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# Ten Mainers we're thankful for 2014

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## Christina McAllister

SOUTH PARIS | DEPUTY, OXFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



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*Photo by  
Whitney Hayward*

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Deputy Christina McAllister often tells students at Sacopee Valley High School in Hiram that they are stuck with her. They clearly don't mind.

The school resource officer's office walls are covered with photos from field trips and handwritten notes from students: "I love you Momma!" "Love U Mum." "You are the best ever!"

McAllister has been the school resource officer for three years, working with just over 1,000 students spread across five schools in MSAD 55, which serves the towns of Baldwin, Cornish, Hiram, Parsonsfield and Porter. She spends most of her time at the high school, where she became known for her unflinching devotion to encouraging students while holding them accountable.

Her bond with students was evident during a vigil this month after the deaths of two recent graduates in a car accident. A year before, another high school student died in a crash. At the vigil, McAllister implored students to make better

decisions, and cried as she talked about going to the accident scenes and talking to parents who had just found out their children had died.

“She tells it how it is and that gets across to the students,” said senior Jamie Goughan. “You can tell she just cares like crazy.”

McAllister says part of her bond with students – she calls them all her kids – comes from sharing her own experiences. One of three children of a single mother, she grew up poor and worked as a waitress before finally following her dream into law enforcement in 2004.

“I didn’t grow up with a white-picket fence, so I understand their struggles,” she said. “I just treat them like they’re my own.”

Principal Britt Wolfe calls her the school’s most effective dropout prevention tool.

“She holds kids accountable, but at the same time she doesn’t leave any doubt she cares about them,” he said.

McAllister says she loves her job, but there are days when it is difficult to watch the struggles some students face.

“Sometimes it’s emotional, because you see so much potential in these kids and they just can’t see it. It breaks my heart sometimes,” she said. “But then it’s a proud moment to see them graduate, especially the ones who have been through so much. I’m just so proud of them.”