

Make A Child Smile event puts students in the holiday mood

Smiles, grins and laughter came easy for 100 Chino Valley Unified School District students and their parents as they were treated to a police escort, a shopping spree, visit with Santa, crafts and snacks during the annual Make A Child Smile event on December 15 at Walmart in Chino.

The event is hosted by Chino Valley Fire Foundation.

The students, selected by their schools for the field trip, pressed their noses against the glass of school bus windows as Chino Police motorcycle officers whizzed by, stopping traffic as the caravan of buses was led to the store by two Chino Valley fire engines.

The students were greeted at the store by dozens of waving Walmart employees, Chino Valley Independent Fire District firefighters, Chino Police officers, San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputies, Highway Patrol officers, Cal Fire officials, other first responders from various departments around the Chino Valley, and Chino Valley Unified School District employees. Santa was among the first to shake the students' hands as they disembarked.

Each child, accompanied by a parent or volunteer, was paired with first responders or community volunteers and a Walmart employee and allowed to shop for \$150 in items. Gift cards for the purchases were provided by Chino Valley Fire Foundation. Some students chose large gifts like bicycles. Others picked out clothes, shoes and small toys. Some students said they were shopping for holiday presents for their entire family.

Nearly a dozen volunteers, including members of the Chino Hills 55+ Club, bagged up the items so they'd be safe for the bus trip back to the schools.

The students were also treated to snacks inside a tent, crafts, two areas of man-made snow, and a formal photo with Santa courtesy of School Portraits by Adams Photography in Chino.

"We're like celebrities!" one child yelled as he arrived at the store.

See photos below:

A student and her family member have their photo taken with Santa, a Chino Police officer, and a Walmart employee at the annual Make A Child Smile event at Walmart in Chino.



A young shopper and her Highway Patrol escort pose for a photo before checking out at Walmart.



A student is excited about the large selection of books to choose from during her shopping trip.



A student tries on a pair of turquoise shoes. Many of the shoppers had clothes on their wish list.



A Chino Police officer and his assigned student have fun shopping.



A girl and her mother check out clothing in Walmart during the shopping spree.



Volunteers offer fruit, pastries and other snacks to the shoppers and their family members.



A student looks at holiday jewelry while her shopping partners watch.



A volunteer helps a young shopper at the craft table.



A Walmart employee checks out a student and his chaperones.



A Walmart employee uses a device to bring a bicycle down from a top rack for a student shopper. One of the law enforcement chaperones stands nearby, holding the student's purchase list.



A young shopper and his entourage get ready to hit the aisles at Walmart in Chino.



A student loads his purchases onto the conveyor belt at a cashier's station.

