



Contact: Sara Spaulding, APR
Public Information Officer
[303-324-1711](tel:303-324-1711)
sspaulding@ci.wheatridge.co.us

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Wheat Ridge Optimist Club Provides Autism Sensory Kits for Use by the Wheat Ridge Police Department

WHEAT RIDGE, Colo., August 13, 2020 – As part of the Optimist International’s Childhood Health and Wellness Program, the Wheat Ridge Optimist Club is providing Autism Sensory Kits to the Wheat Ridge Police Department (WRPD) for use as they encounter someone with autism-associated agitation. WRPD Patrol Officers and School Resource Officers will have the kits on hand in their vehicles to use as needed.

The kits are designed to assist with calming someone experiencing stress and anxiety related to autism. Through the Optimist Club, the kits are being provided free of charge to first responders, teachers, counselors, school staff, and parents and family members of those with autism.

Each kit contains: sound dampening ear covers, dark glasses to reduce the glare of bright lights, a comfort blanket, a doodle board with dry erase markers, a stress ball, a silicone bracelet, fidget toys and a drawstring bag to contain all the items in the kit. The kits are made possible through donations.

According to [Autism Speaks](#), the core symptoms of autism are social communication challenges and restricted, repetitive behaviors. Symptoms of autism may begin in early childhood (though they may go unrecognized), persist and interfere with daily living. Many people with autism have sensory issues. These typically involve over- or under-sensitivities to sounds, lights, touch, tastes, smells, pain, and other stimuli. Autism is also associated with high rates of certain physical and mental health conditions, and for children and adults with autism this may include difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication.

For more information about sponsoring an Autism Sensory Kit, contact Bill Cassel bcassel2@comcast.net

The Wheat Ridge Police Department focuses on community policing where officers can gain skills, expand their knowledge, and become part of a team of officers and staff who know and trust each other. A department of 90 sworn and 24.5 non-sworn, WRPD serves a thriving community bordered on the east by Denver, on the west by Golden, on the north by Arvada, and on the south by Lakewood. The City of 9.5 square miles has a



population of 31,000. New development is currently underway in a number of locations bringing new residents and businesses to this vibrant community.

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