

March 20, 2013

Neighborhood Watch Patrol Program presentation by John Luther

John Luther is the head of the Neighborhood Watch Patrol Program in Barton Hills. The area is located south of Zilker Park between MoPac and South Lamar. They have about 1400 homes and apartment complexes, but do not patrol the apartment complexes. (BV/S area has 1160 homes.) In 2012 they had 38 burglaries. They have not had one since last November. Their website is <http://bartonhills.org/neighborhood-watch/>





Some of the key points John shared are

- There is a difference between daytime and nighttime crimes
 - Daytime is generally break-ins between 8AM – 4PM while people are at work
 - Nighttime crimes include vandalism and car burglaries between 1AM – 4AM
- Neighborhood Watch is interested in *property* crimes, not domestic issues
- Their program includes training sessions for homeowners on how to make their homes secure
 - Over 40% of break-ins are done by breaking in the door
 - Changing screws in strike plates (where deadbolt goes into door frame) to 3” screws rather than the short original ones
- Program began about 4 years ago due to number of car burglaries
 - Reported crimes are plotted on a neighborhood map each week to determine where patrols are most needed.
 - Follow-up by John on each report
 - Started with six volunteers, now have 30 patrols a week
- The program is non-confrontational
 - No weapons allowed in patrol cars at any time
 - Volunteers are not allowed to get out of their car
 - Training includes
 - how to call 911 to report activity
 - how to identify a suspect
 - how to identify a car
 - “Wave” policy – wave at neighbors while on patrol, get to know who belongs where, etc.
- Process
 - Application to volunteer
 - Interview
 - Demo drive with a Neighborhood Watch Patrol volunteer
 - 2 hours training
- Patrol
 - 1 hour per week
 - Pick up magnetic signs for car
 - Pick up clipboard, map, etc.
 - Drive randomly through neighborhood
 - Some days may have more than one car patrolling at a time

- Patrol volunteers
 - 50% are women
 - Some couples ride together
 - Retirees
 - Some do fill-ins for volunteers who are out-of-town or sick
- Nobody knows your streets and neighbors better than the people who live in the neighborhood
- At least seven similar programs in neighborhoods in Austin area
- Websites
 - <http://www.austintexas.gov/GIS/crimeviewer/CrimeReportSearch.html>
 - Did not seem to give much information
 - <http://spotcrime.com/>
 - Reports sent to you by email
 - http://www.krimelabb.com/basic/view/v_welcome.php
 - Must go to the site, but interesting

The Balcones Village/Spicewood APD District Representative is Joe Hebbe, Northwest Command. He can be reached at 512 974-4289 or joe.hebbe@cilaustin.tx.us

What needs to be done to start a similar program in our neighborhood?

-  HOA Board votes to incorporate and fund a Neighborhood Watch Patrol Program
-  Volunteers submit applications
-  HOA Board reviews applications
-  Volunteer committee goes to work

The next meeting of the HOA Board is April 10th at the Balcones Country Club at 7PM.