



VOL 5: ISSUE 2



MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ

As is true of many other entities, shutting down is not an option for us, even when weather strikes hard. I've heard the winter storms of this month referred to as "snow-mageddon" and the "icepocalypse." It was a disaster, no matter what you call it, and disasters bring out the best in TCSO employees. I saw it happen again. In this issue, you can read more about some of the innovative ways our agency banded together to help each other and Travis County.

When the forecast predicted a storm of historical significance was heading this way, our emergency operations team went into high gear. Assets were staged and supervisors prepared to staff up and be ready to flex as needed. When the Austin-Travis County Emergency Operations Center activated, they manned their shifts 24 hours a day.

As the storm hit, our plans went into action and were revised to suit the crisis or need of any given moment. Patrol deputies responded to more than twice as many collisions as they typically work, not to mention roadway closures due to ice, downed trees and power lines. They checked the welfare of elderly and vulnerable residents and provided courtesy rides to those in need of shelter and warmth. Corrections officers and dispatchers pulled double shifts as fellow employees battled their way to work in the treacherous conditions; several even brought camping gear and slept in their offices. Officers manned the jail kitchen, cleared ice, transported their colleagues to and from

home and hotels, and so much more. Our Life Safety and Maintenance teams worked non-stop to keep housing units heated, shore up buildings when pipes burst, kept plumbing systems operational when water pressure downtown dropped significantly and provided an ample supply of potable water to inmates and employees.



Heartwarming stories of human kindness amidst the crisis were shared in our daily agency briefings. It was an event none of us want to endure again, and one we will surely never forget. I witnessed a team effort that forged life-long bonds of friendship and trust among our employees. I also witnessed an agency who stays true to its mission and once again proved to Travis County that TCSO cares.

COLD CASE SOLVED



In 2019, TCSO Cold Case Detective Mike Morton was contacted by Detective Scott Marshall of the Battle Creek Police Department (BCPD) in Michigan. Detective Marshall was working a cold case from 1988. The victim, Gayle Barrus, was sexually assaulted and murdered. Detective Marshall was following leads on a suspect from Texas who is deceased and buried in Travis County. He sought the help of TCSO in the legal process of exhumation, hoping DNA from the decedent, Richard Compton, might help crack the case.

The exhumation was conducted in June of 2019 by an FBI observation team. TCSO detectives were permitted to observe as FBI Special Agent Leslie Larsen conducted her work. She generously explained what she was doing, step-by-step, so detectives could learn about this very rare investigative process.

Earlier this month, Detective Morton was notified the case has been solved. DNA evidence proved a suspect developed by BCPD detectives early in their investigation was the killer. It also proved that Richard Compton was an accomplice. Detective Marshall wrote, "I appreciate your friendships, your professional support and work in all of this. I couldn't have solved this case without you guys. Take care and stay safe."

You can read more about the case in a local Michigan news piece.

TCSO DRONES



The TCSO Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) team is expanding, with the goal of reducing the amount of time roads are closed after major collisions.

Three members of the TCSO Highway Enforcement and Accident Team (HEAT) completed a 100-hour training course after receiving their Part 107 license from the FAA. After completing training from the TCSO Police Technology Unit, the HEAT deputies will use the UAVs for crash reconstruction. Cutting-edge crime scene photography software will allow them to measure, photograph, and document collision scenes from the air which will reduce the amount of time deputies need to close roads for investigation.

The Police Technology Unit began laying the groundwork for drones in 2017. After years of paperwork, meetings, trainings, conferences, and signatures, the first TCSO UAV went airborne in 2019. Since then, the unit has used drones regularly to assist with searching for missing persons, tactical missions, documenting collisions, and photographing crime scenes, among other operations.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

RELATIONSHIPS 101

LOVE IS RESPECT FUN TRUST HEALTHY SAFETY COMMUNICATION CONSENT

MAKE GOOD DECISIONS + TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS + KNOW YOUR BOUNDARIES = HEALTHY & RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

ABUSER... SOMEONE I KNOW MAY BE AT RISK... WHAT DO I DO?

Need to talk? Text LOVEIS TO 22522
24/7 SUPPORT: 1-866-331-9474

#tcsoloveis

AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Dr. Jonathan Sheinberg, an esteemed local cardiologist who is often kind enough to update TCSO staff on health and wellness issues, recently joined one of our morning briefings calls to discuss cardiovascular well-being during American Heart Month.

The average age of law enforcement officers who experience a heart attack is 46, down from 49 a few years ago, and officers are 25 times more likely to die or become disabled from heart disease than they are from violent actions by suspects. Dr. Sheinberg explained that the unique stress patterns and physical exertion on the job can increase the risk of arterial blockage formation, leading to inflammation and potential plaque rupture, often many hours after stressful events.

He encouraged officers, and the public as well, to speak with their doctors about tests for heart calcifications and inflammatory markers because there are lifestyle and nutritional changes, along with medicine if it is needed for cholesterol, that can make a huge difference in keeping everyone healthy.

February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. TCSO worked with area schools, community partners and social media outlets to raise awareness on such an important issue that affects our youth. According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1.5 million high school students experience teen dating violence yearly.

For 24/7 support, please call the National Teen Dating Violence Hotline at 1-866-331-9474 or text LOVEIS to 22522. You can visit www.loveisrespect.org for more resource information.

FEELING THE CHILL



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Transportation, Courthouse Security and Hospital Visitation Unit Officers as well as available Highway Enforcement and Traffic Accident (HEAT) patrol deputies stepped up and served drivers at all hours of the day and night, using 4-wheel drive vehicles to transport essential employees (medical staff, Central Warrants, 911 Telecommunications and security personnel) who couldn't drive their personal vehicles in to work amid the dangerous road conditions.

TCSO experienced a surge in 9