor health and who don't have any family nearby to check on them are eligible. Without S.O.S and the caring deputies in our Civil Enforcement Division, these seniors may otherwise be alone.

Seniors fill out an application, including an agreement to let us know ahead of the scheduled telephone call that they will be out of town or at a doctor's appointment, etc. They also agree to allow a deputy to make entry into their home.

Shortly after the S.O.S. program was developed, the Sheriff's Office began giving holiday gifts to each of the enrolled seniors. In 2006, the NNSO participated with Home Instead Senior Care for its "Be a Santa for a Senior" program. It is a nationwide program with various retail partners. In this area, they team with area Wal-Marts.

After the gift wrapping party, deputies play Santa Claus by delivering the presents to the 45 people on our S.O.S. list. In between serving warrants and other civil papers, deputies make home deliveries that are sure to put smiles on the faces of our city's seniors.

The senior community is an important part of Newport News. The Sheriff's Office wants these men and women know that we care. In addition to S.O.S., the NNSO offers Project Lifesaver (finding Alzheimer's patients who wander), File of Life and Yellow Dot (both programs helping to put emergency medical information at the fingertips of emergency responders).

For more information on enrolling in S.O.S., or information on any other outreach program, call the NNSO Community Resource Office at 926-7017.

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