



VOL 6: ISSUE 5



MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ

This month, the Travis County Medical Examiner's 2021 Annual Report was released. In it, are staggering statistics, revealing that drug toxicity was the leading cause of accidental death in our county last year. Of those deaths, the report also showed a massive spike in cases involving Fentanyl.

Fentanyl is 100 times stronger than Morphine and is deadly in very small amounts. We're seeing it mixed with every other drug. We're also seeing it mixed with fillers and pressed into pills that look exactly like prescription medications.

The spread of this deadly drug is devastating families throughout Travis County. Our agency has responded to deaths across nearly every age, race and gender. I'm particularly alarmed by the deaths of teens. They're making decisions that seem harmless but carry grave consequences. As an example, a high school student, stressed out by exams, purchases a Xanax to calm her nerves. That one pill is a fake that contains Fentanyl. The teen has unknowingly made a terrible mistake that will take her life and devastate her parents for the rest of theirs. We're currently collaborating with ISDs to connect with students and warn them of the danger.

We're also educating our inmate population. It's no secret that drug addiction is a driving factor in criminal activity. Jail is a place where people fighting drug addiction get clean, and it's a place where we fight to make a positive difference in their lives. In November of 2021, a

local cardiologist worked with us to make a video that educates inmates about Fentanyl and its affects. In it, he explains the withdrawal process and a path forward after the drug (and others) have cleared the body.

Inmates have access to counseling services and medical care while in custody. Those in good behavioral standing are also able to attend classes and learn job skills that set them up for employment opportunities. When they're released, they're connected with organizations that can help them make a new start, and they're given Narcan, a medication that can save their lives or the lives of someone they know in the event of an overdose.

I encourage you to [learn more](#) about Fentanyl and to educate your family about the dangers of taking prescription medications that haven't been prescribed to them by a doctor and purchased at a lawful pharmacy.

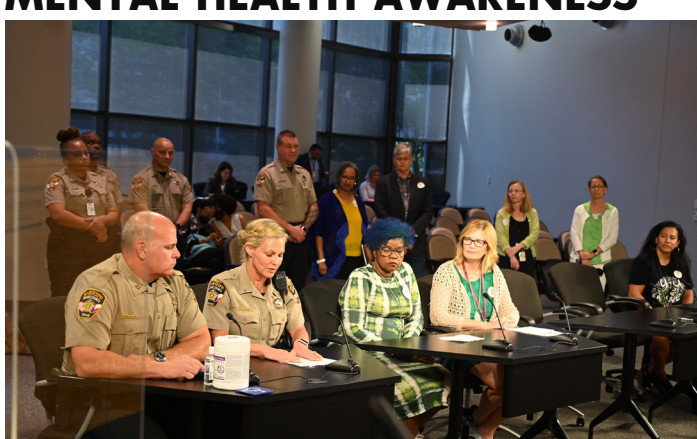


ASIS OFFICER OF THE YEAR



On May 12th, TCSO Sergeant Brandon Bell was recognized by American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS) Chapter 179 as Officer of the Year. Bell was nominated for the award by TCSO for both an act of heroism in 2021, and for outstanding performance of his duties at the Travis County Correctional Complex (TCCC). On June 4, 2021, while off-duty, Bell witnessed a serious vehicle collision that involved a car being struck broadside and flipping several times before landing upside down. He had his wife contact 911 and immediately began rescue efforts with another witness. Thanks to his quick decision making and training in first aid and CPR, he most likely saved a woman's life that day. At TCCC, Bell's recent innovative efforts to alleviate staffing issues caused by the winter storms also contributed to his recognition.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



Sheriff Hernandez is passionate about Mental Health and May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Under her leadership, TCSO has formed strong bonds with fellow stakeholder organizations such as [The National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Central Texas](#), [Integral Care](#), [MCOT/EMCOT](#), and local hospitals to include the [Austin State Hospital](#).

TCSO is dedicated to strengthening mental health resources for those who are incarcerated and to connect them to quality treatment upon release from jail. This year, in partnership with Integral Care, we have implemented a jail-based intake program to provide this essential linkage to treatment.

On May 17th, we joined our partner, [Travis County Health & Human Services](#), as the [Travis County Commissioners Court](#) recognized May as Mental Health Awareness Month in Travis County.

NATIONAL NURSES WEEK



National Nurses Week was May 6 - 12. Earlier this month, the Travis County Commissioners Court celebrated our amazing nurses by unanimously passing a proclamation honoring their extraordinary work as the front line of care for those in our custody. Our nurses help treat many acute and chronic conditions, along with dispensing medications, providing preventative health education, and connecting inmates with specialty services as needed. They work night and day to care for this population, and their dedication is second to none. During the pandemic, they have taken on even more responsibilities, preparing and implementing complex plans to mitigate COVID risks in this environment, educating inmates, and offering vaccinations. Thank you for all you do!

CORRECTIONAL STAFF APPRECIATION



May 1 - 7 was National Correctional Officers and Employees Week, and TCSO took the opportunity to celebrate the wonderful men and women who show up to serve our community with compassion and professionalism. In addition to our officers, they fill many different roles to include chaplains, supervisors, social workers, teachers, and directors. They teach, mentor, and counsel individuals in custody, all while ensuring everyone's health and safety. Travis County Commissioners passed a proclamation in their honor, and TCSO prepared and hosted a BBQ lunch for staff in appreciation. Our correctional staff are truly remarkable, and we thank each and every one!

LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN



On May 5th, TCSO had the honor of supporting the [Special Olympics of Texas](#) by participating the [2022 Law Enforcement Torch Run](#). Along with the Austin PD, Williamson County Sheriff's Office, Round Rock PD, and Travis County Precinct 2 Constable's Office, we carried the torch for the [SOTX Summer Games](#) up to the steps of the Texas State Capitol. Our Community Outreach Officers also attended the Summer Games in San Antonio, TX. We look forward to both events every year - cheering on these amazing athletes means so much to us!

HONORING FALLEN OFFICERS



On May 14th, TCSO joined other local enforcement and military officers for the 2nd Annual Fallen Officers Classic Baseball Tournament. The Pioneer Legends supported National Police Week (May 15 - 21) and National Peace Officer Memorial Day (May 15). The Scrappers Baseball Club, coached by our very own Deputy Oscar Gonzales, wore the names of local officers lost in the line of duty on their uniforms to honor their ultimate sacrifice in service to our community. The Legends team traveled all the way from Virginia to participate and support the Fairfax County Police Department.



After two years of missing out on camp due to COVID, we're excited to host the 2022 Junior Deputy Summer Camp August 1 - 4 for 9-12 year old youth. Campers will have a positive exposure to the daily workings of the TCSO Law Enforcement and Corrections Bureaus. During the four-day camp, campers will have the opportunity to attend the campers from multiple, specialized units within the agency such as SWAT, K-9, Estray, and Lake Patrol as well as some fun recreational activities.

Registration opens June 1st. Please visit our [camp page](#) for more information.

CITIZENS' ACADEMY GRADUATION



TCSO hosted the [35th Citizens' Academy](#) from March 24 - May 26. This 10-week academy provides citizens the how's and why's of TCSO operations and services. We believe the education and dialogue the academy offers will further our efforts in improving community relations and the quality of life for Travis County residents. We congratulate the following students for graduating from the course on May 26th: Kimberly Allen, Tina Byram, Abigail Laky, Alvin Loreta, Rachel McInturff, Bryan Miller, Lawrence Moore, Alice Roberts, and Paulette Diedrich.

TEXAS JAIL ASSOCIATION APPOINTEES



A number of TCSO employees are members of the [Texas Jail Association](#) and we're so proud that two of them serve as Vice Presidents. At this year's conference, Lieutenant Frances Dembowski was elected to the position of 3rd Vice President and Captain Edwardo Jackson currently serves as 1st Vice President.

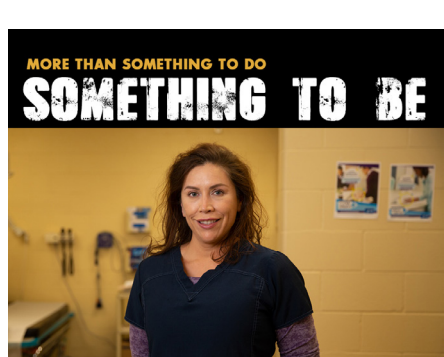
When Dembowski thanked her peers for electing her to this esteemed position she said, "It doesn't matter what size our jail is, we all have something in common; our jailers are the foundation and heart of corrections." We couldn't agree more.

COURTROOM CHALLENGE



During the 36th Annual [Texas Jail Association](#) Conference, the [Texas Commission on Jail Standards](#) hosted the Courtroom Challenge: Quick Draw game to test competitors' knowledge of individual jail standards. Teams were composed of two individuals, and by random draw, they competed head-to-head with opposing teams in elimination rounds. Points were earned for correct answers with additional points added for quickness.

TCSO teams were selected at the last Field Training Officer (FTO) quarterly training. Congratulations to FTO Nicole Perkins and FTO Luke Russum for taking third place!



Visit [TCSOcareers.com](#) for a list of job opportunities and additional information.

Call 512-854-9770 and ask to speak to one of our recruiters!