

MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month. Our Child Abuse Unit is made up of men and women who tirelessly advocate for children. They see and know things most of us can't imagine. Their fight is for the safety and healing of our youngest, most innocent victims and they have my admiration. In this edition, you'll find additional information about our Child Abuse Unit and their efforts.

TCSO serves children and teens in many other ways as well. Over 30 of our employees serve as mentors with [The Seedling Mentor Program](#). They're paired up with the child of an incarcerated parent and meet with that child on a routine basis. Whether it be lunch in a school cafeteria or hanging out at a local basketball game, our officers offer advice, counsel and encouragement in an effort to keep these kids in school and feeling a strong sense of self-worth. It's just one of the ways in which we seek to disrupt the school-to-prison-pipeline.

Our Community Outreach Unit makes children a high priority. It's important to us that children know peace officers care and are here to help. We establish a relationship with them in their early years through school activities and community events. Our Deputies, Corrections Officers and K9s are routinely present at everything from school

special events to community gatherings.

Our Explorers Post program allows 14 – 20 year olds hands-on, practical training that develops a greater understanding of law enforcement and the role of TCSO. We have two new Corrections Officers that were Explorers graduates!

We also have School Resource Officers (SROs) in five independent school districts: Del Valle, Eanes, Lake Travis, Leander and Manor. Our SROs serve in so much more than a law enforcement capacity. They establish relationships with students, looking for ways to encourage and inspire. They also key in on emotional changes, intervening and offering support when students face emotional challenges.

I believe the next generation has incredible potential and am proud of the work your Travis County Sheriff's Office does to protect and invest in the lives of our children and young adults.



CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH



Children are our responsibility. We as a nation, a state, a community, a law enforcement agency and as human beings must strive to protect and promote our children to their greatest potential. TCSO works in collaboration with [Child Protective Services](#) (CPS) and the [Center for Child Protection](#) in this endeavor.

The TCSO Child Abuse Unit specializes in immediate intervention and works closely with CPS to share information, knowledge and manpower to seek justice in cases of child abuse or neglect. While TCSO investigations are criminal in nature, CPS investigations are civil. CPS seeks to educate and protect children, providing aftercare, supervision and intervention as warranted.

The Center for Child Protection is the glue that binds us all. They are the facilitators with an array of people with various specialties from Family Advocates to Forensic Interviewers. They provide education, knowledge and a safe place for children to tell their stories.

It is the combined effort and passion of all of these agencies along with our community that supports the victims of child abuse or neglect. Together we are more effective in fighting such an awful injustice.

On April 2nd, TCSO joined many of the partners at the Travis County Commissioners Court as they read a proclamation recognizing April as Child Abuse Awareness Month in Travis County.



On August 30, 2018, a woman in the Apache Shores neighborhood was assaulted in her home by a baseball bat wielding intruder. Her skull was pulverized by the blow, which caused such severe injury that first responders on scene mistook it for a gunshot wound when making their initial assessment. The assailant also attacked the woman's four-year-old daughter with the bat, pulverizing her skull as well.

The fact that both of them survived is a miracle. TCSO is still investigating with a strong desire to apprehend the person responsible for this heinous crime. DNA and other evidence at the scene is being processed. Detectives believe someone knows about this incident and they're asking anyone with information to call our tip line at 512-854-1444.

To hear from the victim, please click on the icon button to link to the news story.



LAKE PATROL TRAINING



As temperatures start warming up and sunny skies prevail, Lake Travis becomes a very popular destination. In preparation for a busy summer, TCSO Lake Patrol Deputies completed a three-day training course that tested their line handling and boat handling skills, and included a written exam.

As you make your way to Lake Travis for fun, we encourage you to remember that lake safety is of paramount importance. Please use good judgment and remember that driving a boat while intoxicated is as illegal and as deadly as driving a car under the influence. Please also remember to wear your flotation device. If you don't have a life jacket, there are loaner stations located in the parks. Please click on the icon button to link to the map.



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH



One out of every five children have a diagnosable mental health need. Unfortunately, not every child who has a mental health need receives services. This could be due to not knowing what services are available; it could be because they have difficulty accessing services or because of a perceived stigma about receiving mental health care.

On April 27th, TCSO joined the [Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health](#), [Travis Health & Human Services](#) and many other local partners to host the 2019 Children's Mental Health Awareness Day. This annual, free, family-friendly rally and festival provides information about community services while empowering children and families to rise above mental health stigma.

This event was also a kick-off to promote Mental Health Awareness Month in May. On April 30th, TCSO joined community partners at the Travis County Commissioners Court as they recognized the awareness month in Travis County.



AUTO THEFT SCAM



TCSO is part of a 17 county team known as the [Sheriff's Combined Auto Theft Task Force](#). Together, this unit works auto theft cases to curtail the efforts of organized criminals. Currently, the task force is working to put a stop to a scam that leaves victims financially devastated.

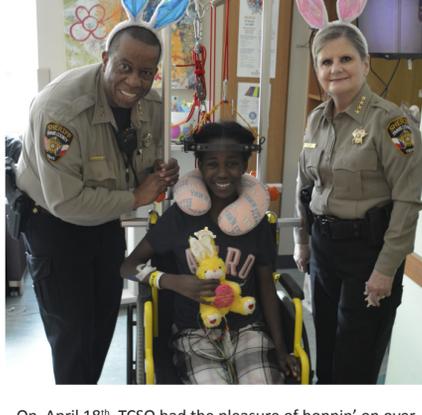
Criminals steal high-end vehicles from large dealerships in Houston and sell the vehicles to residents in Travis County for cash. They advertise the vehicles on Craigslist and other social media outlets. As part of the scam, the "title holder" makes an excuse not to show up for the transaction and someone else presents all the necessary paperwork, already completed. In addition, the person presents a very convincing counterfeit title.

This scam has two victims, the dealership and the car buyer. To date, six victims have been identified in Travis County, each having lost between \$10,000 and \$28,000.

For more information about the scam and who it targets, please click on the icon button to link to the news story.



EASTER BUNNY VISIT



On April 18th, TCSO had the pleasure of hoppin' on over to Dell Children's Hospital to spread some Easter cheer. This annual event is one we look forward to every year and we receive more joy than the kiddos! TCSO deputies bring stuffed Easter bunnies, provided by [The Easter Bunny Foundation](#), to share with the children and families that are spending Easter in the hospital. There are approximately 100 Sheriff's Offices and four Police Departments that participate in this national effort, serving over 14,000 hospitalized children.



FBI TRAINING



Majors Sally Peña and Wes Priddy attended the National Institute of Corrections Large Jail Network Meeting at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA. The meeting covered topics to include Staff Recruitment & Retention, National Data Exchange, Jail Intelligence Gathering, Counter Terrorism Measures, Joint Counter-terrorism Assessment Team, Federal Assisted Treatment for Pregnant Women in Jail, Federal Mental Health & Opioid Program Funding, and Disaster Planning and Response.

This meeting was attended by numerous sheriffs, chief deputies and jail administrators representing the most populous counties across the nation. The Large Jail Network meets twice a year to bring jail professionals together to discuss ongoing and emergent trends and issues affecting jails.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month and TCSO was very engaged in a variety of outreach and awareness activities as well as recognition and training.

On April 11th, the TCSO Victim Services Unit, along with detectives and other deputies, presented the proclamation to recognize April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Travis County to the Travis County Commissioners Court.



Detective Jeff Ford was awarded the End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) Scholarship for Law Enforcement for the 2019 Conference held April 22 - 24 in San Diego, CA. This scholarship is highly coveted and is awarded to only 10 Law Enforcement recipients in the United States.

The selection process for this scholarship program was extremely competitive and Ford was one of the 10 selected among the many applicants.

Some of the criteria for the application were as follows:

- Level of current and future responsibility for sexual assault response and investigation
- Availability of training opportunities for sexual assault response and investigation
- Evidence for the potential impact in improving knowledge and skills in this area
- Letter of recommendation from supervisor

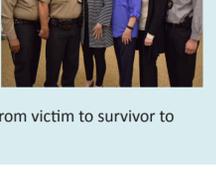
EVAWI is a professional training organization recommended by law enforcement and affiliations to advance and improve the criminal justice and community response systems for victims of gender-based violence. The conference highlighted promising practices and emerging issues in sexual assault, intimate partner violence and other forms of gender-based violence.

[READ MORE](#)

TCSO is dedicated to preventing sexual abuse and sexual harassment of those incarcerated in our correctional facilities. Over the past year, the agency has made a significant investment in sexual safety by seeking US DOJ PREA Auditor Certification for two employees: PREA Coordinator K. Wings-Yanez and Sergeant Tracy Shumard. This certification considerably enhances the custodial sexual abuse expertise in our agency, and we will be able to work with other jurisdictions to complete circular or reciprocal audits in the future, reducing audit costs. The rigorous program consisted of a competitive application process, a week-long in-person training, and a Field Training Audit (FTA). The FTA program involved 10 weeks of audit preparation, 60+ hours of on-site facility visits and interviews, and another 10 weeks of evaluation and report drafting.

This month, Shumard completed her FTA of the county jail in Alexandria, VA, and is now provisionally certified. Wings-Yanez is currently completing her FTA of the Omaha Correctional Center and expects provisional certification in May.

On April 26th, Sheriff Hernandez hosted a special Q&A session with Ellen Halbert, one of the state's most influential advocates.



The audience of detectives and victim services personnel learned about Halbert's personal journey from victim to survivor to champion.

CVE INSPECTOR TRUCK CHALLENGE



Earlier this month, TCSO Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Deputies competed in the Department of Public Safety Region 6 CVE Inspector Truck Challenge in Temple, TX. Officers from the region were put to the test via a timed, written exam encompassing Federal regulations and scenario testing on a Truck Tractor/Semi Trailer, a General Hazmat Inspection, a Cargo Tank Hazmat Inspection and a Passenger Vehicle (bus) Inspection.

Senior Deputies Leonard Shepperson and Christopher Kimmons competed and took high honors. Kimmons placed first in Non-bulk Hazmat. Shepperson took first in Combined Hazmat and first Overall; he will be advancing to the state competition in Corpus Christi in July and we know he's going to do us proud!



MILLION MILE



Several of our deputies participated in [Heathcode's Million Mile Month](#). The challenge is to complete one million miles of physical activity as a global community of participants. The deputies set individual goals and through the organization's web site, they were able to see how their progress matched up to other participants. Senior Deputy Allie Sabrula set a personal goal to run 100 miles in the month. Senior Deputies Michael Manis and Michael Orman used Bike Patrol as a means of logging miles. Deputy Manis not only lead the TCSO scores, but all of Travis County!

