



# On Call



A community news publication of the Arlington, Texas Police Department

## Crossing the Bridge, Arlington Police Officers Build Trust and Partnerships

The 3400 block of Sherry Street is where the relationships grew. Last summer, neighbors came together to paint a mural to cover up unsightly graffiti underneath a bridge. Everyone pitched in to help, including Arlington police officers, a Home Depot and a real estate firm who donated the paint, brushes and rollers.

The bridge is a well-traveled route for Lynn Hale Elementary School students, some as young as six years old. Some walk, others ride their bikes while the smaller ones run to keep up.

School Principal Claudia Morales Herrera said this was not always the safest route for her students.

At dismissal time, there were calls from parents and neighbors reporting children walking in the street, shoving and bullying at the bridge, she said.

"Conflict was brought into the school," the principal said. "I asked APD to please help us."

East District Police Lieutenant Becki Brandenburg, Sergeants Robert Walsh and JaNae Powell answered the call. The lieutenant began assigning patrol officers to the bridge at 3:30 p.m..

Officers were already tutoring. At the school, more began showing up at events like the Daddy Daughter Dance and Multicultural Night. There was an increased presence of officers at neighborhood watch meetings.

The principal says officer involvement has translated into a more positive environment in the classroom. This year, the Title 1 campus earned Texas Education Agency distinctions in five of six academic performance areas and an

education-focused nonprofit ranked them as a top performing school in Tarrant County.

"If we cannot address the social and emotional behaviors of a child, we can't get to the academics," the principal said. "The Arlington Police Department has helped us do that."

"These were the same kids who referred to officers as 'The Po-Po,' people to be afraid of," she said.

"Today, these students run to officers, give them high fives ... They invite them to their activities. They ask about them when they're not here."

What started as a beautification project in a concrete channel under a bridge has evolved into something really great for this school, says Lt. Brandenburg.

In a presentation last month, the Arlington Police Department named this partnership, "The Bridge Kids."



On the bridge, students tell Officer Marissa Sandham about their day and she reminds them to walk safely and watch out for one another.

## Motorist Finds Procedural Justice On Traffic Stop

This busy mother of two was leaving a dance studio after watching her daughter prepare for a recital when she was stopped.

"I wasn't speeding," Felisha Battles says. "So, I asked the officer why he stopped me?" "With all the negative stories in the news about the police, I wanted to know why he pulled me over."

Officer Matthew Thorpe, a patrol officer since 2010, told Mrs. Battles race was not a factor. He stopped the car because the license plate was registered to a Lexus in Houston. Her vehicle is a Mercedes.

This appeared to have been a stolen vehicle, the officer said. This is the second time that day race was questioned on a traffic stop, he said.

"He was very professional," Mrs. Battles said. "He was courteous. He even invited me to sit behind the wheel to see what he observes. I saw for myself that it's not easy for an officer to



Officer Thorpe and Mrs. Battles in the 900 block of Meadow Oaks Drive.



determine the color of a person's skin from the patrol car."

Before sending her on her way, Officer Thorpe took a few minutes to put the correct plates on Mrs. Battles' vehicle. While her personalized pink and green sorority plates recently expired, the original ones were tucked away in her glove compartment.

"I apologized to the officer for jumping to that conclusion," she said.

"I drove away with a new friend and a better understanding of how police officers in my city work."

For the community, this is a good example of what procedural justice looks like on a traffic stop.

Procedural justice in policing is voice, transparency, how we interact with the public and how our actions can shape a person's view of us, the officer said.



"What started as a beautification project in a concrete channel under a bridge has evolved into something really great ..."

Lt. Becki Brandenburg  
Arlington, Texas Police Department  
East Police District

# On Call

# MAY CRIME PREVENTION SPOTLIGHT EAST POLICE DISTRICT

## Immigration Services, Public Safety and More Highlight This Event

Many community resources recently came together Arlington to serve families needing assistance with immigration and documentation related concerns.

The Mobile Mexican Consulate set up at the First United Methodist Church on Center Street over a three day period in May.



Officer Natalia Aumedes is a Crime Prevention Officer in the East Police District. She can be reached at 817-459-5817 or [Natalia.Aumedes@Arlingtontx.gov](mailto:Natalia.Aumedes@Arlingtontx.gov).

Families learned how to obtain documents such as a birth certificate and identification card. Legal assistance with issues involving labor laws and understanding immigration policies were also explained.

The Arlington Police Department was a participant and spoke with families about personal safety and ways to avoid becoming a victim of a crime.

APD Victim Services Counselor Jose Chaidez shared information about domestic violence and the resources available to help those who find themselves in an unsafe situation.

This community event was part of our Unidos Hispanic outreach and education program held quarterly. Planning is already under way for the next program coming in August.

A special thanks to the Mobile Mexican Consulate and our partners at the Arlington Independent School District for helping us reach the families who benefitted from this information.

**NEW!** Find more crime prevention highlights on the APD website at [www.Arlingtonpd.org](http://www.Arlingtonpd.org).



Looking for more crime prevention highlights from police districts? Visit us on the web at [www.Arlingtonpd.org](http://www.Arlingtonpd.org).

## 15 Years Later, More People “Click It” for Safety

A statewide campaign designed to promote safety behind the wheel continues to have a big impact on roadway safety, some 15 years after it was launched.

When the Click It or Ticket Campaign started in 2002, only 76 percent of Texans were using their seat belts, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Today, it is estimated that close to 92 percent buckle up. Eight percent still don't.

“That’s too many,” said Grant Coordinator Danielle Cuesta who manages the funding for APD officer participation in traffic safety enforcement campaigns like this one. “Wearing a seat belt keeps vehicle occupants from being ejected in a crash. It increases the chance of surviving.”

During the last Click It or Ticket Campaign held May 22



through June 4, Arlington officers wrote tickets for 80 seat belt violations, said Ms. Cuesta. Six of those tickets were for child restraints.

TXDOT estimates the Click It or Ticket campaign has saved 5,068 lives in the last 15 years.

Texas law requires every occupant of a vehicle to buckle up, including those in the back seat. Violators face fines and court costs up to \$200. Children younger than 8 years old must be in a child safety seat or booster unless they are taller than four feet, nine inches.

*Looking Ahead: The next traffic enforcement campaign will be conducted in July to address driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.*



**WASHINGTON D.C.** - During National Police Week, the APD Honor Guard traveled to Washington D.C. to honor our nation’s fallen heroes. Every year in May, events draw close to 40,000 people to our Nation’s Capital for candlelight vigils and memorial tributes. (Back Row - Left to Right:) Officer Barry Watson, Officer Natalia Aumedes, Detective Troy Medina, Sgt. Brian Garcia, Corporal Bryant Parks, Sgt. Jakisha Jones, Officer Michael Farmer and Officer Martin Perez

### COMING NEXT MONTH!

It’s not too early to start thinking about National Night Out 2017. **NATIONAL NIGHT OUT RETURNS TUESDAY, OCT. 3.**

In the next issue of *On Call*, read how you can start getting your neighbors involved. Arlington ranks #2 in National Night Out participation in the nation. Help us be #1.



Join APD on **FRIDAY, JULY 7** for a celebration of outstanding service in police volunteerism. Program starts at 11 a.m. at the AISD Mac Bernd Professional Development Center.

For more information, call Crime Prevention at 817-459-5726.

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