MAY NEWSLETTER

# TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

VOL 5: ISSUE 5

## MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ

Are you ready for summer? Memorial Day is the traditional gateway to summer, and summer brings with it all kinds of activity and adventure. It results in peak activity on Lake Travis, increased traffic on roadways and large gatherings for all kinds of outdoor events. I hope you and your family will take the time to keep safety at the forefront of your minds as you make plans.

If you're boating on Lake Travis or other local waterways, please be sure you have life jackets for everyone on board, and that they fit properly. Make sure you have a horn or a whistle and that your fire extinguishers and lights are working properly. Remember, it's just as illegal to drive a boat while intoxicated as it is to drive a car. Please, wear your life jacket when you're in the water.

TCSO Deputies will be out on our roadways, looking for impaired drivers. Be sure to have a designated driver and to follow traffic laws.

For those of you who are new to Travis County, the heat here in Texas is no joke. Bring plenty of water and remember that alcohol will cause dehydration. We want you to have a blast this summer. More importantly, we want you to be safe this summer. Break out the hot dogs, pool floaties and sunscreen, but don't forget to be cautious and courteous.

## HONORING THE FALLEN

May 15th is National Peace Officers Memorial Day. In a show of great honor and respect, the Scrappers baseball team wore the names of fallen peace officers on their jerseys. The team took the gesture one very big step further. Each of the players took the time to research the officer whose name he would wear, and submitted a written paper about him or her to their coach. The families of several of the fallen officers attended as well as representatives from the Austin Police Department (APD), Round Rock Police Department, Hutto Police Department and TCSO. TCSO's Honor Guard presented colors and TCSO Detective Kimberly Orts sang the national anthem as APD's Air 1 helicopter flew over.

## PEACE OFFICER MEMORIAL

TCSO Senior Deputy Christopher Korzilius, who died in a crash in March of 2020, was one of more than 40 fallen officers honored at the Texas Peace Officers' Memorial Ceremony. Texas Governor Greg Abbott and First Lady Cecilia Abbott presented medals to the families of each of the fallen officers, including Deputy Korzilius' family, at the ceremony at House Park in downtown Austin on May 2. The TCSO Honor Guard carried colors at the ceremony, and Sheriff Hernandez along with other members of the TCSO family also attended.

Deputy Korzilius joined the Sheriff's Office in June 2016 and spent most of his time working night shift patrol in eastern Travis County. He joined the VICE unit in January 2020 and worked there at the time of his crash.

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Did you know? Children with mental health concerns who have access to age-appropriate screens and assessments experience improved health and development. It's so important to shed light on children's mental health. Early interventions for mental health challenges can avoid more complex problems later in life.

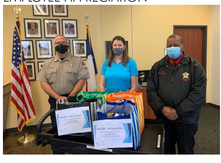
On May 3rd, Sheriff Hernandez joined state leaders, community advocates, and youth and family members with lived experience as they shared their stories of dedication to the importance of children's mental health. The virtual event was in support of Children's Mental Health Awareness Month.

## WELLS BRANCH TOWN HALL

On May 25th, TCSO hosted a town hall for residents of the Wells Branch MUD and Wells Branch Neighborhood Association. The community shared their concerns, and we had an engaging and informative dialogue on topics such as open carry law, patrol practices, public disturbances, criminal activity and traffic. We extend our thanks to Travis County Precinct Two Commissioner Brigid Shea for joining the discussion.

If your neighborhood is interested in a community meeting and/or a neighborhood safety presentation, please contact our Community Outreach Unit.

## EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION



We celebrated many of our employees this month. May 2nd - 8th was National Correctional Officers Week and National Nurses Week occured May 6th - 12th. We are so thankful to have these dedicated, compassionate professionals on our team as we work to maintain a healthy, safe, and supportive environment for inmates in our care. During our morning briefing calls, we invited officers to speak and it was inspiring to hear them discuss how their ability to help mentor and guide individuals in difficult periods of their lives motivates them and makes their work rewarding.

Addtionally, May 9th - 15th was National Police Week, and we took this time to express our deep gratitude to the wonderful men and women who work with TCSO and provide exceptional, compassionate service to our community. The University of Phoenix stopped by and dropped off snacks to celebrate the occasion, and we are appreciative of their kindness.

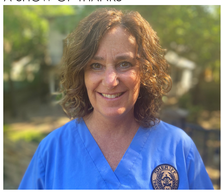
## TEEN REUNITES WITH HERO

A local teenager reunited with a man who made a lasting impression on him after stopping to help after a serious collision in December 2019. The collision, on SH 71 in western Travis County, involved four vehicles. Hayden Hobbick, who was 16 yrs. old at the time, was transported to the hospital with multiple injuries including a broken femur.

Nearly a year and a half later, his mother reached out to TCSO for help finding the unidentified man, who held Hayden's hand and gave him encouragement until EMS arrived. It took several weeks to track him down. That man was Chris Beran, a plumbing technician at Clarke Kent Plumbing.

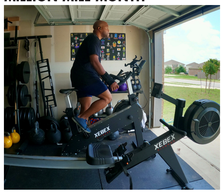
On May 24th, Hayden and Chris met for the first time since the collision, and Hayden and his mother, Ely, shared their gratitude. Hayden presented Chris with a tennis ball with a message written on it – a sport Hayden is thankful to be able to play again after his injuries. Sheriff Hernandez and Chief Deputy Anthony Johnson presented both men with challenge coins.

## A SHOW OF THANKS



Ahead of National Police Week, the Austin chapter of ASIS International held their annual law enforcement appreciation event virtually. Supervisory Special Agent Nick Porter with the Diplomatic Security Service presented on their work securing U.S. embassies around the world. At the conclusion of the presentation, ASIS honored our own Medical Services Director Mary Gallo for her extraordinary work and leadership on risk reduction protocols during the pandemic. We are so proud of her, and this event was a wonderful opportunity to recognize her publicly.

## MILLION MILE MONTH



TCSO participated in HealthCode®'s Million Mile Month challenge and made an excellent showing! HealthCode® supports our communities by raising awareness and offering education through year-round community-focused, goal-based challenges and programs. As of publication of this newsletter, Travis County was in third place overall and TCSO was in first place in Travis County. Having a challenge and a goal help motivate us to get fit, and so do partners. Many of TCSO's participants got inspiration and accountability from their workout buddies.

## DIVE TEAM & LAKE PATROL UNIT

With boat traffic on Lake Travis increasing for the summer, TCSO led two joint training exercises in May for agencies who respond when a life-threatening emergency happens on the water; TCSO Lake Patrol Unit, STAR Flight, Austin-Travis County EMS, and fire departments that serve Lake Travis participated.

Training focused on two of the most common types of life-threatening scenarios deputies deal with on the lake. The first was to search, transport, and treat a person who jumped from a cliff, resulting in serious injury. The second was a missing swimmer scenario. Responders practiced rescue and recovery measures.

The TCSO Lake Patrol Unit plans to organize several of these each year so agencies that respond together train together.

## ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVE

Lime Creek Road winds its way along Lake Travis, near Volente. Residents in the area have routinely been reporting to both TCSO and Travis County Commissioner Ann Howard, that cars and motorcycles driving at extremely high speeds are endangering lives and generating excessive noise. Despite increased presence by TCSO deputies, the trend continued. For a three-week period in May, TCSO executed an enforcement initiative, citing drivers exceeding the speed limit. A total of 112 motorcycles, passenger cars and sports cars were cited. TCSO will continue to closely monitor the area.

"I want to thank Sheriff Hernandez and the law enforcement teams that participated in the efforts to keep our roadways safe." said Commissioner Howard. "This joint enforcement project by the Travis County Sheriff's Office and the Texas Department of Public Safety will go a long way to abate and deter the use of Lime Creek Road for illegal racing activities. Through such enhanced enforcement, Travis County is striving to provide safe roadways for our neighborhoods in our beautiful Texas hill country."