Monaca Police offer toys, smiles to local children

By Daveen Rae Kurutz
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There's no limit to Avery and Kellen Doerschner's creativity — especially when Legos get involved.

Since Thursday afternoon, the Monaca siblings have had a new Lego stage to ignite their imaginations, thanks to Monaca police. While playing outside, a Monaca police officers stopped by to say hello to the children — and gave them a parting gift of two Lego sets and a soccer ball.

"They've been having fun with it," said Kristen Doerschner, their mother. "They've been having a good time with them, building things and making up stories to go along with them. They created a whole world with a performance aspect."

Several Monaca police have been delivering toys and trinkets to children across the borough since last week. Officer Rachel Dietz said she and Officer Anthony Phan stocked up police cars with toys and started stopping to visit briefly with children they saw playing outside. Officers wipe down with hand sanitizer before they head out, but their goal is to build a rapport with the youth of the community.

"A lot of the guys in the department, with what's been going on, wanted to utilize the time we have with the families who are cooped up in homes right now, with the kids not being able to attend school," Dietz said. "This was pretty much just us wanting to give back to the community."

She said while on patrol, she sees a lot of families taking walks or kids playing in their yards. While it's nice to see families building those types of bonds, she knows that it's hard to entertain children around the clock while their routines are completely disrupted.

"I know, as a mom, the kids have so much stuff in the house, but after a week or two of being locked up, all the stuff they normally play with becomes old news," Dietz said. "We wanted to help out with the families and communities as best we can, and bring somewhat of a positive light

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Monaca Police Officer Rachel Dietz visits with Ava, Gracie and Fiona Armezzani last week. Dietz is one of several Monaca police officers who are delivering toys and crafts for local children to play with during the coronavirus outbreak. [SUBMITTED]

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back into people's every day."

It definitely did just that for the Doerschners. After two weeks of having both kids home while Central Valley and other local schools are closed, Doerschner said it was nice to bring some different toys into the mix. Avery, 10, loved her Lego friends set, while the little builder, Kellen, 7, had a blast with his "Frozen" Lego set.

"It's great for the kids to get to interact with the police," said Doerschner, whose husband is police officer in a neighboring community. "At this point in time, everybody needs a little positivity."