



MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ



Photo taken prior to COVID-19

As I shared with you last month, we've been discussing various topics as part of our agency-wide morning briefings. For several weeks this month, we discussed strong families. I challenged our supervisors and staff to present ways TCSO serves families in Travis County as well as ways we serve and strengthen our TCSO family internally. Employees shared ideas and success stories that detailed various ways we support one another and numerous resources available for the cause.

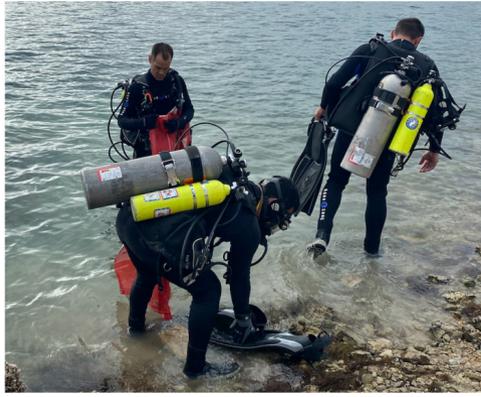
These topical discussions mean a great deal to me and I believe they will to you. In this issue, you'll have the opportunity to read about a few of the stories we heard. Our Transportation Unit took care of an 81-year-old woman in crisis as if she were family. Inmate tablets and SecurePaks are providing innovative ways for families to stay connected and comfort their loved ones during COVID-19 restrictions. One of our veterans recalled the way he was assisted and welcomed to the TCSO family as he transitioned from a military career to his new job as a corrections officer.

The ways we at TCSO endeavor to strengthen families are big and small. They vary from large, organized programs to simple words of encouragement, offered when someone's confidence needs a boost.

Impactful efforts can sometimes get overlooked in the hurry and stress of life. I wonder what you might discover about your own family, business, school or community organization if you open a similar dialogue. What resources and support can you put to work? After all, strong families make a strong community. I also wonder if there are additional ways you think TCSO can help strengthen and support families in Travis County. I'd love to hear from you!



LAKE TRAVIS CLEANUP



TCSO's Underwater Recovery Team participated in the 26th Annual Lake Travis Cleanup. Our team hauled in several large bags worth of debris. They enjoy working with the community to care for one of Travis County's most beautiful assets.

CHAPLAIN M'INTOSH RETIRES



Every family has an iconic member. Ours is known across the entire agency by one name - Tommy. Chaplain Tommy M'Intosh is our longest tenured employee, serving 36 years with the agency. This month, he retired, but it's hard to let him go.

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BROWN SANTA



While many programs and services have been stopped due to COVID-19, the [Travis County Brown Santa](#) program will continue to bring joy to families this year.

Last year, it took more than 2,000 volunteers to run the program. Due to COVID-19, that number will be significantly decreased and safety measures as well as sanitation will be implemented.

[Online applications](#) are due by December 7th and recipients must live in the unincorporated areas of Travis County (outside of city limits). Distribution of gifts and food will occur between December 12th - 20th.

FIRST RESPONDERS APPRECIATION



Residents of the [Longhorn Village](#) retirement community invited us and the Lake Travis Fire Department to join a community parade to show their appreciation for our service. They also provided meals and signed two, giant thank you cards. Their gratitude, generosity and joy meant so much to us!



COVID-19 has changed the way we honor veterans at the Travis County Sheriff's Office.

In past years, we placed flags at veterans' grave sites at the Texas State Cemetery, TCSO Captain Xavier Montalvo would treat each building to cake to honor our own veterans, and we would join numerous community events.

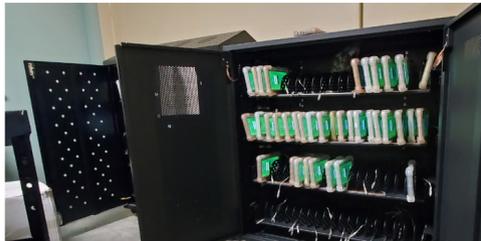
This year, veterans who work at TCSO shared stories during our morning briefing calls about their military service experiences, how the skills and training they received applies to their jobs here, and how they feel about respect and honor for our nation, and each other.

A corrections lieutenant shared that about 15 years ago, he and his wife were expecting their first child. After applying at several agencies, he said TCSO stood out because he was able to apply and undergo testing before leaving the military. Thanks to the flexibility offered in our recruiting process, he started working with us a month later.

Others talked about serving veterans during their free time. A law enforcement sergeant spoke about a non-profit he helps run that finds housing and transportation for veterans, particularly those who are homeless.

We love our veterans and are so grateful to them for their service to our country, and to our agency.

INMATE TABLETS



Senior Corrections Officer Matthew Brunetti shared during one of our morning briefings the benefits inmate tablets have offered during the pandemic. Due to COVID-19 safety precautions, inmate access to shared phones has been significantly reduced. Individual tablets are allowing inmates to easily contact their legal counsel, make collect calls, and utilize their phone cards safely and securely.

The tablets also allow inmates to access educational content, health/wellness information, news, job searches and faith services, to name a few. Inmates can experience growth activities despite the suspension of group/classroom gatherings.

Innovative technology solutions are keeping inmates and their families connected and offering enrichment experiences during these challenging times.

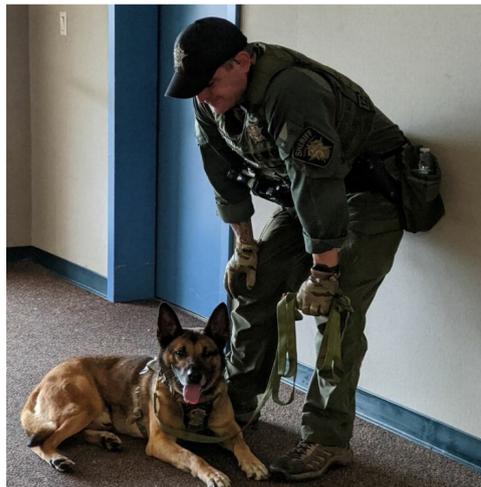
SecurePak COMMISSARY



Inmates in our custody who qualify, have access to a commissary that provides a convenience, store for food and toiletry items. Inmates who want items, in addition to what is already provided to them, may choose what to purchase and pay for it via an account they've set up. Our commissary is stocked with basic necessity items, similar to what you might find in a hotel lobby. Beyond that, we offer an option called a [SecurePak](#) to their friends and loved ones.

A SecurePak is like a care package. Friends and loved ones of our inmates can access this specialized commissary via phone or [online](#). They may purchase food, toiletries, clothing and writing materials. This has proven to be a great option for people who want to offer care and support by sending something extra. "It's amazing the difference a comfort item, like a sweatshirt can make; it's going past the basics and it lifts a person's attitude significantly." - Colette Girouard, Commissary Manager

K-9 BOBEK RETIRES



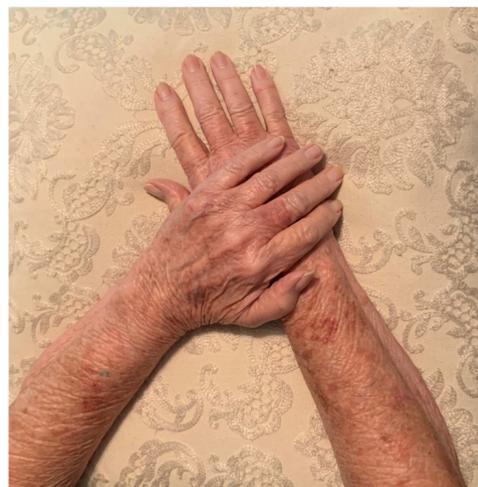
November 19th was retirement day for another TCSO family member - K9 Bobek.

Bobek began his career with TCSO in December 2013. After being certified in narcotics and patrol, he started working the streets, finding illegal drugs and assisting with the apprehension of suspects.

In 2017, Bobek became the first dog to completely integrate into the Travis County SWAT team. Throughout his time with SWAT, he successfully ended two long call outs with violent felons and located other suspects who ran from the scene. He also assisted multiple federal agencies during his career and was deputized by the U.S. Marshals Lone Star Fugitive Task Force.

We are truly grateful for his many years of service. Bobek will enjoy retirement in the home of his handler, where he will chase squirrels, take long naps, eat treats and get lots of love from his family.

CARING LIKE FAMILY



On a recent morning briefing call, Sergeant Jose Garcia shared that we had an 81-year-old woman in our custody who had been arrested for Assault Public Servant. She suffered from a severe mental illness and had no support system. It became apparent at intake that she didn't have family to look after and care for her. The woman received a personal bond and the TCSO Transportation Unit was tasked to take her home once she was released from our custody, to ensure she would get home safely.

Garcia recalled that "once she came into our custody, TCSO became her temporary family. We took care of her from the moment she stepped into our facility, all the way to dropping her off safely at her apartment. From Travis County Jail and Central Booking Officers, to Medical and James Zimmerman, to the Clinical Mental Health Supervisor and Counselors, to the Transportation team; throughout the whole process, she was taken care of and everyone ensured she was in safe hands."