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PRESS RELEASE

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KENNER NEIGHBORHOODS SHINE DURING TUESDAY'S NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME

Kenner, LA. – Dressed in pink from head to toe, Ethel Henderson smiled Tuesday evening as police officers and city officials joined the Filmore Street Night Out Against Crime party just steps away from the Rosemary J. Minor park in south Kenner.

As a five-year breast cancer survivor, she was proud to support Breast Cancer Awareness month with her pink clothes. And as one of the organizers of the Night Out event that brought together residents from both Filmore Street and Taylor Street, Henderson was proud to brag about her city's Police Department.

"I just love them to death," she said. "Whenever a policeman passes by, they all wave at me. They do a great job."

Throughout the city Tuesday evening, residents gathered in parks, garages and front yards to share some food and chat with their neighbors.

That is precisely the idea behind the National Night Out Against Crime, created 31 years ago for local residents to come together and get to know one another and their Police Department. That helps to create a partnership between neighborhoods and police against criminals.

Police Chief Mike Glaser and Kenner Mayor Michael Yenni said Tuesday's turnout in Kenner was the best in recent memory, perhaps boosted by the nearly perfect weather.

"When you know your neighbors, you care about their safety and everyone looks out for one another," Yenni said. "It's also important that Kenner residents know the mayor and police chief and all city officials are always available and want to help solve any problems they may be having."

At the Clay Street Night Out Against Crime barbecue and party in south Kenner, neighbors piled up barbecued chicken and ribs, jambalaya, pie and sweets on plates and shared the events of the day with visitors from the Police Department and City and one another.

Clyde Smith said he started the Night Out gathering 27 years ago to thank police for the difficult and dangerous job they have.

“I think everyone should show the police how you feel about them – don’t wait until a funeral to do that,” Smith said.

It was also a night for police officers and Yenni and members of his administration to show their appreciation.

Traveling with Glaser was McGruff the Crime Dog, a national spokesman for crime awareness, and two of the department’s K-9 officers. The dogs and McGruff were particularly popular with the children.

At a party in the Chateau Lakefront Civic Association in north Kenner, Kevin Delahoussaye said his neighbors go above and beyond the annual Night out gathering, with yearly events that include an annual block party in May and a Halloween Party later this month.

“I feel like this is one of the safest neighborhoods in the city.”

A number of Night Out events also focused on giving back to the city by taking donations for the Kenner Food Bank. Gordon Shaw, former president of the Chateau Estates Lakefront Civic Association, has the job of picking up donations from each of the 10 streets in the neighborhood that held Night Out events.

“This is easily the most we have ever collected,” he said. “We must have 500 pounds of food.”

While helping out the Food Bank is important, Shaw said bringing neighbors together remains the most important aspect of Night Out Against Crime.

“You come home from work and maybe you wave to your neighbors and you go inside and lock the door,” he said. But Night Out events help to break that pattern. “It’s one of the good, important things we do.”

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