

THE UPDATE

*The newsletter of Hays County
Crime Stoppers*



Welcome to the fifth edition of *The Update*, a newsletter from Hays County Crime Stoppers.

This organization is like the little engine that could. For a while it was huffing and struggling to get up that hill, but then in 2022 it got its second wind! That momentum continues in 2023 and we don't see it stopping.

Campus Crime Stoppers groups are now up and running at Hays High, Johnson High, Lehman High and San Marcos High. If you know a student who would be interested, let him or her know about the club. They can ask their campus SRO for more information.

Thanks to the community for joining us in making Hays County a safer place.

www.callcrimestoppers.com



October 2023

Vol. 05

Hays County Crime Stoppers Stats

Our Local Statistics for 2023

Tips Received = 412

Arrests Made = 39

Rewards Authorized = \$5,400

Property Recovered = \$1,981

Drugs Seized = \$401,672

Total Money Recovered = \$411,353

Current as of 10/13/2023



Executive Director Jeff Jordan, Vice Chair Steve Meyer, Goldie Kruger and Board Member Nicholas Costilla.

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Executive Director's Spotlight

by Sgt. Jeffrey Jordan (HCSO)

Hays County Crime Stoppers Executive Director

What a Difference Two Years Makes!

Wow! Two years have now passed since taking the reigns to help guide and reshape Hays County Crime Stoppers. It has been a wild ride with a lot of changes, updates, new friends, community partners, and experiences.

I want to first thank the Board of Directors for trusting in me. You have allowed some of my crazy ideas to become reality, and it has truly elevated Hays County Crime Stoppers back to being one of the leading names in Crime Stoppers in Texas!

Another big thank you goes out to all our law enforcement partners (Hays County Sheriff's Office, San Marcos Police Department, Kyle Police Department, Buda Police Department, Texas State University-San Marcos Police Department, and Hays County District Attorney's Office). Your support and eagerness to reinvigorate our program means more than words can say.

So far this year, our program has hosted a conference to bring together teens, educators, and law enforcement professionals to tackle serious problems that our kids face in school and help to guide them to be active and engage in keeping their campus communities safe. We spent a good part of the year examining our bylaws, leading to a complete overhaul and revision to bring the bylaws completely up to date. Charmaine has been a true godsend when it comes to organizing and ensuring all our bases are covered.

We continue to make efforts to be more financially sound. We switched banking establishments and continue to work toward modernizing. We introduced our EZ Child Identification system successfully, being able to do digital fingerprints, photographs, and videos saved to a thumb drive for parents to have in case of an emergency.



Sgt. Jeff Jordan,
Executive Director,
Hays County
Crime Stoppers

We expanded our Campus Crime Stoppers programs from a sole program at Hays High School to three additional programs at Johnson High School, San Marcos High School, and Lehman High School. These programs are a great way for high school students to learn how to better keep their communities safe and are guided by outstanding school resource officers and school faculty that care about campus safety.

In 2022, our program assisted law enforcement in arresting 50 suspects that had warrants or who had participated in recent crimes. This year, as of October 1, 2023, we have assisted law enforcement in arresting 33 suspects, and we still have three more months to go. We expanded our Most Wanted program to include Most Wanted offenders (violent offenses), Sex Offenders, Wanted (non-violent offenders), and Parole Violators.

This month, HCCS supports victims and survivors of domestic violence by publishing wanted posters of suspects wanted for felony domestic violence crimes and stalking crimes. We are partnering with the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center to bring a strong message that victims and survivors of domestic violence do not stand alone. We will be sharing resources and information regarding the seriousness of domestic violence throughout the month in support of this effort. Furthermore, we encourage everyone to wear purple as much as possible in support of victims and survivors.

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Hays County Crime Stoppers is funded in large part through donations from local residents and businesses. To make a tax-deductible donation to help support HCCS, including our rewards fund, contact us at execdirector@hayscrimestoppers.com or visit our website at www.CallCrimeStoppers.com.

"Victims and survivors of domestic violence do not stand alone."

- Jeff Jordan

Message from the Chair



Hays County Crime Stoppers Chair Gary Tucker, 2nd from right

What a ride it's been! These past few years with Hays County Crime Stoppers have been as or more exciting than the past 20. With our renewed outreach efforts, more community support and a growing number of school groups participating, I marvel at our progress.

Of course, all our success didn't just happen. It's due in large part to the dedicated work from our Executive Director, Sgt. Jeff Jordan, who routinely proposes outlandish ideas. And then successfully implements them.

I also give credit to the HCCS Board of Directors for its vision, hard work and commitment to building the organization back up and expanding our reach within Hays County.

But I believe much credit also goes to the community at large. Our Hotline Tips have increased, and more and more people are interacting with our social media. People want to live in an area that feels safe, that doesn't allow crime to overwhelm it. A place where neighbors know each other and want to feel comfortable walking along the street, playing in the yard and being in their homes.

Over the last few years, more than 85 people have been arrested, directly resulting from tips to our hotline.

Thank you to each and every person who helped bring HCCS back from life support. I am grateful to all those individuals who agree that a safer community is better for our quality of life.

Here's to an even brighter future in Hays County!

- Gary Tucker, Chair, Hays County Crime Stoppers



What kinds of tips can be reported at schools?

Students/Faculty/Staff can report any type of illegal weapon or illegal drugs, gang activity, fighting and bullying. Dating violence and assaults are also crimes to be reported. Students are encouraged to call our crime stopper tip line (800-324-8477) or submit a tip on the P3 App for such illegal activity.

The anonymous caller will not be asked to provide any personal information such as name, address, school ID, or phone number. The student will be asked to provide as much information as possible on the suspect:

- Name,
- Clothing,
- Hair color,
- School or classroom



Plus a brief account of the incident witnessed:

- What was seen?
- Location
- Describe vehicle if used



The student will be issued a number code for future use. Upon investigation, if the information provided leads to an arrest, that student may be eligible for a cash reward. Any updates on the tip will be documented and available for the tipster to review. Tipsters can login to P3 and check on the status or any instructions.

Overview of HCSO Special Services Division

by Sgt. Ryan Watkins

Special Services Division, Hays County Sheriff's Office

The Special Services Division within the Hays County Sheriff's Office is primarily responsible for locating and apprehending violent felony subjects. The relationship between Hays County Crime Stoppers and the Special Services Division proves to be an invaluable resource.

Crime Stoppers tips allow citizens throughout Hays County to provide anonymous information to law enforcement investigators which streamlines the process of locating individuals with warrants. Investigators rely on this information to not only locate the fugitives, but also to build additional criminal cases.

It's No Mystery - We Need You

by Steve Meyer

Vice-Chairman, HCCS Board

There is no mystery: we need your help with the murder mystery dinner! The HCCS Murder Mystery Dinner & Silent Auction is just a few weeks away and there is still a lot to get done. All of the "WhoDunnit" and "Lead Detective" sponsor tables are sold out (yee-haw!) and only a few General Admission Tickets remain for the event. The venue, performance troupe and caterer have all been secured. Silent Auction donations are coming in. But there is still A LOT to be done and **your help is needed!**

Dinner will be catered by Ilario's Italian Cuisine, creating a menu of lasagna and chicken piccata, two salads (Caesar and Garden), three appetizers (Spinach Artichoke Dip with Chips, Toasted Cheese Raviolis and Bruschetta) and bread with iced tea, lemonade and water. We are still working on a dessert, as well as getting a Temporary License from the TABC in order to be able to have a cash bar with beer and wine.

This event will include fine tableware, stainless flatware and real glassware with cloth napkins (i.e., no paper, plastic or Styrofoam). It's a nice sit-down dinner! We are trying to inspire people to become engaged, involved and supportive of our efforts.

We also hope the upscale atmosphere, not to mention the beer and wine, will help bring out checkbooks, credit cards and money clips so attendees spend on the Silent Auction in support of a good cause. One key to the success of this plan will be the quality and variety of the Silent Auction items.

We've already received some generous items. However, we need more. No donation is too small! Items can be bundled into theme packs in order to up the bid, such as multiple small gift cards to restaurants as a Dining Pack or BBQ Tools to go along with the grills donated by Home Depot. If you can find donations, we can get creative and build collections worthy of bidders. Please lend a hand!

Reach out to your favorite merchant, restaurant, fitness club, mechanic or any business you frequent and ask them for a donation. We have a great letter to potential donors along with a Murder Mystery Dinner flyer (Jeff can provide both of these). We will make a small amount of money from the table and ticket sales but the Silent Auction will be our main source of profit for this event. Help us set a high bar and a precedence for the future!

"We are trying to inspire people to become engaged, involved and supportive of our efforts. "

- Steve Meyer, Vice Chair

But that is not the only way you can help...

We will also need people to help monitor and support the Silent Auction, as well as handle transactions after it is closed, not to mention setup and cleanup. If those who are attending can either show up early, be willing to spend some of the evening working the Silent Auction or stay late to help with cleanup, we can make short work of everything.

Even if you are not attending the event, an hour or two of your time can be very helpful. The caterer is providing servers and bussers, plus we are working on volunteer bartenders, and we have security covered. So it will not require much of any one person if everyone pitches in.

This event is more important that many realize. It is becoming more and more difficult to secure the grants which used to fund the Crime Stoppers program. The state, counties and cities are all facing budget challenges. We need to better engage with the community in order to gain their support for our programs and to help provide the necessary operational funding.

This event is one of our largest undertakings in many years, and comes at a critical juncture in the crossroads of this organization. Success can pave the way to a bright future for the Hays County Crime Stoppers leading to closer involvement with the community, which will make Hays County a safer place to live for all of us. We look forward to working with you to make this our best fundraising event EVER!



Hays County Crime Stoppers Presents...

A night of mystery, fun and surprises awaits!

MURDER MYSTERY DINNER FUNDRAISER & SILENT AUCTION

Wimberley Community Center
14068 RR 12, Wimberley, Texas

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 21 | 5:30 P.M.**

A Keith & Margo's Murder Mystery Production

Tickets \$75 per person
Proceeds Benefit Hays County Crime Stoppers

Scan code to purchase tickets via Venmo.
Or email
jeff.jordan@co.hays.tx.us

Get your tickets today! And please ask local merchants and business owners for a Silent Auction donation. Thank you!

Hays County Crime Stoppers Out & About

Hays County Crime Stoppers was once again at the Emergency Preparedness Fair, held each September. We provided free fingerprinting services to Hays County families to help in case of an emergency.



Gary Tucker, Sebastian and Steve Meyer at the table where they did the fingerprinting.



Mary Earls, Steve Meyer and Goldie Kruger



The HCCS Team with members of the Hays County Constable Pct. 5 office.

Have a tip? Students and community members are encouraged to call our Crime Stoppers Tip Line (800-324-8477) or submit a tip on the P3 App to report illegal activity or provide information that could lead to an arrest.



**ALL TIPSTERS
REMAIN 100%
ANONYMOUS!**



Hays County Crime Stoppers encourages anyone with information on a wanted fugitive, any crime, or potential crime, to contact Hays County Crime Stoppers anonymously:



1-800-324-TIPS (8477)



Online at <http://callcrimestoppers.com>



P3 Tips app on your smartphone or device

Together as a community, citizens, the media, and law enforcement can fight crime and keep our communities, schools, and businesses safe.

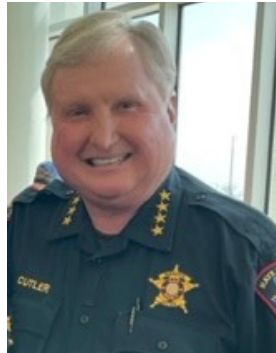
2023 FUGITIVE STATS: 39 ARRESTS THIS YEAR SO FAR

A Message from the Hays County Sheriff

The following was submitted by Hays County Sheriff Gary Cutler

There is no doubt the Hays County Crime Stoppers has made an impact since its inception in 1981. With over 6,000 tips received, resulting in hundreds of arrests and thousands of dollars recovered, the program speaks for itself in helping local law enforcement solve crimes.

The HCSO supports this program in its entirety, as well as the men and women who ensure its success. I look forward to many more years of partnership with Crime Stoppers.



Hays County Sheriff
Gary Cutler

"...Hays County Crime Stoppers has made an impact since its inception in 1981."

- Gary Cutler

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Lastly, I want to thank our Chairman Gary Tucker, Vice-Chairman Steve Meyer, and our special fundraising promoter Sharla Marshall for all the hard work they have done to make our first Murder Mystery Dinner Fundraiser and Silent Auction a great success. Our goal is to raise money to be more self-sufficient in maintaining our operating costs, ensure enough funds for paying rewards on tips that lead to arrests, and to start a scholarship program for graduating seniors that are part of the campus crime stoppers program.

This has been a great experience, and I continue to look forward to the difference Hays County Crime Stoppers makes in keeping our communities, businesses, and schools safe!



Ray Robert Saenz, Jr. was
arrested

Bringing Attention to Domestic Violence

By Melissa Rodriguez, Chief Executive Officer
Hays Caldwell Women's Center

For over 45 years, HCWC has been the local resource for domestic violence survivors in our community. Our mission is focused on providing healing, support and advocacy to adults, youth and children who experience violence and abuse.

A core part of our work is collaborating with local partners, like Hays County Crimestoppers to bring attention to this very important issue. Holding domestic violence offenders is a critical part of the work in ensuring safety for survivors.

But we also recognize that this can also escalate danger for survivors. It is with this knowledge that we encourage anyone who is experiencing a form of violence to reach out to HCWC for free and confidential services, even if your situation doesn't involve the criminal justice system. We offer safety planning, crisis intervention, counseling, legal advocacy and emergency shelter. **Call our 24-hour crisis HELPLINE at 512-396-4357**, advocates are available (English and Spanish) and ready to help.

Calendar of Events

October 21 — HCCS Murder Mystery Fundraiser
Wimberley Community Center, 5:30-9 p.m.

November 3-6 — Crime Stoppers USA Conference
Denver, CO

November 20 — HCCS Annual Awards Banquet
Price Center, San Marcos

February 12-14, 2024 - The 28th Annual Texas Campus Crime Stoppers Conference, Houston, Texas

Check our website and FB page for more events and happenings!

Want to see the results of our efforts - and your help? Check out our social media!

School Program Ready to Roll

by Kim Hilsenbeck, HCCS School Liaison

It's time to thank everyone working behind the scenes to build up our Campus Crime Stoppers programs. I am duly impressed by all of the dedication to getting these school groups moving forward.

Hays County Crime Stoppers now has official programs at:

- Hays High School
- Johnson High School
- Lehman High School
- San Marcos High School

That is fantastic! And while each program is unique in its own way, they are all part of the HCCS umbrella and we are 100% committed to ensuring their enduring success.

I and the entire board are here to support our SROs, teachers, and students, as well as the broader community. It's my privilege to work with everyone involved to help keep our campuses safe.

What can I do to help? Let me know. We will promote your programs via our website and social media, as well as through media relations when possible.

Please check out the separate pages for each school on our website and begin sharing those links with your group and with parents. I also encourage you to follow HCCS on social media and provide the info to your students, their families and your school communities.

By following us on social media, you'll be well-informed and able to participate in the effort to improve public safety in our community. Follow us and join our mission!

I look forward to working with all of you!

www.callcrimestoppers.com

www.facebook.com/HaysCountyCrimeStoppers/

"I am duly impressed by all of the dedication to getting these school groups moving forward."

-Kim Hilsenbeck

Follow and Like Us!



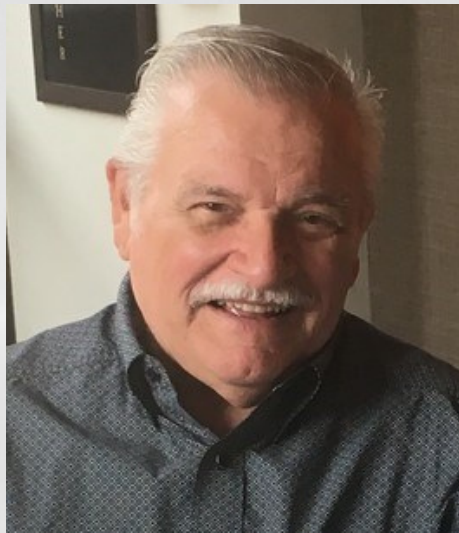
Hello from an SRO

Submitted by HCSO SRO Jacob Starr

I am the School Resource Officer for Lehman High School as well as the Crime Stoppers Coordinator at Lehman High School. Crime Stoppers has been at Lehman for a while now and I am working on getting more student involvement.

I'd love to see the program take off in a positive way and hope that it will be utilized to save lives. It is important to know that one pill can kill, and if you see something then say something. The goal of Crime Stoppers is not to be viewed as a "snitch" but in doing your part to save the life of someone.

My hope is to gain support more from our community, staff, and students as we strive to make Hays County schools safer.



Michael Wilmore was a true community servant. He will be missed!

A Tribute to Mike

One of Hays County Crime Stoppers' volunteers, Michael Wilmore, 79, passed away on July 29. Those who knew him knew Mike was a remarkable person. After high school, he earned a degree in Biology at Ball State University. He then honorably served his country flying F-4s and KC135s as part of the 44th TAC Fighter Squadron "Vampires". Later he flew with the 704th Tactical Fighter Squadron "Outlaws". He retired from the military after 37 years.

But his servant's heart continued. Mike was not only a Hays County Crime Stoppers board member. He also served on the Hays County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and was part of the Hays County Citizens Sheriff's Academy Alumni Association. Mike remained active in the VFW Post 6441 in Wimberley. He will be dearly missed and fondly remembered by Hays County Crime Stoppers.

Bylaws Update

by Charmaine Wilde, Board Member

Any time you join with fellow community members with a common goal in mind there will be challenges in how multiple voices communicate and what the vision is for the group. Often we get so excited about “our mission” that we forget “our standards for operating.”

This is where bylaws are important for establishing the ground rules of how a group will function. Having strong bylaws helps members predict how to properly share an idea or goal, and what is expected of them in their service to the board. Bylaws also ensure that organizations keep balance within their ranks to represent the group or community as a whole so everyone gets a seat at the table.

Recently, Hays County Crime Stoppers Association revamped its bylaws for the first time in many, many years. I had the opportunity to lead this effort. As I prepared for this large task, I reviewed what worked well in other organizations and how to best serve our community. I was inspired to look at a lot of nonprofit charities and organizations serving millions of Central Texas residents. Multiple board members gave valuable input, helping to develop the most thorough set of bylaws this organization has ever had.

Here are three areas we improved:

#1 Remote Involvement in Meetings. The way we communicate and the way we vote looks a lot different from when Crime Stoppers came to Hays County in the 1980s. The way we communicate has significantly changed from just five years ago. Since the bylaws were first written, and through their many iterations, allowing for electronic or video participation seemed unnecessary. That all changed when March 2020 halted our regular meeting style due to the COVID-19 shutdown worldwide.

Like many organizations, we found ourselves connecting only through video, e-mail or by phone. The new bylaws provide a means for individuals to be present by video, exactly how you can vote by video and what it means to give a vote. Establishing a remote participation and voting procedure will help keep accurate records and allow for flexibility no matter what changes come to society.

#2 Executive Director Duties Outlined. The Executive Director of the Hays County Crime Stoppers serves and assists the board in carrying out the mission of Crime Stoppers, but in previous bylaws the expectations were vague and unclear.

The new bylaws outline in detail what duties the Executive Director has and help establish some wiggle room to add or modify those duties. I appreciate this update because I know how frustrating it can be to have a vaguely defined role for a group and constantly wonder if I’m working in line with expectations or if I’m overstepping my role. Outlining important roles strengthens leadership. This change is a positive step up from our previous bylaws.

#3 Mandatory Bylaw Review. These new bylaws have built in an automatic review process; every five years there is a mandatory review and proposed update that must happen. This means we will be proactive in modifying to the changing society we live in and that we’re continually looking and questioning to see if we can be more ethical, more inclusive and more fair in the work we do and the service we provide to our community. Our bylaws will not be stagnant again because we will have a preset review deadline to make sure we are aware of how things have changed.

I realize bylaws are not the area of governance most of us enjoy. They tend to be multiple pages and often use technical language that feel like you’re learning the rules of a really long and complicated board game. I’ll admit that I myself took many reading, writing, and reviewing sessions with breaks intertwined to get through the bylaw update process. (A big thank you to Dr Pepper Zero for helping me through these times.)

The efforts were worth it to establish the Hays County Crime Stopper board as one of the most forward-thinking, innovative nonprofit organizations in Hays County. I can’t really say I’m glad it’s done, because I know, as mentioned in #2 above, that this whole process will happen again, but hopefully it’s not as lengthy of an update because of the work we’ve done this year.

At least we can enjoy the fruits of our labor for the next five years and see how the changes have a positive impact on our work.

Until next time, you can find me at the board meeting (in person or by video) working alongside other board members to keep our community safer.

“The efforts were worth it to establish the Hays County Crime Stopper board as one of the most forward-thinking, innovative nonprofit organizations in Hays County.”

–Charmaine Wilde

Sustaining Sponsor Spotlight

Submitted by Katie Paddon

Since November 2022, The Lucky Heifer (then 777) has been a monthly sustaining sponsor of Hays County Crime Stoppers. Their support and dedication to community safety is evident in every aspect of their business. They even put the HCCS logo on their front door!

Owners Tabitha and Chris Shoopman provide a monthly donation to Crime Stoppers to assist in maintaining operational costs and paying rewards.

In February 2023, they were one of our major sponsors of the 27th Annual Texas Crime Stoppers Campus Conference in San Marcos.

They hosted a sweepstakes game night fundraiser in July benefitting Hays County Crime Stoppers.

Outside of supporting Crime Stoppers, The Lucky Heifer has been a major supporter of activities with the Buda Police Department and the Hays County Sheriff's Office.

Tabitha and Chris, and the staff of The Lucky Heifer, have repeatedly stated they are not interested in recognition, however, their love of community and desire to keep our communities safe, truly make them CRIME STOPPERS!

If you are in the area, please drop by and visit them at 102 Rebel Drive Buda, Texas.



Congrats, Mary Earls!



HCCS Board Member Mary Earls was recently honored for her involvement in the community. She was inducted into the San Marcos Women's Hall of Fame.



Hays County Crime Stoppers Board of Directors member Mary Earls (Front row, second from left) was honored on October 12, 2023, by being inducted into the San Marcos Women's Hall of Fame.

Mary has been active in numerous community organizations over the years, and her dedication to the communities of Hays County has helped to better and strengthen our communities. Mary and three other outstanding women were nominated by family, friends and community members for their volunteerism and leadership in the community.

Outstanding job, Mary! We are proud of your achievement and are honored to be your friend and colleague.

HCCS logo is on the front door of The Lucky Heifer

