



VOL 6: ISSUE 12



MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ

As 2022 comes to an end, I find myself marveling at the challenges we've faced over the last few years and the ways in which we've grown. We've learned so much about ourselves along the way. We fought hard and innovated in the face of a pandemic, managed to stay fully operational during a wicked ice storm and are currently staring a nationwide staffing shortage in the face with equal determination.

This year, we implemented multiple strategies in an effort to recruit new employees. Our external efforts are proving to be effective, but nothing beats the commitment of our own employees. Their efforts to introduce people they know and meet to the opportunities here at TCSO have played a vital role in advancing our efforts to fill vacancies.

Caring for the mentally ill in our care and custody is a matter I'm passionate about. Approximately 40% of inmates currently in custody are suffering from some form of mental illness. I've said many times that this situation can only be addressed in a meaningful way through partnerships and collaborative efforts. I'm so glad to tell you that those strategic alliances are taking shape.

I'm honored to be part of the [Travis County Forensic Mental Health Project](#) steering committee. The project brings together medical experts, elected officials, law enforce-

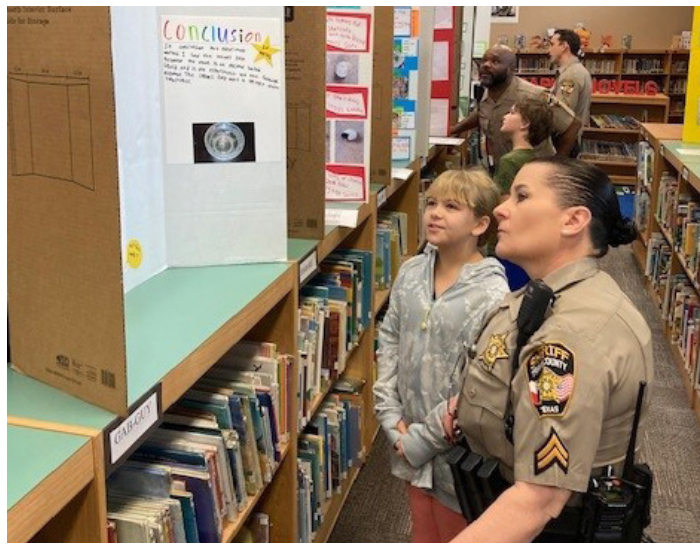
ment officials and a variety of community partners to come up with a better solution than jail for people suffering from mental health crises.

Within TCSO, we continue to innovate regarding our response to mental health as well. We're focusing our efforts on trauma informed care and making strides forward in that arena. I'll share more about that with you soon.



We live in a vibrant community that's on the move and growing at a stunning pace. Explosive population growth means a whole lot of good things for our county. It also comes with challenges. We're ready to meet the challenges and, as always, consider it our privilege to protect and serve the residents of Travis County.

MURCHISON SCIENCE FAIR



Earlier this month, our Community Outreach Unit and Detectives had the privilege of judging the awesome projects at the Murchison Elementary School Science Fair. Their kiddos were a smart and enthusiastic bunch and we learned quite a bit. This is an annual event we really missed during the pandemic, and we look forward to coming back next year!



SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER



On December 9th, we visited the [Longhorn Village](#) retirement living center to spread some holiday cheer by singing Christmas carols to their residents. They enjoyed it so much, and asked to join us at the end to sing together. Our hearts were filled with joy and the holiday spirit was definitely there that day!



CLOTHING DRIVE



TCSO Lieutenants Jennifer Jennings and Gabriel Hernandez assisted [Capital Area Private Defender Service](#) (CAPDS) by hosting a clothing drive to replenish its indigent inventory. TCSO's Hospital Visitation assisted in screening and transporting the donations.

Over 500 articles of clothing, in addition to four bags of socks and underwear, are now available for people released from TCSO custody who lack appropriate attire. Thank you to all who helped out and to those who donated to this cause.

TREE OF ANGELS



On December 3rd, families of violent crimes victims and some survivors gathered at the Central Christian Church. They each placed an angel ornament representing their loved one on the Christmas tree in remembrance. For over 20 years, [People Against Violent Crime's Tree of Angels](#) has been a staple event honoring those affected by crime in our community. TCSO Lieutenants Andres Alaniz and Virgil Villarreal proudly served as ushers for the families during the ornament placement.

BROWN SANTA DISTRIBUTION



This year, [Brown Santa](#) served over 2,600 families - the most in Brown Santa history! There was a 45% increase in applications, and at one point, donations were alarmingly low. However, thanks to social media the dire message was heard by the community and they really came through via Amazon Wishlists, donation drop-offs and monetary donations. You can support the program year-round by visiting their [Donations](#) page. Thank you to everyone who assisted Brown Santa's efforts this year!



NASHVILLE FACILITY VISIT



Sheriff Hernandez and TCSO Corrections Major Raul Banasco were honored to be invited by Davidson County Sheriff Daron Hall to tour the Davidson County Behavioral Care Center, along with Judge Andy Brown and other Travis County leaders. The treatment facility opened in 2020 and provides gender responsive, trauma-informed care short-term for those with non-violent charges experiencing mental illness or substance use disorder. As an alternative to jail, the center offers stabilization services and connects patients to ongoing treatment in the community following their discharge, upon which their criminal charge is dismissed. It was inspirational to see how so many local leaders were able to work together to establish more robust treatment options for their community.



Congratulations to our recent retirees! Thank you for your dedicated service to this agency and the citizens of Travis County. We wish you the best of luck in your new adventures.

- Karen Maxwell – 33 yrs. of service
- Juan Garza – 33 yrs. of service
- Darla Fuller – 31 yrs. of service
- Jaime Castaneda – 31 yrs. of service
- Michael Spinner – 30 yrs. of service
- Steven Coleman – 28 yrs. of service
- Joseph Zahn – 28 yrs. of service
- Paula Knight – 25 yrs. of service
- Arturo Reyes – 25 yrs. of service
- Douglas Michaud – 25 yrs. of service

- David Guzman – 21 yrs. of service
- Kevin Boissonneault – 21 yrs. of service
- Kimberly Hall – 21 yrs. of service
- Marc Gutierrez – 21 yrs. of service
- Mario Aldaco – 21 yrs. of service
- Carl Spillers – 20 yrs. of service
- Jeffrey Futrell – 18 yrs. of service
- Terri Garcia – 15 yrs. of service
- Danny Kohlert – 14 yrs. of service

MAIL THEFT PREVENTION



On December 19th, TCSO, the [Travis County Tax Assessor](#) and the [U.S. Postal Service](#) held a press briefing to get the word out to Travis County residents that criminals look for opportunities to steal tax payment checks from mailboxes. The best way to protect yourself from having your payment stolen is to pay those taxes online. If you prefer to pay by check, minimize the amount of time your check is in the mailbox by putting it in as close to the postal pick-up time as possible. It's especially important to make sure your check isn't left in an outgoing mailbox overnight.



Congratulations to Law Enforcement Specialist Rashidah Williams for her outstanding accomplishment of losing 30 lbs. and being crowned the TCSO Biggest Loser Challenge winner. If you're interested in joining the upcoming challenge in February 2023, please contact [Linda Anderson](#).