# **­­­­­­­­­Restore Rundberg Community Meeting**

The Settlement Home

1607 Colony Creek Drive

October 22, 2015

7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

***Call to order: 7:08pm***

**Attendees:**

Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team and Designees: Aida Cerda-Prazak, Abel Soto-Lopez, Cary Roberts, Monica Guzmán, Donald Baker, Erica Saenz, Melinda Schiera (filling in for Randy Teich), Sarah Wagner (filling in for Jo Kathryn Quinn)

CARY: Deputy Executive Director Shana Fox, Dobie MS youth advisor Amber Sarpy, Barrington and Hart ES youth advisor Denisse Pinzon

APD: Grants Manager Kyran Fitzgerald, Region 2 District Representatives Sergeant Keith Bazzle, Region 2 District Representatives Adam Soliz, Ray Kianes, and Frank Wilson, Police Officers Tuhwan Kim, Jacob Ballesteros, and Cecil Jones,

UT: Restore Rundberg PI Dr. David Springer, Jennifer Hernandez

August and September community meeting minutes were approved.

**New Business:**

* **Skillpoint Alliance Workforce Acceleration Programs Recruitment Coordinator Gabi Almanza** presented this nonprofit established in 1994 by the City of Austin and the Austin Chamber of Commerce as the Capital Area Training Foundation in order to provide training classes at no cost to people willing to become skilled construction workers, much needed at that time for converting the Austin Bergstrom Air Force Base into the Austin Bergstrom International Airport.

The goals of the organization are to empower all people in Central Texas with the skills and tools necessary to get the jobs that are available in the areaby developing their interest for areas offering lots of opportunities, as well as raising awareness on those opportunities.

Students are empowered through Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) project-based learning to train and study to work with Austin’s booming high tech sector. There are also huge needs from the construction industry and in entry level positions. Healthcare, manufacturing and construction are three industries Skillpoint works in. These trainings are all full time, Monday through Friday from 8-5 and are 100% at no cost to participants as they are covered through a combination of grants and scholarships.

As part of its **“Gateway” or Rapid Workforce Training**, Skillpoint Alliance will be adding a 12-week welding class next year, as well as a plumbing one.

Skillpoint Alliance pays for all licensing for the classes. For example, the Certified Nurse Aide class provides participants with entry-level CPR and First Aid training. Skillpoint Alliance also provides construction classes through a partnership with the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER. The Machine Operator and Construction trainings include OSHA 10 certification on top of NCCER certification.

Gabi Almanza is interested in knowing who’s interested in taking classes like these and can provide flyers promoting them.

As part of its **“Velocity” programs for high school students**, groups of 15-20 high school students come together to form a consulting company to work on a real world problem. There are two different models:

* In the first one, students participate in part time internships during the spring semester and earn academic credits.
* In the second one, students participate in paid full time internships over the summer.

A project that was carried on as part of those Velocity programs is the development of a business plan for the Texas School for the Blind that included a full organization, including a marketing team and CEO for example. “The students came up with an application prototype,” informed Gabi Almanza.

The Velocity programs insists on STEM education because it matches professional opportunities in Central Texas.

**Questions** were asked about the public that could benefit from a Gateway training. All you need is a GED to enroll.

About the need to pass a criminal background check. It is not needed to take construction classes; certified nurse aide classes are on a case by case basis.

About the need to be legally eligible to work in the US. It is.

About childcare during classes. Skillpoint Alliance is not able to provide it itself today but works with community partners to ensure childcare is provided.

About how topics students work on as part of the Velocity programs are chose. ‘The companies come to us with a topic, for example the need for an engine for a cloud server, or Internet bug fixes,” said Gabi Almanza.

* **University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work and LBJ School of Public Affairs Professor David Springer** said his presentation was aimed at reviewing violent and property crimes across the three Restore Rundberg hotspots, examining key initiatives and takeaways to date, and discussing ongoing research related initiatives

He let **Austin Police Region 2 Commander Donald Baker** present the initiatives contributing to a reduction in criminal activity:

* the formation of an Apartment Coalition formed by apartment owners and residents as soon as 2012, and that’s been especially active in hotspot 3,
* mentoring and the teaching of a leadership class at Dobie MS,
* weekly meetings at the North Austin YMCA, and monthly Restore Rundberg community meetings with the newly formed Revitalization Team

from 2013, when APD could verify 100% enforcement initiative didn’t have the effect it hoped.

Since 2014:

* Mobile Walking Beat was implemented,
* Support was provided to Ken Street Ex-Gang Members Group,
* CEO for A Day operation led by Abel de La Fuentes,
* A matrix of properties that could be rehabilitated was created (see presentation during last community meeting, in September 2014),
* The running with the Running man was organized,
* A Rundberg Educational Advancement District was formed,
* A partnership with the Council on At-Risk Youth is now in place,

Etc.

Before presenting the latest statistics on **violent crime** in the Rundberg area, Dr. Springer reminded the public of the location of the hotspots.

He then announced that, between the comparison period of April 2012 to August 13 and the intervention period of April 2014 to August 2015, a reduction of more than 15% was measured for violent crime in the three hotspots combined and a -4.52% evolution in the whole grant area. “We’re going to look at the data in different ways in the upcoming months, but it is going in the right direction,” he said. The most reduction is in robberies.

Violent crime in Austin attributed to the grant area is down -1.27% between the two periods (from 12.99% to 11.72%).

A graph depicting the trends in violent crime shows a spike on the right due to property crime in hotspot 1, but overall if shows that, whereas before crime was on average on the rise, it is now trending down.

The comparison with the Dove Springs area shows crime there is roughly steady, or if anything slightly up, contrary to Rundberg area.

**Property crime** seems to be trending down in both the comparison and the intervention periods, but it is down faster than in the Dove Springs area, although auto theft remains relatively stable.

In **APD survey of community members**, the question on whether the Rundberg area is a safe place for you and family got mostly negative answers in the summer of 2014, compared to almost 75% yes in the summer of 2015. “Those are answers received from the same areas, mostly the hotsposts,” confirmed Dr. Springer when asked the question by Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team Erica Saenz.

Drug dealing is still the main identified problem.

**Key takeaways** for Dr. Springer are:

* the fact that residents are feeling safer,
* a reduction in crime that’s “not trivial”,
* the fact that zero violent crime has been committed when APD was deployed on the streets,
* and that decreases in crime were registered despite an annual population increase of about 2.5% in Austin.

**Ongoing research initiatives** are:

* a process evaluation that’s in the copyediting phase,
* wave two of a community survey to take place early 2016,
* continued crime analysis of original hotspots and entire grant area,
* the preparation of a replication guide for 2016,
* the launch of hotspot 4 through the identification of priorities for improvement, continued crime analysis and Mobile Walking Beat, and continued support from research team, in order to provide evidence-based information regarding prostitution to the Georgian Acres Neighborhood Association and the Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team.

Dr. Springer finally presented the **new perimeter of hotspot 4**, explaining this new, smaller perimeter is an example of “tweaks we need to make based on the officers’ observations.” “The new perimeter is one they can actually walk. And we heard some community members already have seen a difference.”

Commander Baker took that opportunity to recognize both the District Representatives and evening shift officers who do the Mobile Walking Beat.

Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team chair Erica Saenz commented that, based on those numbers, it’s “no coincidence that the focus of the community is on prostitution and drug use.”

* **Council on At-Risk Youth (CARY) Deputy Executive Director Shana Fox presented a summer camp project** by this nonprofit serving a majority low income students with an incarcerated family member.

She started by underlining the “huge need” for such a program that would last five weeks, and serve 100 kids with social and emotional learning in three Elementary School-aged, Middle School-aged, and High School-aged groups.

“The summer camp will be mainly about collaborating,’ said Shana Fox, explaining breakfast and lunch would be provided through a partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank.

Underage alcohol consumption prevention and things like that experience of Nature for three days will be offered as part of that summer camp, as well as trips to St Edward’s University, UT, maybe other campuses like Texas State.

Social needs that might arise will be addressed as part of the summer camp.

Kids don’t have to be CARY students to enroll; the only condition is to live in this community.

Parent classes are also going to be offered.

Experts for health and wellness will be available.

The summer camp will provide community safety by giving the kids something fun and productive to do.

The kids will have options, although “clubbing not on the table.” CARY is looking for community members willing to share ‘their love for yoga or chess, for example, depending on what they’re super into.”

Leadership opportunities will be provided to the kids through service learning, by identifying issues in the community and working on them.

CARY will request ongoing feedback on the summer camp from community members, parents, etc.

Questions were asked on the selection of the kids. “If we end up with a waiting list, we will perform a risk assessment,” explained Shana Fox, but it doesn’t seem appropriate for the organization to exclude those who haven’t been identified as at risk yet. CARY will not be asking for proof of income neither.

Kianes handed out **Rundberg Educational Advancement District** flyers presenting the T-shirts project aimed at getting all 4,500 READ students a shirt showcasing their pride and unity. Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team chair Erica Saenz invited everyone to contribute to inform on the initiative through social media.

Dobie Middle School CARY youth advisor Amber Sarpy announced the first installment of a new Keep Dobie Beautiful series providing free breakfast, music therapy and gardening and other activities on October 31st. The event will take place once a month on a Saturday morning from 10 to noon.

Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team chair Erica Saenz concluded by reminding everyone there would be no meeting in November, to stay tuned for the date of next community meeting, and asked everyone to “please, have a wonderful Thanksgiving,” while keeping in touch through Basecamp and email.

***Adjourn 8:27pm***