



VOL 7: ISSUE 2



MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ

February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. It may not seem at first glance as if dating violence amongst teens is prevalent, but it happens. In fact, the involvement of teens in unhealthy relationships is more prevalent now than ever. Our young adults are literally bombarded with messaging via movies, music and TikTok that glamorizes unhealthy relationships and glorifies aggressors. Students from all backgrounds, including those being raised in homes where a healthy relationship is modeled, are susceptible to being victimized.

Oftentimes, young adults not only don't recognize the signs of an unhealthy relationship, they also don't know how to handle getting out of one. During this month, we presented a social media campaign dedicated to educating young adults and their parents. The social media posts included signs of an unhealthy relationship, signs of someone who might be in an abusive relationship and steps for getting out of a bad relationship.

TCSO enjoys longstanding partnerships with organizations like Texas Advocacy Project and SAFE Alliance. On February 11th, I had the honor of welcoming Texas Advocacy Project's Teen Ambassadors of Hope to their annual training day at the State Capitol. These students are from across the state and serve as ambassadors in their respective schools. I admire their commitment to learning about healthy relationships and supporting their fellow students by sharing their knowledge and taking action to help those in need of support and encouragement.



At your Travis County Sheriff's Office, victims are our top priority. If a teen reports criminal abuse, we conduct a thorough investigation and provide immediate assistance to the victim using every resource available. Sometimes teens are afraid to report abuse because they don't want to draw attention to themselves. We're able to protect the identity of victims and operate with discretion.

In this issue, you can learn more about the signs of an unhealthy dating relationship and ways you can help someone who might be experiencing one. I hope you'll take some time to learn about this important topic and share it with your teens.

SPREADING VALENTINE'S LOVE



We LOVED celebrating Valentine's Day with the seniors over at Western Trails Senior Apartments and Jonestown Community Center this year. We spread the love by sharing teddy bears and Valentine's cards with several seniors living at both communities. We also joined a few teams with their trivia games. What a great day full of laughs and warm hearts!



HONORING DEPUTY HOLLIS



On February 13th, TCSO and The 100 Club of Central Texas joined the Hyde Park baseball and softball teams as they hosted Fallen Heroes night. The special event honored TCSO Senior Deputy Jessica Hollis, who died in 2014 after her patrol car was swept away by high flood waters. We also paid respect to Texas DPS Patrolman Billy Howry, who was struck and killed by a drunk driver in 1972.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Relationships 101 - Love is Respect, Trust, Safety, Communication. Good decisions, instincts, boundaries can build healthy & respectful relationships. #tcsoloveis

As February marks Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, TCSO shared tips from the Texas Advocacy Project and loveisrespect.org across our social media channels to highlight this alarming issue. These tips ranged from how to spot specific behaviors from a victim or abuser and how to seek out help. You can also find more information via the new stories covered by KXAN and KVUE.



FENTANYL CRISIS

QR code with text: ONE PILL CAN KILL. Background of various colored pills.

As we've warned in previous issues, fentanyl continues to rage across both Travis County and the United States. 50 times stronger than heroin, virulently addictive, cheap to produce and impossible to visually detect, the deadly drug is being disguised to look like prescription pills and is killing adults and teens who are unaware of the danger. At the urging of parents who wanted to learn more, Round Rock ISD held a virtual panel discussion. Sheriff Hernandez was invited to attend and shared hard truths about the cases TCSO works on an ever-increasing basis. She offered helpful tips fentanyl in an effort to protect them from falling victim to this deadly drug.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS WINTER GAMES



Our Community Outreach Unit had a great time attending the Special Olympics of Texas State Leadership Conference at their Winter Games to include the opening ceremonies on the evening of February 18th. In addition to honoring this year's amazing athletes, we also focused on developing partnerships and fundraising opportunities in the Central Texas region. This year's conference took place at Lakeway Resort & Spa and featured special guests, life-changing sessions and more.



We always strive to celebrate diversity and equity here at TCSO. Throughout February, we take great pride in recognizing the achievements and significant contributions of African Americans to our community. Celebrating their rich cultural heritage is an important part of our history.