

Nomination for CPAM Award – Outstanding School Resource Officer

Nominee: Deputy Rick Edgerle, Berrien County Sheriff's Office, School Resource Officer, New Buffalo Elementary School

Deputy Rick Edgerle has been a dedicated deputy with the Berrien County Sheriff's Office for 18 years, serving in the Enforcement Division before recently being selected to serve as the School Resource Officer at New Buffalo Elementary School. In his short time in this role, Deputy Edgerle has already made a tremendous impact by building meaningful connections with students and creating new opportunities to engage them in positive and safe ways.

New Buffalo Elementary has an excellent after-school program, BASE (Bison After School Enrichment), whose mission is to provide students with an educational environment that exposes them to new ideas, develops new skills, and builds social and emotional relationships with peers and the community. Its vision is to foster experiences in the arts, sciences, and athletics, helping increase students' chances of pursuing clubs and extracurricular activities as they move into middle and high school. Deputy Edgerle has been proud to supplement this outstanding program with his own initiative—the creation of a trading card club.

Drawing from his passion and experience as a local sports memorabilia store owner, Deputy Edgerle launched the club by providing each interested student with a starter pack of baseball, football, or Pokémon cards. This simple but powerful idea gave students an additional outlet to build friendships, practice social skills, and enjoy structured activities in a safe environment. The club quickly became a highlight for students, reinforcing the goals of BASE by further expanding their opportunities to learn, share, and grow.

In addition, Deputy Edgerle has committed himself to ensuring that every student feels valued. He personally designed and created sheriff birthday cards and takes the time to handwrite a unique note for each child on their birthday. Even during the summer months, students receive their birthday cards in the mail, ensuring that no child is overlooked and that each one feels remembered and celebrated year-round. This thoughtful gesture has had a profound impact, making students feel seen, celebrated, and connected to both their school community and Deputy Edgerle. These small but meaningful acts demonstrate his heart for the students he serves and his dedication to going above and beyond his daily duties.

An SRO's job is to build connections, and Deputy Edgerle has made an amazing start and positive impact in his short time serving New Buffalo Elementary. His efforts highlight the

best qualities of an SRO: building trust, creating a positive presence, and serving as a role model for students. His initiatives strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the school community, encourage positive youth development, and promote a safe and supportive environment for learning.

Deputy Edgerle is a loved and respected member of both New Buffalo Elementary School and the Berrien County Sheriff's Office. His innovation, kindness, and commitment to students make him highly deserving of recognition for the CPAM Award for Outstanding School Resource Officer.