



MIDDLETOWN

Heartfelt thanks from officer's wife

The wife of late Middletown Patrolman Chris Jones said she was overwhelmed by the support received on Valentine's Day.

By JAMES MCGINNIS
STAFF WRITER

The wife of late Middletown police Officer Chris Jones leaned against the hood of his patrol car on display inside the Oxford Valley Mall on St. Valentine's Day. All around Suzanne Jones, shoppers rushed to buy last-minute tokens of love and affection. Jones' Valentine's gift was an outpouring of love and compassion from the community. And, somehow, she found the strength to give back.

"I just wanted to be here and thank all these people. The support has been unbelievable," she said.

Sixteen days after his death, Chris Jones memorial T-shirts seemed to fly off the shelves at the special kiosk outside Sears.

Suzanne Jones stood there in the mall for several hours.

Shoppers approached her husband's tribute patrol car, if only to touch it. One man felt the hood of the car, and then made a gesture in the sign of the cross.

She was overwhelmed.

"Chris was not a flashy guy," Suzanne Jones said. "I know he would be happy to see that his family was being taken care of. But he wasn't the type who liked all this attention."

Chris' friends and fellow patrolmen Rob Compton and Dennis Kucinski of Middletown said the experience has also changed their lives forever.

"As officers, we always see the bad people," Compton said. "Since Chris' death, we've met so many people in the community — good people — who do support us."

Suzanne's brother, Dennis Cahill, said the family was even approached by some people whom Jones' arrested. "Even guys he put away, they've come to say they are sorry and to pay their respects," Cahill said.

Nearby a group of officers' wives gift-wrapped Valentine's Day presents to raise money for the Jones family.

It was \$2 to wrap a small present. But many gave more than \$2.

Nancy Lewis, Pauline Cooperman and Karen Compton — all of them officers' wives — stood in awe of Suzanne Jones' fortitude and wondered how she could be so strong.

"My husband works the night shift and he goes out that door and all you can do is pray," Karen Compton said, gesturing to a tiny gold pendant of her husband's police shield that she wears round her neck.

With Chris Jones' death, it's been even harder to watch their husbands walk out the door, the women said. And just as things were getting easier, another officer died.

Philadelphia police Officer John Pawlowski was shot and killed Friday while responding to a report of a fight in the city's Logan section. Pawlowski is the sixth Philadelphia police officer to be killed in the line of duty in just two years.

"When I heard about that shooting, I was at home and I just wept," Compton said.

"Sometimes I think it's harder for the wives of the police officers," she said. "The guys are out there with their team, fighting

crime, and we're at home. All we can do is worry and hope he makes it home alive."

Jones is the first Middletown cop to die in the line of duty and the 11th on record in Bucks County.

He was a 10-year veteran of Middletown police, a Bucks County corrections officer and a veteran of Operation Desert Storm. James McGinnis can be reached at 215-949-3248 or



Elizabeth Griffiths (left) and Jennifer Rusay, both of Bristol Township, gift wrap last-minute gifts for Valentine's Day at Oxford Valley Mall on Saturday. The proceeds from the wrapping will benefit the Officer Chris Jones fund. ANDREW A. NELLES / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER