



VOL 7 : ISSUE 8



MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ

On August 26th, we joined [Mother's Against Drunk Driving \(MADD\)](#) in their [Saturation Saturday](#) awareness campaign. It brought to mind all the years I've seen MADD advocate for victims and their families. Over the 21 years I served in the Travis County District Attorney's Office, I saw first-hand that representatives from MADD were a powerful and constant presence in courtrooms. They held our feet to the fire and fought tirelessly to hold offenders accountable. Their awareness campaigns have been a part of our lives for decades and have been a stalwart reminder not to drink and drive.

Your Travis County Sheriff's Office is also dedicated to keeping drunk drivers off county roadways. TCSO deputies are routinely recognized at MADD's annual awards ceremony for their efforts to keep our roadways safe. In this issue, you can read about Senior Deputy Edgardo Melara who received the Enforcement Hero award.

TCSO is also an active participant in the [Travis County Underage Drinking Prevention Program](#). They go into local schools and teach 200-300 classes annually. They also present at health fairs and community coalitions and are members of the Impaired Driving Action Task Force with the City of Austin's Public Health initiative.

I have friends and loved ones in my life who are forever scarred by the poor decisions of drunk drivers. I'm sure

many, if not most, of you reading this can say the same. Labor Day weekend is almost here. It's one of the most dangerous weekends of the year for drunk drivers on our roadways. Please do your part to save lives and don't drink and drive.



Every deputy who works as a DWI enforcement officer has been impacted by the devastating effects of drunk driving. You can watch some of their stories:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwgn971CdgA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAGkwwxCfIk>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q21rfhg38fM>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCyRIWxIAW0>

MADD RECOGNITION



On August 2nd, the Texas affiliate of [Mothers Against Drunk Driving \(MADD\)](#) honored Senior Deputy Edgardo Melara with the Enforcement Hero award. Deputy Melara was among several Austin-area first responders who were honored at the 2023 "Take the Wheel" Law Enforcement Recognition Luncheon. Specifically, Melara was recognized for his exemplary dedication to DWI enforcement with the most DWI arrests in his department. Congratulations, Deputy Melara!

TEXAS AGAINST FENTANYL



August 21st was national Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day. To show our support, earlier this month we were proud to welcome Stefanie Turner, founder of [Texas Against Fentanyl](#), to our [Building Bridges](#) community dialogue session. Not only did Turner share vital information on the topic, she also recently partnered with us for a campaign about the dangers of the drug right here in Travis County. You can learn more about the awareness campaign by clicking on the icon below.



Law enforcement agencies in Texas participate in [National Night Out](#) on the first Tuesday in October. We encourage communities to gather that evening for neighborhood block parties where you can get to know your neighbors - those relationships are the best proactive measures to preventing crime in your area. It also provides a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances.

You can register your party with TCSO by clicking on the icon link below. We will make every effort to attend registered parties, however, emergency response calls take precedence and staff may not be available.

Also, check our [online event calendar](#) for upcoming information about our NNO 40th Anniversary Kick-off Party on September 23rd.



POPS WITH COPS



Our deputies have been working hard this summer to beat the heat by hosting Pops with Cops around Travis County. We've partnered with [Good Pop](#) to provide free popsicles to the community. We had a lot of fun visiting with families from the Easton Park and Highland Village neighborhoods as well as kiddos from the Wells Branch MUD Stuff 2 Do summer camp.



Earlier this month, our TCSO Community Outreach Unit supported local kiddos by hosting our annual back-to-school supplies drive and Fresh Start event. Not only did our employees donate to the drive, but we had an outstanding show of support from the following local businesses: [Hensel Phelps, N-Able, Whitestone Fine Jewelry, McCoy's Building Supply](#) (Burleson Rd.), [Gartner Information Technology - Austin](#) and [Thomas J. Henry](#). Donations were provided to Del Valle Elementary, Blake Manor Elementary and Lago Vista Elementary schools.

On August 12th, Sheriff Hernandez, Chief Johnson and the TCSO Public Safety Cadets provided hygiene kits sponsored by [Jerry Dixon Automotive & Classic Kars](#) and [Austin YES](#) school supply boxes to 250 families. It was a heartwarming experience to serve our community and we're so grateful to our sponsors for making this event successful every year!

BPOC ACCOMPLISHMENT



Last October, a group of TCSO Prisoner Transportation Officers completed the Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC) with the [Capital Area Council of Government](#) (CAPCOG). They spent the next 10 months receiving academic and practical instructions to become licensed Texas Peace Officers while working their regular assignments during the day, attending classes in the evening, and all-day Saturdays. Congratulations to the following officers who graduated on August 11th: Benny Castro (Salutatorian), Jose Garcia, Arthur Gutierrez, Rodrigo Serpas and Dillon Vinklarek. In addition, Castro and Vinklarek scored over a 90% on the TCOLE state exam!



Every year, the TCSO Cares team looks forward to supporting the [National Alliance for Mental Illness Central Texas](#) (NAMI) in their annual [NAMI Walks Your Way Central Texas](#). The walk raises funds and awareness to advance NAMI's mission of improving the lives of people affected by mental illness through advocacy, education and public policy. NAMI is a vital partner with TCSO, supporting families in our community and providing specialized training for deputies and corrections officers. We invite you to join our team for the walk on September 30th or make a donation by clicking on the icon below.

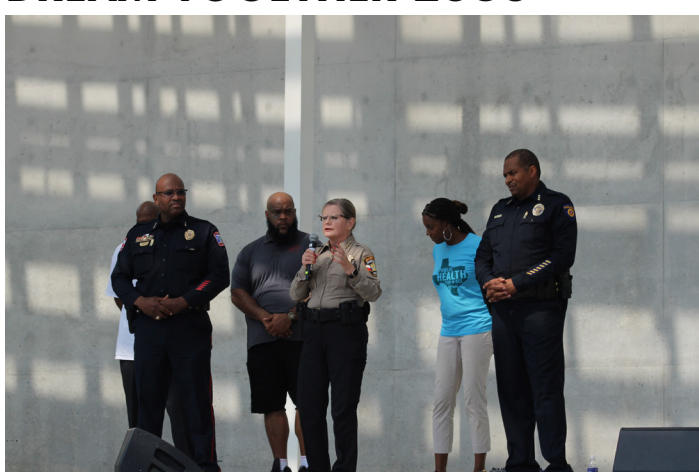


NATIONAL DOG DAY



August 26th was National Dog Day. To celebrate, we created this video to help introduce you to all the pups of our various K9 units. Enjoy!

DREAM TOGETHER 2030



Sheriff Hernandez was honored to attend [Dream Together 2030](#) on August 28th, the 60th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. The event was a gathering of community members, nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, local leaders and law enforcement. Attendees celebrated the legacy of the civil rights movement and their dedication to a more equitable future, with a vision of an even safer and more prosperous region by 2030.