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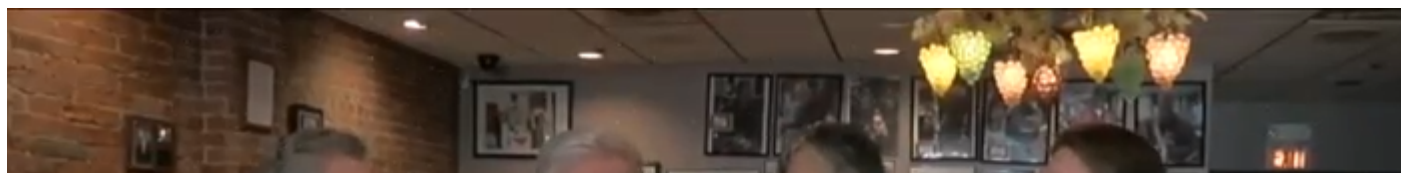


Police calls to Walden Galleria increase during holidays

Posted: 3:00 PM, Dec 16, 2018 **Updated:** 11:35 AM, Dec 18, 2018



By: Hannah Buehler



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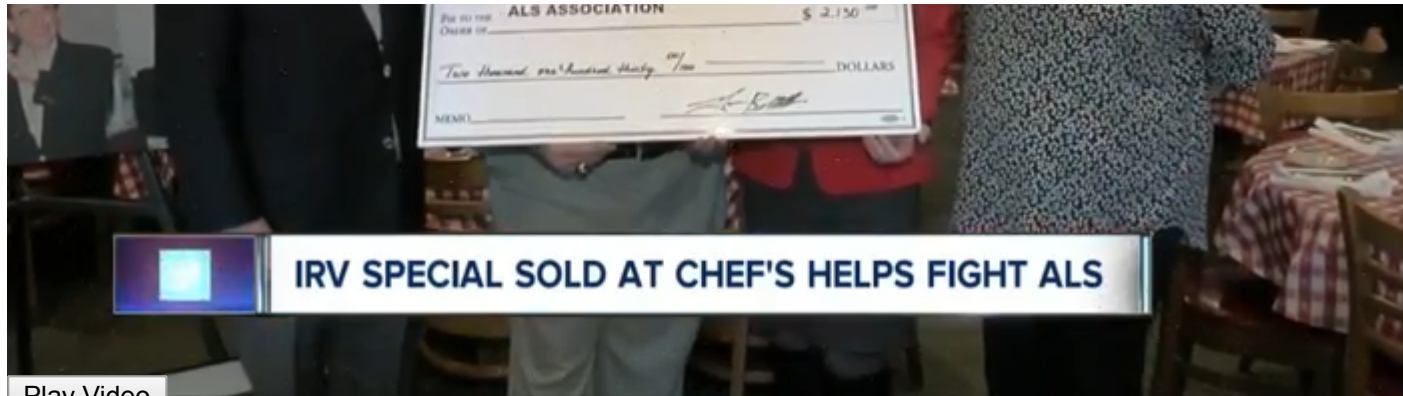
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CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. (WKBW) — This time of year, the Walden Galleria is a destination for thousands of shoppers, looking for the perfect holiday gift.

Hannah Buehler
@HannahBuehler

Do you wish there was a greater police presence at the Walden

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With the increase in people, comes an increase in police calls to the mall.

7 Eyewitness News wanted to know how often Cheektowaga Police respond to the mall, and what they respond for.

Documents provided to 7 Eyewitness News show the times police are called to the mall on any given day. Some include police voluntary pop-ins called "community policing" where officers patrol on foot. Police respond to everything from parking violations, suspicious people and hit and run accidents, to calls for shoplifting, fights and strong armed robberies.

The Walden Galleria has private security guards, but Cheektowaga police say the private security guards have no arresting power.

One of the highest call volume weekends during last year's holiday season was Friday, December 22 and Saturday, December 23. Cheektowaga Police checked into the Walden Galleria for various reasons 33 times that Friday, and 22 times on Saturday. The calls included everything from customer trouble and drunk visitors, to shoplifting and strong armed robbery attempts.

"For a single day, I would say that may be a little high," said Cheektowaga Police Chief Michael Sliwinski. "It could be because it's so close to Christmas with many people coming to the mall."

An officer is not stationed at the mall at all times, but shoppers we talked with say they should be, especially around this time of year. Clief Sliwinski says the Walden Galleria pays Cheektowaga police to station an

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He adds having officers at the mall is a crime deterrent.

We asked the Walden Galleria specifically if it has any plans to station an officer at the mall Friday and Saturday nights during the holiday season. The mall did not directly answer that question, but responded with the following statement:

“We take great pride in working collaboratively and collectively with our law enforcement agencies and community partners to make Walden Galleria a safe, year round family friendly shopping, dining and entertainment destination.”

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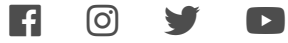
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