

KIDS ON A MISSION

To get involved

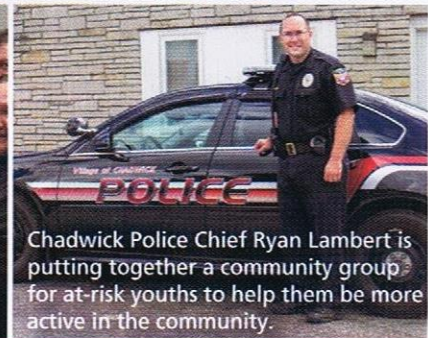
If you'd like to help out the Chadwick Super Troopers, the group has an account at Triumph Community Bank, 123 Main St., in Chadwick.

If you have possible community service projects for the group, or if you want more information about the group, call the police department at 815-684-5264.

Chadwick Super Troopers are do-gooders doing good



Photos by
Michael Krabbenhoft
Carroll County Living



Chadwick Police Chief Ryan Lambert is putting together a community group for at-risk youths to help them be more active in the community.

BY KAYLA HEIMERMAN

SPECIAL TO CARROLL COUNTY LIVING

It's a bird!
It's a plane!
It's the Chadwick Super Troopers!

This small group of junior high and high school boys is making a big impression on their community.

Police Chief Ryan Lambert started the group in late May to give the youth some direction.

"I was seeing the same kids hanging out at the park," he told Sauk Valley Media in July. "They weren't doing anything bad or criminal in nature, but they seemed bored and without direction."

Lambert got the boys involved in community service. Over the summer, the boys painted the crosswalks, parking lines, and handicapped-access lines on Main Street, pulled weeds, and cleaned up the park. In the fall, they helped an elderly man with yardwork and an exterior paint job.

Around the holidays, they assembled food baskets for needy families in both Chadwick and Thomson, wrapped gifts for needy children in Thomson, and partnered with the Lions Club to deliver holiday fruit baskets to senior citizens in the community.

"Some people were in tears [because] they were so appreciative," Lambert said. "That's what it's all about – the boys being able to see the impact that doing something good can have."

The group meets regularly, sometimes at the police station, but mostly at school over lunch.

"It's not just about going over what our next project is going to be," Lambert told Sauk Valley Media in July. "... We go over life, education stuff, too ... about making wise decisions."

The group has just six members, who range in age from 12 to 16. Almost all of the boys in the group have had run-ins with law enforcement, such as vandalism, and one has been on probation; none of the infractions was serious, Lambert said.

Since the group started, juvenile-related calls have been down, Lambert said, and the pride among the boys in both themselves and in their community has grown, he added.

"This first year has really been a work in progress," Lambert said. "I didn't know what to expect when I came up with the idea.

"... I've noticed the bond within the group has grown, gotten stronger. They all work well with each other. They all have the willingness to help and to give back."

Lambert hopes the boys get something out of their experience.

"I'm hoping they can take away some structure and some direction," he said. "I'm hoping they'll learn to make good decisions ... and to understand that it's important to give back to your community and help out people who need it."

The boys already seem to get it.

"Helping people feels good," said Christian Shores, 12.

And their friends certainly are curious.

"They think it's weird because this is something that has never been done before," said Keaton Casares, 15.

The group has neon yellow T-shirts with its logo – the letters C-S-T with feathered wings flanking them and a thunderbolt shooting through the whole lot – and they are the talk of the hallways at school.

"They're always like, 'Hey, how do I get one of those shirts?'" Lambert said.

Lambert has received high praise from the community.

"People stop me around town and compliment me and the boys on a job well done," he said. "We're making a positive impact."

Lambert hopes the group grows as word spreads about Super Troopers. He even has considered a similar group for girls.

"If I had a female officer [on staff], I would love to be able to incorporate the girls in the community and start a group for them," he said. ✿