



Boo Parade Spooks Plaza Oaks

The recently formed Plaza Oaks Women's Club took on this year's annual Boo Parade event, sponsored by **Massage Heights of Town & Country Village**, with frightfully fun results!

On Halloween afternoon, more than 200 trick-or-treaters and their family members arrived at the Plaza Oaks Club and were welcomed with a cup of green witches brew.

While waiting for sundown, kids could pin the nose on the pumpkin, participate in an eyeball and spoon race, get their faces painted or mark



More than 200 people turned out for the 2012 Plaza Oaks Boo Parade.



Ferris and Chris Gooderham were bound to have fun at the Wrap-the-Mummy contest.

the occasion with a photo taken by **Hallie Keller Photography**



Cutest buzzing bee ever!

among hay bales and pumpkins.

Meanwhile, almost 200 hot dog dinners were sold, with proceeds benefitting Plaza Oaks Club.

The most popular event of the afternoon? After dozens of rolls of toilet paper, it was no doubt the Wrap-the-Mummy contest! Much to her delight, **Tamara Gooderham**, this year's Boo Parade lead volunteer, overheard a girl telling her friend at school the next day, "I was wrapped so tight, I couldn't move!"

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Continued on page 12.

POWC Off and Running

By Christine Mediamolle, President

In August 2012, the Plaza Oaks Women's Club began with the leadership of a few energetic women who believed a women's club would be a beneficial addition to the neighborhood. Although we have just begun, the membership growth (120+ members as of November) along with the enthusiasm and attendance at our initial events have been outstanding!

Our goal is to have events that bring women and their families together — those who have lived here for years and those who have just moved into the neighborhood. Knowing your neighbors and being an active steward of your community is a daily challenge with our

busy lives but it is what makes a neighborhood strong and sought after.

On a personal note, I have enjoyed meeting so many new and wonderful people who live right here in our neighborhood.

One morning, I came home after a run and told my husband, "I had the best run!" The funny thing is that it wasn't because of the great feeling of getting some exercise. It was simply because I kept *running* into people I have met through the women's club — one after another! One was walking her daughter in a stroller, another backing out of the driveway on the way to work, another playing in the driveway with her kids, and another walking her dogs. Later that day,

I saw someone else at the grocery store. They all helped to make my day! Before, I may have passed them with just a friendly wave.

Thank you to everyone who has enthusiastically supported our efforts, joined the club, helped at events, and attended the events. Most importantly, I want to thank the Leadership Team for their support, creative ideas, guidance and hard work, and the talented ladies who worked tirelessly on this first issue of our bi-annual newsletter.

We hope that you find this newsletter informative, and I look forward to watching the Plaza Oaks Women's Club continue its effort to build upon an already outstanding community!

WHO CAN JOIN?

You can! The Plaza Oaks Women's Club welcomes women who live west of Beltway 8, south of I-10, east of Wilcrest Dr. and north of Memorial Dr., including Georgetown. You can be as involved as you want to be.

We have events planned for women, and their husbands and families.

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HOW TO JOIN?

- Go to *www.bigtent.com*.
- Search for Plaza Oaks Women's Club, click "JOIN" and fill out the short member form. Make sure to set your e-mail notifications.
- Pay your annual dues by mailing a check for \$30 made out to the Plaza Oaks Women's Club to:

Brandy Demaris
643 Cherrybark Ln.
Houston, TX 77079

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START A SUBGROUP!

A subgroup is a smaller special interest group within the Plaza Oaks Women's Club.

To see our existing subgroups go to *bigtent.com* and click on the "subgroups" tab.

Interested in starting a subgroup? Examples include running or prayer groups, book clubs or Bunco groups. All it takes is for someone to be the organizer. The subgroup can be small or large and is easy to start and manage using *bigtent.com*.

If you're interested or have an idea, contact **Christine Mediamolle** at *cmediamolle@me.com*.

Plaza Oaks Women's Club Event Calendar

UPCOMING EVENTS

"Favorite Things" Gift Exchange

Thursday, December 13, 2012

Vanessa Walton's house

Rodeo BBQ Family Event

Saturday, February 23, 2013, 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Plaza Oaks Club

Ladies' Night Out

March 2013

Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, March 24, 2013, afternoon

All neighborhood event

Summertime Pool Party

Thursday, May 2, 2013, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Plaza Oaks Club

4th of July Bike Parade and Pool Party

Thursday, July 4, 2013, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Plaza Oaks Club, All neighborhood event

RECENT EVENTS

Plaza Oaks Safety Day

Tuesday, September 26, 2012

Plaza Oaks Club

Boo Parade

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

Plaza Oaks Club, All neighborhood event

Guys' Night Out, Keg in the Cul-de-Sac

Friday, November 2, 2012

Holiday Market Open House

Wednesday November 7, 2012

Ladies' Night Out

Thursday, November 15, 2012

Liebman's Wine and Food, 14529 Memorial Dr.

Swirl Day

Mark your calendars, grab your friends and
go to *Swirl* on

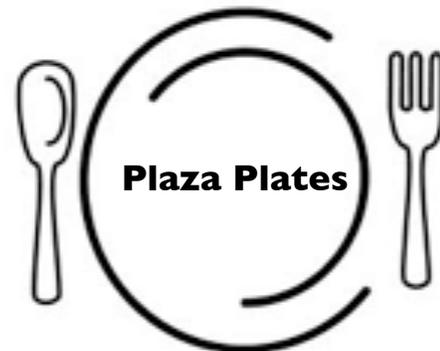
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13!

10% of **ALL** Swirl's profits on
December 13 will go to support the
Plaza Oaks Women's Club!



791 Town and Country Blvd., Suite 140
(Next to PRONTO Cucinino)

Plaza Plates is a program to provide meals to families who are welcoming new babies, dealing with the loss of loved ones, recovering from surgery or experiencing hardship. Contact **Audra Marye** at audramarye@hotmail.com if you or anyone you know could benefit from this program.





Holiday

Members of the Women's Club describe some of their families' holiday traditions.

Last year we started what is sure to be a new family tradition of cutting down our own Christmas tree at Dewberry Farm. Growing up in Texas, I had assumed that this could only be done in more northern parts of the country, and I was thrilled to learn that this opportunity was so close to home.

They supply all of the tools as well as help load it onto your car, which makes it fun and easy.

The experience of my son and husband cutting down the tree together was priceless, and our tree was beautiful! We are all looking forward to it again this year!

— Erin Abdelnour



When our kids were younger, they were really caught up in getting presents, and we wanted the holidays to be more about giving back, so we made a December Kindness Calendar. We hung it by the dinner table, and each night the kids told us something thoughtful they had done that day for someone else, and we wrote it on the

calendar. It really changed the focus to helping others throughout the entire month of December.

— Cindy Trice



In addition to leaving milk and cookies for Santa on Christmas Eve, we leave carrots and water outside for the reindeer. When we wake up Christmas morning, the carrots are gone and the water is red. This is how we know Rudolph was at our house with Santa.

— Heather Pennington McDaniel



A family tradition the Walton family of Perthshire Rd. treasures every year is a visit to Santa's Wonderland in College Station. We caravan with family and friends at dusk to enjoy hot cocoa, hayrides and hot fixings under a mile-long canopy with millions of Christmas lights.

It's the perfect end to our Thanksgiving weekend and always gets us in the Christmas spirit.

And of course there's always a stop at Santa's house for a photo with country Santa. Family tip: visit on an off-peak day and arrive at least 30 minutes before doors open. Sundays have proven to be best for us, and don't forget your cameras.

— Vanessa Walton



We love to take night walks with our kids to let them walk right up to the lights and Christmas characters that are in the yards. It's a special treat, and they look forward to it at Christmas time.



Traditions

We also have a big box of Christmas books under the tree, and starting on December 1, we alternate choosing a different one to read as a family before the kids go to bed.

Another tradition has become making Christmas-themed s'mores with red, green and white marshmallows. We sit and drink hot chocolate by the chimnea. It's great family time!

We love to take the kids to the Lighting of the Club at Westside Tennis Club. It's lights galore, cute moving characters and a wonderful Santa Claus. It's free and so much fun!

— Christine Mediamolle



We have many traditions in our family. I take each child out shopping alone for the other child. It's important for me to see them being thoughtful and picky about what they purchase for each other.

My children help me bake a Texas sheet cake every year on Dec. 23 for Jesus' birthday cake. It's their favorite cake, plus it helps us keep the focus on what the holiday is all about. We give it sprinkles and a candle and sing "Happy Birthday to You" on Christmas Eve.

Santa brings three gifts (and only three) to each child to find on Christmas morning to represent the gifts from the three kings. We tell them if it was enough for Jesus, it's enough for them. Again, keeping the focus on the meaning of Christmas is

important. We open our gifts one at a time. We like that it takes a while, and we can see what everyone else gets.

At the bottom of each stocking, Santa leaves a note that sends the child on a treasure hunt for a special gift. Santa runs them back and forth through the house, outside under the flower pots, and even to the garage to find a special something at the end. It's fun, and we do them for the



grandparents as well.

Of course, cookies and milk are a must! Each child leaves his or her list, and Santa writes back. They used to love getting Santa's letter! Right now, they're old enough to think that's about the corniest thing ever, but it happens anyway.

I pull out the Christmas china and use it every day between Thanksgiving and New Year's — only because one day a year isn't enough.

We started doing Elfie before Elfie was cool. (Another idea I should've published!) Our elves didn't make messes, though. Each child has one (one is green, and one is red). He used to move in the night if the child had a good day. If the child had a hard day, that elf stayed put. Sometimes they both moved, sometimes neither moved and sometimes just one moved.

It was always fun to wake up and watch the kids hunt through the house to find where he was placed. It kept my kids in check beautifully for that one month of the year! Now that my children are older, the Elfie dolls sit on the fireplace.

Both of my children decorate their bedrooms. They each have a little tree with their own ornaments that they love.

My 14-year-old strung lights all over her ceiling last year and loved it so much that she kept them up through January. My 12-year-old hung lights all over his headboard and kept them on all night. It's festive and fun!

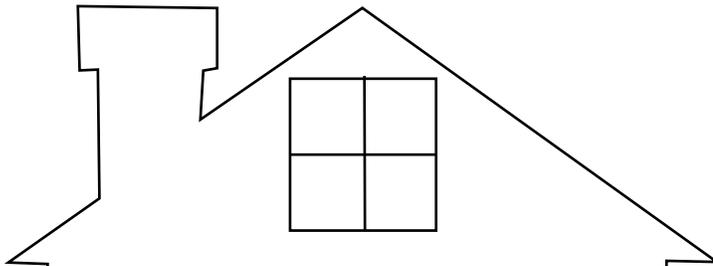
— Dana Machen



My family goes to High Star Tree Farm in Hockley, Texas (Hwy. 290 @ Becker Rd.) to cut down a Christmas tree. The farm opens the day after Thanksgiving. They have a hay ride, train, Santa. Always fun!

— Catherine Velarde

Just the Facts Ma'am



Some Things You May Not Know About Households in the 77024 and 77079 ZIP Codes

- More residents aged 65 and over (16% vs. the national average of 13%).
- More husband-wife households than average (56% vs. the national average of 48%).
- Almost half of husband-wife households (46%) have children aged under 18.
- Fewer residents aged in their twenties (8% vs. the national average of 14%).
- More owner-occupied housing than average (69% vs. the national average of 65%).
- Higher proportion of houses owned free and clear without mortgage (27% vs. the national average of 20%).

Data from the 2010 U.S. Census. Contributed by Tamara Gooderham, a resident of Plaza Oaks and proprietor of TG Research.



NEW PERTSHIRE NEIGHBORS!

Bill and Hallie Keller
 Children: **Hannah, Graham and Mason**

Jarrod and Laura Haughn
 Daughter: **Ella Grace**

Births

**Michael Brett Fostel and
Ana Ward Fostel**

Born July 11, 2012

Congratulations to **Lauren and Clay Fostel**
and big sister **Sophie** (age 6).



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Jasper Jude Hodges

Born July 24, 2012

8 pounds, 15 ounces, 22 inches

Congratulations to **Joseph and Kristin Hodges**
and big brother **Jonah** (age 3).



Submit birth announcements by e-mailing **Erin Abdelnour** at erin_abdelnour@yahoo.com

Constable's Office Gives Tips for a Safe Holiday Season

Sgt. Mitchell Hutter of the Harris Co. Precinct 5 Constable's Office provides the following advice for keeping our families and homes safe during the holidays.



HOLIDAY SHOPPING TIPS

1. Do not leave purchased items visible in the car. Leave them in the trunk.
2. While shopping in the evening hours may be less crowded, there are also additional potential risks involved. Park in areas of parking lots that have adequate lighting. Consider shopping with someone rather than going alone.
3. Make sure purses and wallets are secure on your person and you are aware of their location at all times.
4. Keep the amount of available cash you have at a minimum or separate it into different pockets or locations on or about your person. This way all of it is not lost if your purse or wallet is misplaced or stolen.
5. Credit cards offer convenience and security. However, keep track of all cards and keep receipts to compare to your monthly statement.
6. Remain aware of your surroundings at all times and move to and from your vehicle with confidence and purpose. Have keys ready before getting to your car so you do not have to search for them while standing near it.
7. Report suspicious people or activity to law enforcement immediately!
8. Most important, reduce your own vulnerability and do what you can to minimize the possibility that you could be a victim of a crime or accidental loss.

SAFETY TIPS WHILE AWAY

1. Valuable items, such as televisions, stereos and computers should be inscribed with an identifying number unique to its owner (do not use your entire social security number).
2. Create an up-to-date home inventory including make, model, serial numbers, other detailed descriptions and photographs of items of value (including jewelry). This inventory should be kept somewhere safe, out of the house.
3. At least two light timers should be set to turn the lights and TV on and off in a logical sequence when away for an extended time period to give the appearance that someone is home.
4. The motion detector or other alarm system (if you have one) should be activated when you leave home.
5. Mail and newspaper deliveries should be stopped or arrangements for a neighbor or friend to pick them up should be made when you are away from home for a period of time.
6. Ask a trusted neighbor to tend the yard and watch your home when you are away, or have a trusted friend or relative house stay in your absence.
7. Make sure all doors and windows are locked when you leave, even if you have an alarm system.

**Office of
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Constable
Harris Co.
Precinct 5**

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and Ask for Sgt.
Mitch Hutter**



Recipe Swap

Submit your kitchen favorites to **Erin Abdelnour** at erin_abdelnour@yahoo.com.

CARROT SOUFFLE

From the Kitchen of **Erin Abdelnour**

This easy and elegant side dish works well for holiday meals or any cold winter night! It's a very yummy way to introduce cooked carrots to the kiddos as well as a general crowd-pleaser. I've seen a lot of variations of this recipe, but this version that I got from my mom is by far my favorite!

- 1 pound carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1/4 cup butter
- 3 eggs
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cook carrots in inch of water in sauce pan. Bring to boil, cover, reduce heat to low and cook for 10 minutes until tender. Drain water from carrots. Place all ingredients in food processor and blend until smooth. Pour mixture into greased oven-safe dish. Bake for 45 minutes.

BAKED CHEDDAR OLIVES

From the Kitchen of **Erin Abdelnour**

Need a little munchie to go with the martinis? This is my go-to easy-but-elegant appetizer! The recipe in *The Gourmet Cookbook* cracks me up because it says that any good kitchen always has these ingredients in stock, yet I always have to run to the grocery store for something.

- 1 cup (about 4 ounces) sharp cheddar cheese, coarsely grated
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 20 small pimiento-stuffed green olives, drained and patted dry

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Stir together first three ingredients. Then blend in butter with hands to form dough. (I always panic and have to add a little olive juice to make my mix anywhere near a dough — never fear!) Wrap about a tablespoon of dough around each olive, enclosing it completely. (Again, practice makes perfect here — you can do it!) Place on baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes.

Resident Shares 40 Years of Neighborhood History

As you drive through our neighborhood today, it is a vibrant mixture of original '50s and '60s ranch homes, updated homes and brand new construction. We thought it would be fun to reach out to some of Plaza Oaks' long-time residents to find out what our neighborhood was like when they first moved in. **Moya Mischon** of 13013 Taylorcrest Rd. was kind enough to share some history with us.

In 1972 Moya, her husband and two young children "moved into the neighborhood as people still do today, for the schools." Built in 1959, her home was the first home on Taylorcrest Rd. in Section 2 of Memorial Plaza.

The original owner had walked down Electra Dr., saw the lot on Taylorcrest Rd. with three post oak trees and decided to build his family home there. As his family grew, he eventually built a second home across the street. In 2007, Moya's family was one of the first to rebuild their home on the original lot where she and a second generation still live today.

Sadly, the three post oak trees are no longer on the lot. Moya shared that a lot of other things have changed since she moved to the neighborhood.

Where the new City Centre Lofts stand today, there used to be a farmer's market and an ice-skating rink, and Memorial Dr. was just a two-lane road.

She remembers that the neighborhood had been trying to get a traffic light at Memorial Dr. and Brittmoore Rd. without luck. Then,

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Continued on next page.

10 Things You Should Know About Plaza Oaks Club

Our club wants you! Plaza Oaks Club membership, \$415 annually plus a one-time \$150 initiation fee, is open to anyone living within the boundaries of Beltway 8, Buffalo Bayou, Wilcrest Dr. and I-10.

For more information, visit plazaOakspool.com or contact Plaza Oaks Club Board President **Amy Huggins** at amyhuggins23@gmail.com.



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neighborhood children gathered at Weingarten's, where T.J. Maxx sits today, to gather signatures for the light so they could safely cross Memorial Dr. to get to and from school.

"All of the sudden, we got a light," Moya recalls.

For all of these changes, much has stayed the same: the schools and swimming pools still help to build a sense of community. (Pools? Yes, there used to be a second swimming pool closer to I-10. A house stands there now.)

So what has kept Moya and her family in the Plaza Oaks community all these years?

"We have original friends and have made new ones — we're just comfortable."

- 10** *Membership includes swimming, tennis and park access! Bring your friends! It only costs \$2 per day per guest. If you have interested friends who live outside of the boundaries, you can recommend them for membership.*
- 9** *Our club is an asset! Open for swimming May through September, with tennis and other activities year round, our club not only helps to build a sense of community, but also adds value to our neighborhood and homes. Consider making a donation to the club's Capital Improvement Fund.*
- 8** *The club has a swim team! More than 150 kids swim on the Plaza Oaks Piranhas team each summer as part of the Memorial-Spring Branch Swim Conference. Last year our Piranhas proudly came in second at the Meet of Champs.*
- 7** *Our club swim team includes children of all ability levels! Open to children ages 4 to 18 whose families are members, our swim team is a fun way to introduce kids to the sport of swimming — we even have half-lappers. Look for sign-ups in April. Gotta wanna be a Piranha!*
- 6** *The club is looking for volunteers! All of our fun activities, such as Friday Night Burgers, and maintenance are organized by volunteers. We are always in need of and looking for fresh faces to pitch in!*
- 5** *The club is a neighborhood employer! The club employs life guards and swim coaches — the perfect summer job for a high school or college student.*
- 4** *The club offers more than swimming! Fall weather is perfect for tennis on our recently resurfaced courts. Women from throughout our neighborhood participate in leagues that generally run September through April. Join them in the A-level league that plays at the club on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.*
- 3** *The club offers tennis lessons! Clinics for beginner to advanced players are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m., and Friday mornings between 8:15 a.m. and 11:45 a.m. Clinics run one hour and are \$15 per person. Beginners wanted! For more information, contact **Deb Kopp** at (832) 419-5871.*
- 2** *The club is available for parties year round! Consider renting the club for your next special event! It's great for birthdays, crawfish boils and BBQing.*
- 1** *The club offers year-round fun for the whole family! In addition to swimming and tennis, the club is a favorite spot for Plaza Oaks Women's Club activities, including our annual Easter Egg Hunt, Fourth of July, Safety Day, and Halloween Boo Parade celebrations.*

Women's Club Kick-Off Party a Big Hit

Word about the Plaza Oak's Women's Club spread fast over the summer! We officially kicked-off our new group in late August with more than 100 women from across the Plaza Oaks community.

Held at **Iguanas Tex Mex Grill**, it was a loud and lively evening of meeting new faces and catching up with old friends — while having a few margaritas! MC'ed by **Erin Moss**, a fun-filled raffle resulted in over half the ladies going home with gifts donated by local businesses.

Thank you to **Diane Chong, Jordan Maegen, Cheryl Ormston** and **Karen Koster** for planning this special event!

Among the ladies that night were two gentlemen, **Joe Bono** and **Clifford Westbeld**, owner and regional sales manager respectively, of **Legacy Design Outdoors**.

Not only have they done fantastic work for many of us in the neighborhood — including landscaping, patio pavers, design and construction, coupled with great service and high



Clifford Westbeld with the Women's Club's Leadership and Kick-Off Planning Committee.

quality — they also generously volunteered to host our kick-off! Thank you so much for your support that allowed the Women's Club get off to such a great start!

SEE YOUR AD HERE!

If you would like to advertise in our Spring/Summer 2013 Issue contact Erin Abdelnour at erin_abdelnour@yahoo.com. 20% discount for Plaza Oaks residents.



Katie Hemphill receiving her raffle gift from our MC, Erin Moss.

Thank you to all who contributed to our inaugural newsletter including

Christine Mediamolle, Erin Abdelnour, Kris and Jeff Burk, and Jeni de la Mora.

A special thanks to **Jordan Maedgen, Audra Marye** and **Mary Chamberlain,**

and to each of our **Block Captains** for your role in the hand delivery of our newsletter.

HPD, HFD Participate at 1st Annual Safety Day at Plaza Oaks Club

On September 26, we gathered at the Plaza Oaks Club for our first annual Safety Day event. While this was our inaugural event, it was a huge success, with more than 70 children and 40 adults in attendance!

Houston Fire Dept. Station 78 was on hand answering questions and allowing kids to climb in and around their fire engine. A Houston Police Dept. officer was also there to let kids take a tour of a squad car. The red fire hats and police badge stickers were big hits with the kids. First aid kits and personalized fingerprint cards were also provided to all in attendance. The fun continued at the **Stratford High School Honor Society** face-painting station. A balloon artist, Lori

Rizzo, kept the fun going with balloon art for all the children.

We are grateful for our generous community businesses that donated items: **James Coney Island, Chick-Fil-A, Orange Leaf, Walgreens, H-E-B** and **Memorial Emergency Center**. Additionally, thank you to **Jeni de la Mora, Audra Marye** and **Cheryl Ormston** of the Women's Club Planning Committee who did an outstanding job with all the ideas and details. We appreciate your hard work!

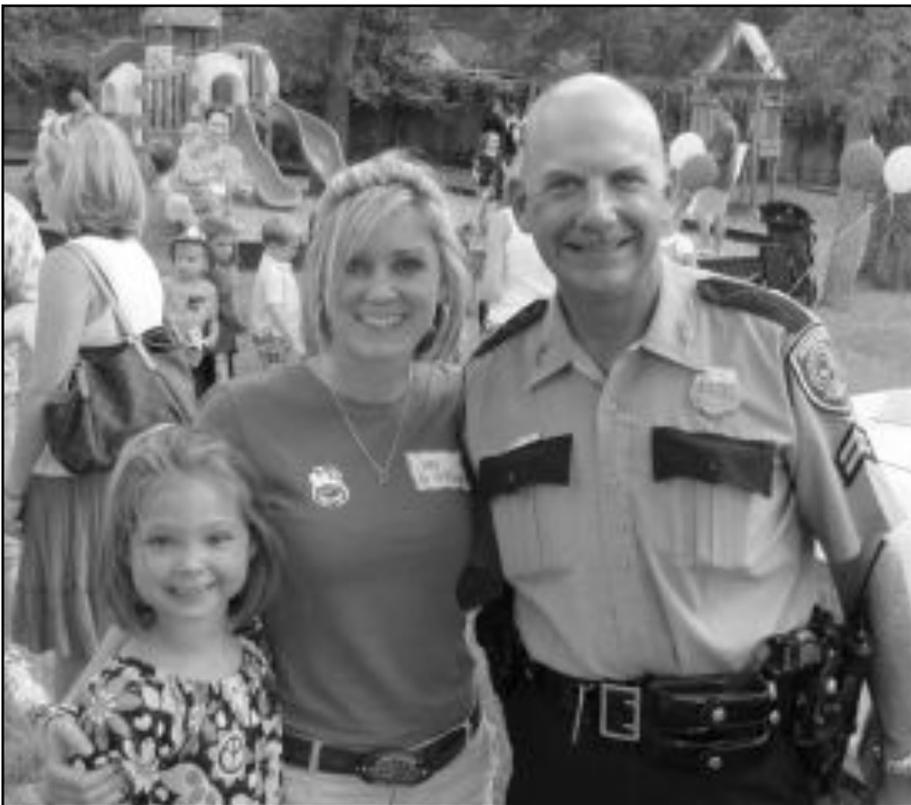
Fun was had by all in the sunny weather as we met with our community service men and women, visited with neighbors, enjoyed the outdoors and learned some important safety information.



Allie Moss, Julia Howard, Caroline Chamberlain, Isabella Rincon, and Elizabeth Chamberlain.



Rachel Jones and son Soren meet K-9 dog.



Ava and Jeni de la Mora and her cousin HPD officer Chuck Dodson.



Cutest fireman ever!

Continued from page 1.

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"That made it all worthwhile!" said Tamara.

As the sun finally set, an officer from the Harris Co. Precinct 5 Constable's Office led the Boo Parade from the pool into the neighborhood, kicking off yet another candy-filled and safe year of trick-or-treating.

A round of applause for the Boo Parade Committee, **Tamara Gooderham, Hallie Keller, Sofia Lamon, Laura Haug** and **Natalya McBride**.



Watch your back! I'd be scared – wouldn't you?

Additionally, thanks to **Elena Mischon, Caroline Elholm** and **Mary Chamberlain** for helping with set up the day of the event, **Katie Hemphill** for jumping in at the last minute to assist with money and food serving, and volunteers from the **Stratford High School Honor**



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Important Dates to Remember:

Kindergarten Open House: Thursday, January 31, 2013 from 7:00-8:00pm

Open House for 18 months – 4 year olds: Wednesday, January 30, 2013 from 11:00am – 12:00pm

Registration: February 1, 2013– February 15, 2013

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www.pinespresbyterianpreschool.com * (713) 467-9358

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