



# HALL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## CRIME PREVENTION UNIT



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### NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWS

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**DATE:** July 30, 2009  
**TO:** Neighborhood Watch Liaisons  
**FROM:** Deputy Stephen Wilbanks  
**SUBJECT:** Additional Benefits of a Neighborhood Watch Program  
**DISTRIBUTION:** All members

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Neighborhood Watch, being primarily a crime prevention tool, naturally tends to focus solely on matters related to criminal activity. However, there are many ancillary benefits to an active neighborhood watch program.

I've personally witnessed neighbors making introductions and forming new friendships that have lived in the area for a number of years, but they never really had the opportunity to meet anyone other than the residents of the home next door... until they began participating in the program. I've seen a neighborhood with no homeowner's association at all, and no formal residential structure come together for a community picnic that turned out 100+ people. It provides new residents who may otherwise be a little reluctant to going around and introducing themselves a viable means of meeting their new neighbors. I've also heard conversations regarding business and social networking. These are just a few examples.

But what I really want to highlight in this newsletter is an incident that illustrates an added benefit of the program that had a fantastic outcome and might have saved a person's life. Recently a neighborhood watch liaison had taken the initiative to stop by and speak with a new resident who lived alone and had not really had the opportunity to get out and get acquainted with anyone. They chatted briefly, talked about the program, exchanged phone numbers, and then parted ways. Several days later the liaison received a phone call from that resident, sounding disoriented and somewhat distressed. After a little difficulty, he determined that the resident was in the midst of a medical emergency and needed help. Due to her disoriented state, she couldn't recall her new address and the concept of 9-1-1 having automated address recognition wasn't registering with her, but the memory of the neighborhood watch liaison offering assistance had stuck with her and she was able to dial his number. The liaison immediately called 9-1-1 on her behalf and confirmed that an ambulance was en route, while also responding to the residence himself. Medical personnel arrived on the scene and the patient's needs were successfully addressed.

**This incident perfectly illustrates the point about neighbors watching out for each other. Remember, it's not always about crime, but it's no less important.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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