

Sabal Elementary Students Brand New MPD Outreach Program

Before the holidays, students in Mr. Dorricott's Sixth Grade class at Sabal Elementary won a competition to brand a new Melbourne Police Department elementary school outreach program. The sixth-graders came up with the winning name "COPS" or "Cool Outside Programs at School" and even designed a logo for the program, which was started this fall by Community Resource Officer Ben Slover.

"The idea behind the COPS program was to reach out to and give children a chance to get to know Melbourne police officers in a positive setting," said Lt. Cheryl Trainer, who oversees community outreach for the Melbourne Police Department. "Middle and high school students get to interact with our officers through the School Resource Officer program, but we don't have dedicated officers at elementary schools."

Though the MPD has conducted other elementary school outreach programs in the past, Officer Slover wanted to try something more interactive and fun for the kids, so he contacted the each of the principals of the elementary schools located in Melbourne to ask if he could play games with the kids during their PE time. He now visits schools two days every month, playing games like basketball, dodgeball, tag and even jump rope.

The response has been extremely positive, and all of the public elementary schools in Melbourne are now participating in the COPS program.

"I believe that this is the type of innovative idea that we need to connect our community together, said Stephanie E. Hall, Principal of Sabal Elementary. "Officer Slover walks the halls and visits the cafeteria to introduce himself and build relationships with our students."

"The COPS program is exactly the type of positive interaction we want with our community," said Lt. Trainer. "We want everyone in our community to feel that we are approachable, but with kids there's a need to keep it simple and real. They have responded in a very positive way to this type of interaction."

The Winning Logo:



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