

"Building Bridges in Houston's East End"

Problem-Oriented Policing Project Submission

By:

Houston Police Eastside Division
Differential Response Team/ Community Service Unit

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"Preserving the relationship with the Hispanic community in Houston's East End, while establishing a framework centered on problem-oriented policing and Building Bridges"

Project Summary:

The Eastside Differential Response (DRT)/Community Service Unit have worked tirelessly in Houston's East End community. The community is predominately Hispanic and Spanish speaking. Recently, a growing fear towards law enforcement has become apparent within the community. This largely stems from recent legislation that was drafted and passed at our state's capitol during the 2017 legislative session. Senate Bill 4 allows local law enforcement the ability to enforce federal immigration laws.

Officers at the Eastside DRT unit found proactive ways to combat that fear. The officers brought innovative problem-oriented policing techniques to fruition and the results have been phenomenal. Calls for service reporting within the Hispanic Community decreased drastically because of the fear, and officers at Eastside enhanced their work in the community and spent more time working to build trust and strengthen bridges within the community. Calls for service within the Hispanic community rose significantly after the unit's enhanced outreach plan by an estimated 20%.

SARA: Scanning: Growing fear towards police within the Hispanic community, leading to a drop in calls for service. **Analysis:** Recent legislation allowing local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws. **Response:** Enhanced efforts in the community with bilingual outreach and innovative events. **Assessment:** Positive feedback from many stakeholders and community members and a rise in calls for service in Hispanic community.

Building bridges is vital and the partnership between the police and community is important to prevent and fight crime.



Problem-Oriented Policing Project Using The SARA Model

Scanning:

The problem at hand, specifically deals with Texas Senate Bill 4, which allows local law enforcement officers to enforce federal immigration laws; and threatens community-oriented policing concepts and can lead to a downward spiral in regards to police and community relations.

The issue stems from the growing number of Hispanic residents that are moving to the region, and in Houston's East End. Coincidently, the issue originated from an influx of recent legislation targeting the immigrant population, thus negatively impacting the relationship between the community and police.

By listening and learning from residents in Houston's East End neighborhoods, officers quickly learned that there was a growing fear towards police. Others have also acknowledged the problem, such as elected officials, police chiefs, sheriffs, constables, and community/educational leaders. The problem of Texas Senate Bill 4 deals with discrimination, promotes racial profiling, and presents a serious risk to the general peace and welfare of the community. The initial response of officers within the Eastside Differential Response Team (DRT) / Community Service Unit was to respond with an innovative approach to community-oriented policing techniques through two innovative outreach initiatives "The School Outreach Project" and "Alianza Against Crime".

The problem-oriented policing methods we decided to go forward with involved a substantial presence in neighborhood schools and creating a series of events for the community to have the opportunity to interact with police.

The first initiative was the "School Outreach Project" in which Eastside DRT officers visited with local elementary schools, focusing on both the students and their parents. During this three month initiative, Eastside officers utilized the Coffee with the Principal events as a forum to address the concerns of the parents. By utilizing the schools, parents were at ease in asking questions and interacting with law enforcement. Eastside Officers regularly visited with the elementary students in their classrooms and during their lunch periods to reestablish the fundamental understanding that law



enforcement officers are always there to help. It was during one visit at Gallegos Elementary that Eastside officers were challenged to a friendly game of soccer.

On Thursday, April 6, 2017, Officers of the Eastside Division took on the Gallegos Elementary School "Firefighters" in a very competitive match. A number of community leaders and members attended the event. Among the schools visited within the 3 month initiative were JP Henderson Elementary, Gallegos Elementary, Bonner Elementary, Carrillo Elementary, Rucker Elementary, Park Place Elementary, Raul Yzaguirre Elementary, Briscoe Elementary and Garden Villas Elementary.

The second initiative was the "Alianza Against Crime" in which five separate community driven events were organized to help promote community-oriented policing strategies. Each of the five separate events were held monthly in each of the five geographic beats located within the boundaries of the Eastside Division.

Each event was comprised of 3 components; 1) an open town hall forum allowing community & police dialogue, 2) a resource fair in the form of booths and 3) interaction between members of the community and law enforcement via stationary displays and hands on activities hosted by specialized divisions within HPD such as SWAT, Air Support, Mounted Patrol, Canine, and HPD Explorers Program.

Analysis:

Through their daily interactions with residents, Eastside DRT officers had personal knowledge about the fear in the community. The officers met regularly with neighborhood civic clubs, parent/teacher groups, and with members of Eastside's monthly Positive Interaction Program (PIP). Officers also participated in a police question and answer phone bank with a local Spanish television station, and fielded an alarming number of questions in relation to the rising fear within the community.

Police and community relations have always been a work in progress, nationwide. However, the issue has become a severely problem-oriented, with regards to the discussions of Texas Senate Bill 4. The Spanish speaking community in the East End of Houston consists of parents, children, teachers, community leaders, and others. Because of the growing fear, Eastside DRT officers learned that children would come to school crying and were not able to focus in class. The children were sad because of the fear of coming home to an empty house, after learning that the parents had been deported. The issue has become so detrimental; that officers also learned that parents are giving bus



drivers alternate addresses for student drop offs, if parents were to be deported during school hours. The fear is real.

The fear has grown, specifically with a decline in reported crimes within Houston's Hispanic community, as well as apprehension of getting involved within the investigative process, such as volunteering to share witness statements. In identifying the problem-oriented policing issue, Eastside DRT officers enhanced their presence at schools and civic meetings and promoted the notion that officers were here to protect everyone from crime; but most importantly, to ensure the community that we are only interested in becoming partners in fighting crime. The nature of the problem was that the Spanish speaking community was scared to come forward and work with police. Eastside DRT officer realized that there was a need for an increase of problem-oriented policing methods.

Response:

The goal of creating the "School Outreach Project" and "Alianza Against Crime" was to establish positive bilingual interactions, open to everyone, to reach out to the community and ensure partnerships between the police and community would not be diminished. Working with the community and creating an "Alliance" to combat crime and promoting teamwork was the main response to the problem that we came up with.

By looking at the issue, we learned that taking a proactive approach would be best and that would emphasize our commitment to working together with all community members. Officers then met with community, law enforcement, and education leaders as well as elected officials to determine that something had to be done to address the growing fear. Currently, the community works hard to enhance the quality of life within Houston's East End. With full support from civic leaders and elected officials, Eastside DRT officers knew that by forming an alliance with the community, positive steps towards increasing the quality of life would occur. Officers used many resources to push forward with both initiatives. Officers partnered with city departments, elected officials, local business owners, school officials, and the Mexican Consulate, to name a few. Officers encountered few difficulties promoting and planning the events. The issues were minor and dealt with logistical concerns, but were eventually solved. One example was coordinating the event next door to a polling location during a special election. This happened to be a positive occurrence, as attendees stopped by to vote as well.



Assessment:

The purpose of enhancing the partnership with the community was met. The first event had over two hundred people in attendance. The response from attendees was very positive and the event helped build a stronger bridge with the community in Houston's East End. We asked attendees to sign in and provide their contact information, so that they could be added to the community listserv for future meeting notices. A number of attendees entered with a sense of confusion and uncertainty but left with affirmation.

Officers' evaluated data collected by the Houston Police Department prior to and after the event focusing on offense reports and calls for service specifically dealing with Hispanic residents. After further review, we noticed an increase in calls for service from the Hispanic community in the East End of Houston. The unit also conducted an internal after action review to discuss what went well, and what could be improved on for future Alianza Against Crime events.

No major problems were noted; just minor logistical ones, such as a having a sign in sheet for volunteers and possibly extending the hours for future events. Other suggestions were to possibly stream the town hall forum live on Facebook and/or YouTube; this would allow those that were not able to attend, to conveniently watch on their electronic device. Officers also saw no evidence of displacement, in fact as mentioned previously, the initiative spread throughout other police districts in Houston, and we received requests on how we organized everything. The effect was larger than what we planned for, and the officers in the unit were very pleased with the outcome. We plan to hold the Alianza Against Crime event monthly every year, from May-September, leading up to October and

National Night Out.

Hispanio	Hispanic Resident Population at Eastside Division						
	Beat:		Population:				
	11H10 11H20 11H30 11H40 11H50	+28k +18k +13k +7k +4k	out of 30,140 out of 20,099 out of 16,499 out of 8,940 out of 6,954				

^{*}Source: Houston Police Crime Analysis Unit



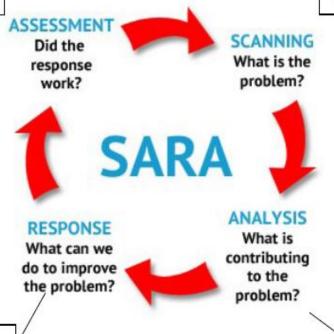
 $[\]hbox{\tt *Eastside Division is comprised of five geographical police beats.}$

"Building Bridges" Community Outreach in Hispanic Area in Houston's East End

SARA Model Outline

Positive feedback was received from community members, city leaders, and outside law enforcement agencies. Over 200 people in attendance at first Alianza event. Data from crime analysis showed an immediate increase in reported crimes from Hispanic population. Growing fear in the community due to recent legislation in regards to allowing local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws. The law is said to lead to discrimination and racial profiling.

Decrease of reported crimes in Hispanic communities was also a growing concern.



Eastside DRT officers came up with a plan to address the issue by hosting a series of community projects and a large scaled event consisting of a town hall forum, resource fair, and police static displays. Legislation and expanding enforcement amongst the immigrant population. Specifically, Texas Senate Bill 4. The Hispanic community is in fear of calling the police.





The 2017 "Alianza Against Crime" initiative is focused on enhancing the partnership with members of Houston's East End community and law enforcement through open "bilingual" dialogue and positive interaction. The term "Alianza" means Alliance in English, thus saying "Alliance Against Crime".

Background

Houston's East End community is located in a predominantly Hispanic area, where over 116,000 residents are Hispanic¹, with the majority of them speaking Spanish. The Houston Police Department has had a long history of positive interaction with the community, recently celebrating the 30 year Anniversary of the Positive Interaction Program. After numerous meetings with community members, officers received feedback in the East End area, and heard a growing concern from community members about recent police state and possible federal directives in dealing with the Hispanic community.

Hearing the concerns and staying in tune with local apprehension towards police, the officers in the East End thought it would also be a great addition to their community –orientated policing strategy to add a new, proactive initiative. "Alianza Against Crime" was created after a unit meeting one morning in March, and it was agreed upon to have one large scaled, bilingual community event per month, starting in May and ending in September, leading up to National Night Out.



"Alianza Against Crime" is Born

The initiative began with the first event on May 6, 2017, at a regional city park in the neighborhood, Mason Park. The strategy of the event is a combination of proactive as well as reactive activities; the latter designed to augment and enhance the normal response to daily crime and civility issues faced by citizens within the community.

Each of the five separate events will be held once a month in each of the five geographic beats located within the boundaries of Houston Police Eastside's Division. The event was presented in 3 components; 1) an open town hall forum allowing community & police dialogue, 2) a resource fair in the form of booths and 3) interaction between members of the community and law enforcement via stationary displays and hands on activities hosted by specialized divisions within HPD such as SWAT, Air Support, Mounted Patrol, K-9 and the HPD Explorers program.

The Alianza's Goal

The main goal is to empower members of the community, including non-English speaking individuals, in becoming actively involved in open dialogue with members of the Houston Police Department as well as provide crime prevention tips, various resources and to promote the Positive Interaction Program. Furthermore, enhancing trust within the community by interacting with various programs like, The HPD Explorers as well as the various neighborhood civic clubs currently operating within the East End communities. Eastside Officers will then conclude each event with the announcement of National Night Out which will be held in October 2017. In short, the Alianza Against Crime event is aimed to provide community members with necessary resources to enhance the interaction with police, with a focus on building partnerships while promoting community-oriented and problemoriented policing techniques.

The Town Hall Forum

The first event, which was held on Saturday, May 6th had a formal sign in count of 120 people, with an estimated total of 200 in attendance. The forum was found to be very helpful, where residents were able to ask questions directly to panelists from various organizations, such as: Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, Mexican Consulate, 3-1-1 City Helpline, City Department of Neighborhoods Inspectors, and representatives from the Houston Police Department.



Here, Chief of Police Arturo Acevedo was in attendance, along with Executive Assistant Chief Finner, Assistant Chief Williams, and Captain Cantu; each of them along with the mentioned panelists, fielded questions from the audience on topics ranging from quality of life issues, speeding vehicles, narcotics complaints, and information on the passage of the recent Texas State law, more commonly known as SB4. "As a community leader in the Mason Park community, I want to commend all law enforcement agencies in taking time from their busy schedules and personal lives to promote a positive influence in the community", said Elisa Gonzalez, President of the East Lawndale Civic Association.

The Resource Fair

The other component to the event was the resource fair. Here, there were a number of organizations who provided helpful information to the public about things such as: How to report illegal dumping from 3-1-1 City Helpline and how to report gang activity to the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office. The local Mexican Consulate also had a booth to answer various questions, as well as booths from our Constable's office and Mayor's Department of Neighborhood.

The Police Demonstrations/ Interactive Areas

The demonstration areas were also a hit, with various offerings, from the Houston Police SWAT, Mounted Patrol, Hostage Negotiation Team, SWAT, and Air Support. This gave the community a prime opportunity to interact with police one on one. "The main reason for having these events with the police, is to create an atmosphere of trust between the Hispanic community and local officials, it is a way to make our communities safer", said Jay Deleon, a Houston resident. Other highlights from the display area included the Houston Police Department's Explorer program, as well as a face painting booth for the children. The Explorers played an integral role at the event, as they assisted in handing out trinkets to the children, police themed wrist bands, candy, junior police stickers, and Houston Police autograph books.





The 2017 "School Outreach Project" initiative is focused on enhancing the partnership with members of Houston's East End education community along with parents and students through open "bilingual" dialogue and positive interaction.

Coffee With The Principal

Eastside officers helped develop stronger relationships with local schools by reaching out the area principals, and made arrangements to visit with parents during the monthly coffee with a principal events. Here, officers were allowed the opportunity to address any concerns the parents or school staff may have had, as well as offer crime prevention tips and review local crime statistics. This series of events are fluid, and in 2017, officers visited approximately twenty schools and spoke to hundreds of parents and teachers. Building bridges with school staff and parents has provided the officers with first-hand knowledge about the growing fear of police in the Hispanic areas of Houston's East End.

Visits With Classrooms & Cafeteria

After visiting with school staff, arrangements were made to visit with students in the classroom. Some of the classroom visits incorporated career day activities, while others were simply planned, questions and answers sessions with the children. Other notable activities that the officers participated in were lunch with students and mentoring those that had discipline issues.

Soccer Game

While eating lunch with some of the students at Gallegos Elementary School, a student challenged Captain Cantu to a soccer match. The captain agreed, and the rest is history! The Eastside team had a friendly soccer match with the Gallegos Elementary School "Firefighters" comprised of fourth and fifth grade students.

The unit organized the event and worked with the school to get the word out about the friendly match, as well as coordinated with the local city council member, HISD officials, and the police chief. Various



officers from the Eastside station volunteered their time to take part in the match. This soccer match was made possible because of the tireless efforts of officers at the Eastside DRT/ Community Services unit. Just days before the event, Chief Acevedo held a press conference in regards to recent statistics that show that the Hispanic community has shown a decline in calls for service to the police.

The soccer match was planned months prior to the announcement, so the timing was perfect. The officers at Eastside have taken the issue seriously, and work wholeheartedly in the community to help bridge the gap between the community and the police, as well as building more rust between the two. The soccer match is a prime example of the hard work and dedication of the Eastside DRT/Community Service Unit.



Pictures From "School Outreach Project"



Eastside Sergeant Tapia and Officer Yanez talking at Coffee With A Principal Meeting at Franklin Elementary School.



Eastside Lieutenant Lopez talks to parents at Gallegos Elementary School.





Eastside Officer Robles reading to kids at St. Christopher School.



Eastside Officer Cisneroz and Captain Cantu talk to kids at Gallegos Elementary School.



Captain Cantu empowering young girls at Gallegos Elementary School.



Officer Palacios interacts with kids during lunch at Gallegos Elementary School.





Eastside Officer Cisneroz talks to kids during lunch at Gallegos Elementary School.



Eastside Officers Robles and Salazar walk with kids during career day at Carillo Elementary School.



Eastside Officer Salazar assists in fingerprinting at J.P. Henderson Elementary School.



Eastside Officers Robles and Cisneroz talk to parents at Coffee With A Principal meeting at J.P. Henderson Elementary School.



Eastside Officers Robles and Cisneroz talk to kids at career day at Garden Villas Elementary School.



Pictures from Alianza Against Crime at Mason Park



The front set-up for Alianza Against Crime in May 2017.



The crowd listens to HPD Chief Acevedo, during the bilingual town hall forum.



The sign in table at Alianza Against Crime in May 2017.



Sergeant Ruiz and Assistant Chief Williams interact with kids and sign HPD autograph books.





HPD Chief Acevedo signs autographs for children at the Alianza Against Crime event in May 2017.



Officer Robles and Assistant Chief Finner talk to the crowd during the bilingual town hall forum.



Attendees visit with HPD mounted patrol at the Alianza Against Crime event in May 2017.





HPD SWAT officers interact with kids from the Explorer Program at Alianza Against Crime Event in May 2017.



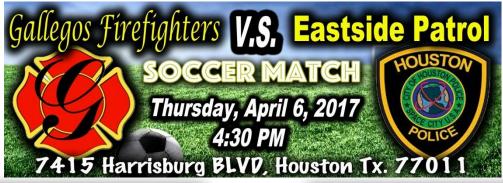
Residents arrive to the sign-in table and resource fair at Alianza Against Crime Event in May 2017.



Captain Cantu interacts with families while kids get their face painted at Alianza Against Crime event in May 2017.



Pictures from Soccer match with Gallegos Elementary School in Houston, TX





Sergeant Ruiz in action with a student soccer player.



Children playing with Eastside officers.



Explorers present the colors at the soccer game.



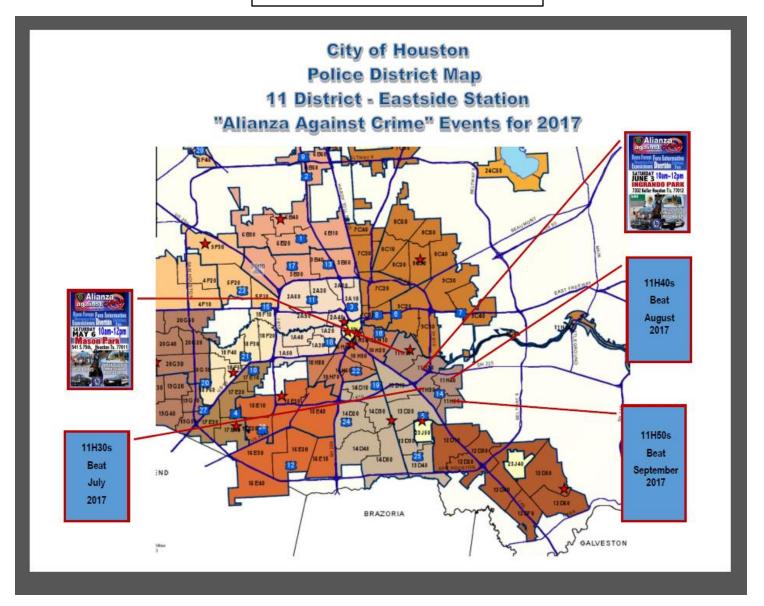
Captain Cantu cheers with Gallegos Elementary cheerleaders.



Eastside officers pose for a group picture.



City of Houston Police District Map Alianza Against Crime Event Overview



A	В	С	D	E	F	G	Н	1	J	K
Police_Beats ▼	Total_Population 🔻	Hispanic ▼	White ▼	Black ▼	American_Indian ▼	Asian ▼	HawaiianPacific_Islander 💌	Other ▼	Two_or_More_Races 💌	Area_Square_Miles ▼
11H10	30140	28230	1416	298	29	78	3	29	57	5.31
11H20	20099	18517	721	506	22	271	1	19	42	3.93
11H30	16499	13844	1134	466	22	954	0	18	61	2.84
11H40	8940	7911	891	72	12	29	0	5	20	6.16
11H50	6954	4922	1260	348	11	370	1	9	33	2.11
Total	82632	73424	5422	1690	96	1702	5	80	213	20.35

^{*}Source: Houston Police Eastside Division Crime Analysis Unit

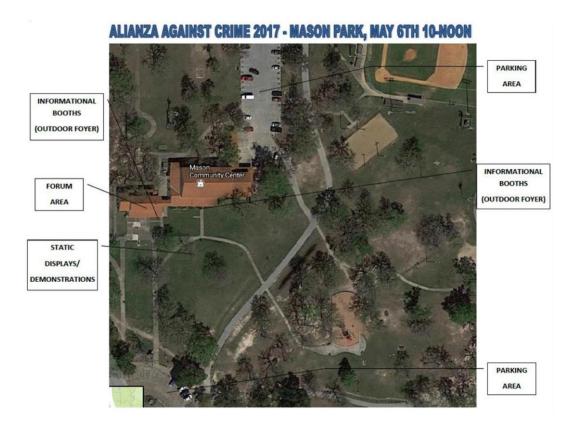


Alianza Against Crime - Site Maps

First Event:

Mason Park on May 6th





Second Event:

Ingrando Park on June 3rd







Crime Statistics – Calls for Service Data

The reported calls for service from the

Hispanic community in the East End of

Houston in 2016, before the growing fear of police.

Time frame 4/19/16 5/6/16	Reports (Hispanic Complainant) 215	Total Reports 816
5/6/16 - 5/23/16	202	864

The increase of reported calls for service from the Hispanic community in the East End of Houston, after the first Alianza event on May 6, 2017.

Time frame 4/19/17 – 5/6/17	Reports (Hispanic Complainant) 182	Total Reports 815	
5/6/17 - 5/23/17	196	764	

^{*}Source: Houston Police Eastside Division Crime Analysis Unit

The decrease of reported calls for major crimes in the Hispanic Community, 2017 citywide:

Rape Burglary of Habitation	42% 35%
Theft	20%
Robbery	11%
Aggravated Assault	11%

^{*}Source: Houston Police Crime Analysis Unit



^{*}Source: Houston Police Eastside Division Crime Analysis Unit

Quotes from Community Leaders & Key Stakeholders

Community Member Quotes:

"Tremendous opportunity for the public, especially young adults and children to interact with law enforcement especially with our local police officers. Making changes to beliefs that police are our friends." – Marilu De La Fuente, Treasurer and Secretary of Eastside Positive Interaction Program

"Alianza against crime is a superb event that allows residents to meet the law enforcement personally addressing real life situations in a changing world." –Victor Villareal, President of Greater Magnolia Park Civic Club

"Me gusto la informacion y traje a mi familia para que eschuharan a los lideres de la comunidad y su vision" (I liked the information the leadership offered and I brought my family so that they could be aware of the vision of our leadership) – Pablo Toscano, Magnolia Park Resident

"Hable con el jefe de policia, y me dio gusto estan colaborando con el consulado de meico" (I spoke with the police chief and I liked that he has been working closely with the Mexican Consulate) –

Antonio Torres

City Official Quote:

"Big shout out to the Eastside Division for their work to organize Alianza Contra El Crimen! Eastside's proactive efforts are vitally important to strengthening community-police relationships." – Houston City Council Member, Robert Gallegos

Police Leadership Quotes:

"The Alianza Against Crime is a fantastic way for the community and the police to get together for the purpose of uniting against crime! Alianza is also an opportunity to build and strengthen the police community relationship, creating stronger bonds of trust and getting to know our neighbors." — Assistant Chief of Police, Bruce Williams

"The event was formed to help ease fear in the community and strengthen the relationship with them. I know that the fear is real, I have witnessed it first-hand. I grew up in this neighborhood, and effects everyone." – Captain Patricia Cantu

Partnering Organization Quotes:

"Well organized with agencies that communities need to get familiar and a very personalized way of meeting the new Chief of Police." – Maria Bolanos, Mayor's Citizen Assistance Office

"A very informative and fun event for the community to come together." – Maritza Pedraza, City of Houston Department of Neighborhoods



Social Media and Media Promotional **Snap Shots**





Alianza Contra el Crimen is happening now at Mason Park, Tipps at 75th, until noon; come meet the officers in your area #communitypolicing



RETWEETS LIKES 16 8

Directory



May 5, 2017

MEDIA ALERT: HPD, East End Align Against Crime

● 0 Comment / N Community, Crime, HPD, Media alert, Park, Police Chief



View this email in your browser (mailchi.mp/houstontx/media-alert-hpd-east-end-align-against-crime?e=4cb1ed7e51) HPD, East End Align Against Crime

Beginning at 10 a.m. TOMORROW (Saturday, May 6), Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo, the HPD Eastside Patrol Division Community Service Unit and Differential Response Team (DRT) officers, along with other agencies, will join together for the "Alianza Against Crime" initiative.

The event will take place at Mason Park, 541 South 75th Street.

The purpose of the event is to strengthen the relationship between the police and the Hispanic community. There will be an open question-and-answer forum, resource booths and various displays and hands-on learning about various units within HPD.

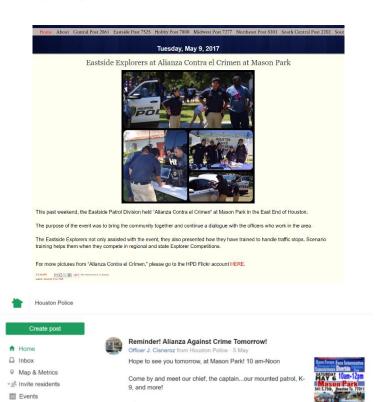
HPD, East End Align Against Crime

TOMORROW (Saturday, May 6)

TIME: 10 a.m.

WHERE

541 South 75th Street, Mason Park (Key map 535-A)



REPLY · 1 ▼



HPD Chief artacevedo is at Alianza Contra el Crimen meeting the residents of East End Houston and answering questions #communitypolicing







💙 73 🦠 1 🔀 May 6, 2017 🔧 Mason Park





The Houston Police Eastside

Differential Response Team/ Community Service Unit -Key Project Team Members

"The primary responsibility of DRT officers is to proactively identify and address crime issues in their assigned areas to increase the quality of life in the communities, thereby reducing the need for police services."

Houston Police General Order 600-40

"Community Service Officers are assigned to make presentations and implement programs related to police activities and crime prevention to benefit the community."

Houston Police General Order 600-40

- **Captain Patricia Cantu**
- **Lieutenant Vidal Lopez**
- **Sergeant Javier Tapia**
- Senior Police Officer Alfonso Yanez
- **Senior Police Officer Ramon Palacios**
- **Police Officer Francisco Salazar**
- **Police Officer Roger Rodriguez**
- **Police Officer Jesus Robles**
- Police Officer Jason Cisneroz

Project Contact:

Jason.cisneroz@houstonpolice.org

Officer Jason Cisneroz 7525 Sherman Street Houston, TX 77009 832-368-2042: Cell 832-395-1580: Office





Eastside DRT / Community Services Promotional Banner



