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Former Police Officer Ordered to Pay \$15,000 to “Shop With A Cop” Program

AKRON, Ohio (Thursday, December 01, 2016) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that Summit County Common Pleas Court Judge Alison McCarty sentenced Michael Simmons, 42, of Stow, to an 18 month suspended prison sentence and placed Simmons on two years community control.

Simmons was also ordered to pay the Richfield Police Department Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 66 \$15,000 in restitution by March 15, 2017. Judge McCarty also ordered Simmons to complete 500 hours of community service.

On October 26, 2016 Simmons pled guilty to the following charge:

- Grand Theft – a felony of the 4th degree

Simmons, hired by the Richfield Police Department in 1999, oversaw the department’s “Shop With A Cop” program since its inception in 2003. In January of 2016, Richfield’s Chief of Police notified the Ohio Attorney General’s Office after becoming aware of unauthorized financial transactions with the program. Agents with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation discovered thousands of dollars missing from the “Shop With A Cop” account.

Investigators say Simmons used the money to buy several items including tickets to sporting events, electronics, clothing, tools, and gift cards for his personal use.

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The “Shop With A Cop” program helps financially disadvantaged families by taking children on a shopping trip with law enforcement each holiday season.

“Michael Simmons was entrusted by the citizens of Ohio to uphold the law. He broke that trust and stole thousands of dollars from needy families and children for his own personal use,” said Prosecutor Walsh. “His own despicable behavior and greed damaged the wonderful reputation of the Richfield Police Department, and potentially all law enforcement.”

According to the Richfield Police Department FOP, the money will be used to assist several Summit County organizations and to benefit the children of Summit County.