

Merriman Park  University Manor

Communicator

Merriman Park/University Manor Neighborhood Association

January 2010

Crime Watch Meeting:

Date & Time: January 19, 2010; 6:00 PM

Place: Dallas Police Department, Northeast Division, 9915 E. Northwest Highway

This year we will have our Neighborhood Patrol Officers, Sr. Corp. Geoffrey Pettay and Sr. Corp. Bert Rippey, on hand to share crime stats for our neighborhood, inform us of any criminal activities we need to be watching for and answer any questions you might have about crime in or near our neighborhood.

We are also pleased to have Sgt. Mark Johnson who is in charge of the Dallas Police Department's Expanded Neighborhood Patrol (ENP) program. Sgt. Johnson is from our Northeast Division of the Dallas Police Department and will be sharing more details about how this program can help our neighborhood fight crime. For more information about the ENP program, see the article below.

This is an excellent time to learn more about criminal activity in our area, ask specifics about issues you have personally encountered and learn more about how the DPD ENP program can help our neighborhood fight crime. So make sure you come to what we feel will be a most informative meeting.

Crime Watch*:

Perception by many of you and by even the police department is that our neighborhood has done a very effective job fighting crime. Both the VIP program and all the residents watching out for each other are responsible for reducing crime. While that perception is valid compared to other nearby neighborhoods, we still have had a number of crimes in 2009. In an effort to reduce crime further, we are turning our focus to the Expanded Neighborhood Patrol (ENP), a program provided by The Dallas Police Department. Since acquiring a new Deputy Chief at the Northeast Station, we have seen fewer patrols in our neighborhood because DPD has taken a different direction, where officers concentrate their time in high crime areas. Previously the officers were using all residential neighborhoods to travel from point A to point B so we saw a more frequent presence from the Dallas Police Department. The ENP program buys us a guaranteed police presence in our neighborhood which is why the ENP program is so important.

In the past year, we have had fewer residential burglaries and an increased amount of crimes late at night. The night crimes tend to be Burglary of a Motor Vehicle and Criminal Mischief/Vandalism. We seem to have a lot more "foot traffic" late at night, especially on feeder streets like Kingsbury and Walling. Also, Town North and Larmanda are vulnerable as people cut through across the school grounds. We have also had issues in the heart of our neighborhood as well. Unless this criminal activity happened near you, you may be surprised about how our 2009 ended up – just for our neighborhood alone. Here's a view of 2009:

Auto Theft – 3 offenses
Burglary of Motor Vehicles (BMV) – 5 offenses
Residential Burglary – 8 offenses
Criminal Mischief/Vandalism – 11 offenses
Theft – 7 offenses
Robbery – 3 offenses
Other – 2 offenses
Total Crimes recorded by DPD – 39 offenses

The estimated total in damages and property stolen for these crimes was \$10,283 for the home burglaries and \$24,350 for the vehicle vandalisms/burglaries. As you can see, the majority of the crime involved vehicles, most of which were parked on the street. Most of the \$24,350 total was from valuables that had been left in the vehicles.

Of the 39 crimes, 18 happened during the day while 21 happened at night. The nighttime activity has picked up, especially very late at night or in the wee hours of the morning. So while this level of crime is better than many other neighborhoods, it is not good enough. Thus the reason we are looking very critically at the Dallas Police Department ENP Program. This program has been successfully used by approximately 16 neighborhoods in the NE DPD Division and we hope each of you will give it a careful review as you get acquainted with how it can help our neighborhood.

ENP: Expanded Neighborhood Patrol (ENP)*:

A Committee has been appointed by the Association Board President to begin the process of moving toward the ENP program as one more way for us, as a community, to be proactive in fighting crime and protecting our neighborhood. Based on the number of residents who told us they would pay \$150 per year to

guarantee police presence in the neighborhood, we are moving to the next level. You will be receiving more details about this program which will allow you to make an informed decision about whether you would like to join others in the neighborhood to have an off duty Dallas Police Department officer who patrols our neighborhood at the times we designate. The times will be staggered so criminals will not be able to commit crimes when they know the ENP is not on patrol. We will cover both day and night as we stagger the hours. We need patrolling during the day hours when you are at work. But we would like to have a late night patrol if possible to let the "street" know they cannot be sure when the neighborhood will be monitored. Certainly weekends would be a good time for night patrols. Week days we will most likely concentrate on day hours to give you peace of mind while you are at your office.

We would encourage all of you to attend the Crime Watch Meeting on Tuesday, 1/19/2010, to hear what Sgt. Johnson shares about this program. We are also trying to get one of the coordinators from another neighborhood currently using this program to share how it has helped them make their neighborhood safer. It will be a great time to ask questions about the program, especially since this could be a very important step toward reducing crime in our neighborhood.

Solicitors*:

We are experiencing another rash of solicitors who are scammers. We cannot urge you enough - do not give money to strangers and never allow a stranger in your home. If you have a "No Soliciting" sign, enforce it by pointing it out to the person at the door. They will say they are not soliciting. Just politely (or not so politely) tell the person you are not interested and close your door. The only people who are exempt are solicitors who are holding a charitable solicitation permit. So if you have a No Soliciting sign posted, do not talk to anyone unless they can produce a Charitable Solicitation Permit. Those who do not have these signs posted, if you want to know you are speaking to someone legitimate, ask for the Permit.

Also be aware there are times when solicitation is not allowed by our City Code. The Codes says: No one should go on any residential premises, ring the doorbell, or rap or knock on the door or create any sound in a manner calculated to attract the attention of the occupant:

- 1) Before 9:00 a.m. or after 30 minutes following sunset of any day, Monday through Saturday, or
- 2) At any time on a Sunday, New Year's Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day or Christmas Day

If you have a solicitor during any of these times, you should call 911 – especially if the solicitor approaches your house after dark. Legitimate solicitors know these rules well. So if you have someone breaking the rules and approaching your house at unlawful times, most of the time they are up to no good. So don't hesitate to call 911 to have them checked out. If you would like a free No Soliciting sticker for your home, send an email to info@mpum.com with your address and we will drop one on your porch.

Finally, if anyone knocks on your door after dark, be sure to make some noise inside your house. Tell the person *through the door* you are calling 911. Immediately call 911 and report a "suspicious" person knocking on your door. And, finally, keep in mind that when you hand over money to a stranger, it sends a message to the solicitor that our neighborhood is an easy target for acquiring money for illegitimate reasons. So help the neighborhood send the message we are not an easy target.

2010 Census Coming Soon:

The U.S. Census is taken once every 10 years. It's that time again. Census Day is April 1, 2010. You will be hearing and reading a lot about this in the next few months. With one of the shortest questionnaires in history, the 2010 Census only asks 10 questions. The questions ask about name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship among household members, and whether you own or rent your home. That's all! It only takes a few minutes to complete. There will be no Long Form questionnaire asking more detailed questions like there has been in past censuses.

Here's what will happen. Some time prior to April 1, during the month of March, you will receive your questionnaire by mail. You are asked to complete it and return it by mail. A postage-paid, addressed envelope will be provided. Upon receipt of the questionnaire, you should complete it and return it. NO ENUMERATOR (CENSUS TAKER) WILL BE COMING TO YOUR HOUSE TO TAKE THE CENSUS AND ASK QUESTIONS. THIS IS A MAIL CENSUS. PLEASE COOPERATE AND RESPOND EARLY so that a Census enumerator will not have to come to your house later to complete the form in person. The concept of the Census is to simply give a snapshot of the U.S. population as of April 1, 2010. Complete the form and return it no later than April 1.

What happens if a household does not respond? Later in April and May the Bureau of the Census has to send field enumerators to your house to knock on your door and attempt to complete the questionnaire. Multiple attempts will have to be made if no one is at home. Returning the form by April 1 will not only save the government money, it will also prevent Census enumerators from interrupting your life by coming to your door. Please be aware that in the event Census takers ever come to your door, all will have professional photo ID badges. They will show it to you! It will have very clear labeling indicating that person is employed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Furthermore, as stated above, they will never ask questions regarding social security numbers, financial information, etc., only the above information.

Responses to the 2010 Census questionnaire are required by law. All responses are used for statistical purposes only and are strictly confidential. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share an individual's responses with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. All Census Bureau employees have taken an oath to protect confidentiality and will not disclose any information that could identify a respondent or household.

It is particularly important for Neighborhood Associations to be accurately counted. Getting a full population count will help associations to ensure that local governments provide adequate and appropriate political representation and infrastructure improvements, as well as provide Congress with the information it needs to allocate more than \$400 billion in federal funds to state and local governments. It will also directly affect your community's representation in Congress and your community leaders' planning decisions. For more information on the upcoming 2010 Census please visit: www.census.gov/2010census.

2010 Sanitation Changes (One Day Dallas):

We have learned that by March 1, 2010 all of Dallas will have trash and recycling pick up only ONE day a week. If you do not have a blue container for recycling, be sure and call 3-1-1 between now and next March and order one for your house. Having both a city trash cart and a blue recycle cart will make it easy to transition to one day a week pick up. Also call 3-1-1 if you need a trash cart or if you need yours replaced due to damage. If your cart does not have a lid, be sure and have it replaced because it gathers water and can become a mosquito problem. To read more about OneDay Dallas, visit this website: <http://www.onedaydallas.com> And, remember, if you have a way to take your recyclables to the Big Blue recycle bin located in the parking lot at the Town North Bible Church, the MP/UM Neighborhood Association receives the proceeds from that recycle bin. There is another Big Blue recycle bin assigned to our neighborhood, located in the Fiesta parking lot, near Aaron's Rental store.

New Business – T-Hee Gifts:

In the past couple of newsletters we have highlighted and reviewed new restaurants around our neighborhood. This time we want to tell you about a wonderful gift shop called T-Hee Gifts. The store is located at the SW corner of Walnut Hill and Audelia (In the same shopping center as the Highlands Café.). T-Hee is a gift shop with a good selection of greeting cards, unique gifts for all occasions with a wide range of prices. Then, there are special custom print items, i.e., invitations for weddings, birthdays, retirements, graduations, etc. Plus they have a custom cup printing service. There are Styrofoam cups, stadium cups and "Koozies" for any purpose. You will enjoy the friendly, helpful atmosphere. In fact one of the friendly personnel members is one of our own residents. Next time you need to find that special gift for someone special, go check out T-Hee!

Fall Festival:

Our Fall Festival was the best! We had almost 100 people who attended with each family bringing a covered dish or a dessert - it was simply delicious. We particularly enjoyed the many families that attended with their children and it was fun having door prizes for both adults and children this year.

Website:

Please take the time to visit our website. You will find a lot of useful information. If you think of information you would like to see on our website, please send a note to info@mpum.com. We are always looking for content that would be helpful for all our residents. If anyone would like to help publish information on our website, please send an email info@mpum.com. Stuart Johnston has programmed our website so anyone can actually edit and add information, once they are given clearance. So if you like to write, have the time to help us keep the website information fresh, please let us hear from you! Stuart can be reached at webmaster@mpum.com. If you think of information for our website that you believe would be of help to all residents, send your idea to info@mpum.com.

Email Communication:

If you have an email address, be sure you send it to info@mpum.com so you can be added to our neighborhood email list. Those on the email list will receive crime alerts, events affecting our neighborhood, updates on the redevelopment of commercial properties around our neighborhood and pet alerts.

Neighborhood Association Dues:

Help the neighborhood fund various neighborhood events and expenses by paying your dues. The dues are still just \$15.00 per household so if you have not already paid your dues for the 2009/2010 year, now would be the perfect time. If you have any question at all about whether or not you have paid, you can check the list of

households paid on our website at www.mpum.com. Look for the link on the front page in the right-hand column that says "Dues Paid for the Current Fiscal Year." You can also call Charley Ramirez, our Treasurer, and he will be glad to look it up for you. He can be reached by telephone at 214-341-1861 or by email at treasurer@mpum.com. Dues may be mailed to MPUM, P.O. Box 820803, Dallas, TX 75382-0803.

Yard of the Month: (visit our website at www.mpum.com for pictures)
December Yard of the Month: 6914 Winchester

Hotchkiss Computers:

We have learned that our neighborhood school, Hotchkiss Elementary, is in desperate need of more up to date computers and other media tools in the classrooms. Currently they are still trying to operate with what they refer to as "dinosaurs." These are old Pentium 3, yellowish beige colored PC's. And they have other needs as well to help them teach the children more technology skills and help escalate their ranking in the State of Texas.

Many of you may have PC's you have retired rather recently that are older to you but would be light years ahead of what the school has now. If you have a desktop or laptop PC made in the last 5 years that you are not using, consider donating it to Hotchkiss. Our Webmaster, Stuart Johnston, is checking out each machine donated to be sure it is running.

If you are afraid of having sensitive data on your computer, we have a program that will zap away everything. Reformatting a disk does not get rid of all the data but this program will. Hotchkiss calls their tech department who then comes out to install an operating system on it because they must have a license for each machine. If you wish to donate one with the operating system intact, you will have to also furnish the license for the operating system on that PC. So, they can handle PC's with and without operating systems. Here's a list of the equipment needed by Hotchkiss. They currently have about 30 PC's that are the dinosaurs we mentioned earlier. To date we have about 9-10 PC's pledged and hoping to receive very soon. Help us support our neighborhood school by reaching our goal of 30 PC's.

Hotchkiss Wish List:

Teacher/Student Desktop PC's
Teacher/Student Desktop Monitors (LCD Flat Screens Only due to desk space)
Teacher/Student Laptops
These are two more sophisticated pieces of equipment that are expensive but listed just in case someone has one of these and it's not being used:
Epson Powerlite Projectors
e-Instruction Classroom Performance Systems

If you have any of this computer equipment to donate, please contact
Stuart Johnston 214-553-9579 webmaster@mpum.com
Donna Mason 214-348-7721 info@mpum.com
Robert Giesler 214-349-7028 jazzydott@sbcglobal.net

The Communicator is a publication of the Merriman Park/University Manor Neighborhood Association, P.O. Box 820803, Dallas, TX 75382-0803. Articles, letters and suggestions are invited and appreciated and can be mailed to the P.O. Box or sent via e-mail to info@mpum.com.
