



VOL 5: ISSUE 12



MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ

Last year, I wrote to you about plans and goals for 2021, or as I expectantly referred to it, 2022won! I'm pleased to tell you I witnessed great accomplishments and growth here at TCSO, but it came in ways I could never have imagined.

In the early months of 2021, we experienced COVID among our general population in the Travis County Correctional Complex. It was a dreaded event that our diligence managed to hold off for nearly a year. I'm so proud of the men and women of TCSO who managed the complex task of testing, isolating, quarantining and treating inmates. Those extraordinary efforts brought the situation under control quickly and resulted in less than 5% of our inmate population being affected. The exceptional efforts of our medical team also prevented infected inmates from hospitalization or worse. I simply cannot express enough gratitude to them.

Winter Storm Uri slammed our correctional, law enforcement, and support operations, but our teams pulled together to maintain critical services, often making great personal sacrifices to help each other and keep our inmate population and citizens safe. Catastrophic water damage to our academy required the building to be taken off-line for nine long months. Our staff innovated and kept critical training going. The repaired and renovated facility is open, and our instructors are busy getting settled in.

In June, we were finally able to honor fallen Senior Deputy Chris Korzilius in a memorial service with full honors. This beautiful memorial service, long delayed, helped us and the community say goodbye.

Using TV, social media, and outreach campaigns, we brought awareness to domestic violence, breast cancer,

human trafficking, heart disease, child abuse and emerging issues, such as the rise in fentanyl deaths, tragedies on Lake Travis and dangerous traffic hot spots to name a few. Our Building Bridges program brought virtual audiences into meaningful discussions about everything from conservation to caring for elderly family members, and everything in between.



Our NAMI Walks 2021 team raised more money for mental health support programs than any other team in the 16-year history of the Central Texas walk. We were so happy to be back together as a community at several events, including Trunk or Treat and Brown Santa.

I'm proud of the many ways the wonderful men and women of TCSO work each day to serve our mission and live our values, even in these challenging times. I look forward to all the new opportunities 2022 will bring. As always, we're here if you need us and I thank you for the kindness and support you offer us all year long.



TCSO assisted in a federal investigation that led to the arrest of serial predator Leao Hida in 2019. On August 26th, Hida pled guilty to two counts of sexual exploitation of a child and one count of distribution of child pornography. Earlier this month, Hida was sentenced to 60 years in prison for his crimes against 20 victims between the ages of 12 and 17. "The FBI and our law enforcement partners are committed to protecting our community's vulnerable children and holding accountable those who would harm them." - FBI Special Agent in Charge Christopher Combs

In 2021, TCSO opened investigations into 12 homicides. Detectives are diligently working these cases to bring justice and closure to their families and loved ones. You can find the current status of these investigations [here](#).

BROWN SANTA DISTRIBUTION



The [Travis County Brown Santa](#) program proudly served approximately 1,800 families this holiday season. Brown Santa provides assistance with gifts and food to families and elderly citizens in Travis County primarily living outside the geographic city limits of Austin. This year's success was made possible with donations and support from local merchants and Travis County residents. Thank you to our community for all that you do!



CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY OUTREACH



On December 7th, our Corrections Officers were invited to speak to Concordia University students about the myths and realities of daily activities inside the Travis County jails and the different departmental sections within. Officers reviewed different processes from intake and treatments to how we handle inmates before and after trial or those offenders jailed for misdemeanor/felony charges. They also took the opportunity to share advice and recruit students who may be interested in joining TCSO in the future.

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING



Starting December 26th and continuing through January 10th Travis County will provide FREE Christmas tree recycling for Travis County residents. Before dropping off your live tree, please follow the [disposal requirements](#) to ensure trees can be mulched and recycled. There is no charge for county residents to drop-off their trees so come by and recycle that tree!



TREE OF ANGELS



The Tree of Angels is a meaningful Christmas program held in memory of victims of a violent crime. On December 5th, the annual event was an open house for families to gather, visit outdoors, and then enter [Central Christian Church](#) where they could place an angel ornament on a tree to honor their loved one. Lieutenant Andres Alaniz stood vigil, and assisted families during the ceremony along with our Victim Services Unit. The angel adorned trees will stay lit through New Year's Eve and may be visited Sundays between noon and 1:00 pm.



Congratulations to those who retired from TCSO this month! 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.

- James Gonzales – 33 years of service
- Shelly Eaton – 31 years of service
- Michael Eaton – 29 years of service
- Russell Thompson - 29 years of service
- Lawrence Goodloe - 23 years of service
- Allayne Perkins – 19 years of service
- Patricia Diaz – 18 years of service
- Steven Silva – 11 years of service

TRAFFIC INITIATIVE



In our November issue, Sheriff Hernandez shared information about a traffic initiative that had recently wrapped up. Neighborhoods on FM 1826 and along FM 812 expressed concerns about explosive growth, construction traffic, speeding and aggressive driving to TCSO in late October. There has also been a dramatic increase in the number of deadly crashes on FM 812 this year.

The area of FM 812 in TCSO's patrol jurisdiction is a 7 mile stretch that runs from US Hwy 183 east to the Bastrop County line. TCSO conducted a traffic study, and it revealed most drivers are following the speed limits, but some speeders are traveling in excess of 90 mph.

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HONOR GUARD TRAINING



On December 2nd, the TCSO Honor Guard, which represents the agency at official functions and funerals, was glad to host representatives of the U.S. Navy Honor Guard for a cross-training on protocols. Because both Honor Guards sometimes assist in the same service but have different operating procedures, it was a great opportunity to learn from each other and plan for coordinated performances. The U.S. Navy Honor Guard focused their presentation on flag folding, the part of each ceremony that has the most differences depending on which Honor Guard is directing it.