



St. Michaels Police Department

THE JUNIOR POLICE ACADEMY AND S.M.Y.L.E. (ST. MICHAELS YOUTH AND LAW ENFORCEMENT) PROGRAM



The Junior Police Academy in St. Michaels is back in session. This is the second year of the after-school, eight-week program.

The after-school course is run through the St. Michaels Police Department's S.M.Y.L.E. (St. Michaels Youth and Law Enforcement) program, in partnership with the Easton Police Department, Talbot County Sheriff's Office, Maryland State Police, local financial contributors and the St. Michaels Community Center, which is where the classes are held.

Not only does the course aim to teach recruits—kids ages 9 to 12—aspects of good character, but it also instills team building, discipline application, physical training participation and education on all aspects of policing.

St. Michaels Police Chief Anthony Smith, MSP Easton Barracks Commander Lt. Ryan Bricker and St. Michaels Pfc. Ben Taylor taught the kids on the first day of class, Wednesday, March 4, that police work in

partnerships with other agencies, emphasizing teamwork. "Whenever the chief needs us, we come out and help him. Whenever my troopers are down here and they need help, they come out and help us," Bricker said. "So no matter what the uniform we have on, we're all here to help, because in turn we all have to help you guys whenever you need us." They also taught the kids that police, in essence, work for citizens. "You're





kind of my boss,” Taylor said, adding the people vote in elected officials, the elected officials pass laws and then police enforce the laws. “That’s a lot of power, and a lot of responsibility comes with that, so take that responsibility seriously. Before you know it, you’ll be driving cars, and then you’ll be voting, and you should take those things very seriously,” he said. “Look what’s going on around you and decide what you want to change.”

Smith split the group of recruits into pods, gave them uniforms and had them introduce themselves to one another.

Throughout the course, the students will take field trips. Each trip focuses on a different aspect of police work, like a police dog training exercise, a tour of the detention center and a visit to see a Maryland State Police helicopter.

The helicopter field trip is what 11-year-old Alijah Perry said he’s most excited about this year. This is Perry’s second time participating in the course. Perry isn’t the only one who came back for a second round,

as some other familiar faces from last year’s class were present at the community center Wednesday.

Part of the course teaches kids about the harmful effects drugs can have on a person’s body, which is what Perry said stuck with him most from last year’s course. “I like the way that it told me about how I don’t want to do drugs and how I didn’t want to do anything that would affect my body, and I want to be healthy, so I’m going to do that,” he said. Perry said he also learned last year that one day he might want to be a police officer.

Chief Smith would like to thank the Commissioners of St. Michaels, the St. Michaels Community Center, Christ Church, Union Methodist Church, Marcoritaville, Ava’s Pizzeria, the St. Michaels Rotary Club, Bridges Landscaping, Chesapeake Bay Outfitters and many other business and citizens for their financial support to make this life skills programs possible.

