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Perris Police Department Holds 2018 National Night Out



Perris Mayor Michael Vargas addresses the crowd at May Ranch Aug. 7 during the annual National Night Out, saying the event "gives the opportunity for the community to familiarize themselves with our police department."

The Perris Police Department went mobile Aug. 7, visiting four different communities in neighborhoods throughout the City, talking with constituents, showing off some of their equipment, addressing concerns like speeding vehicles, street racing and noise complaints and urging residents to report any suspicious activity.

The meet-and-greet was part of National Night Out 2018.

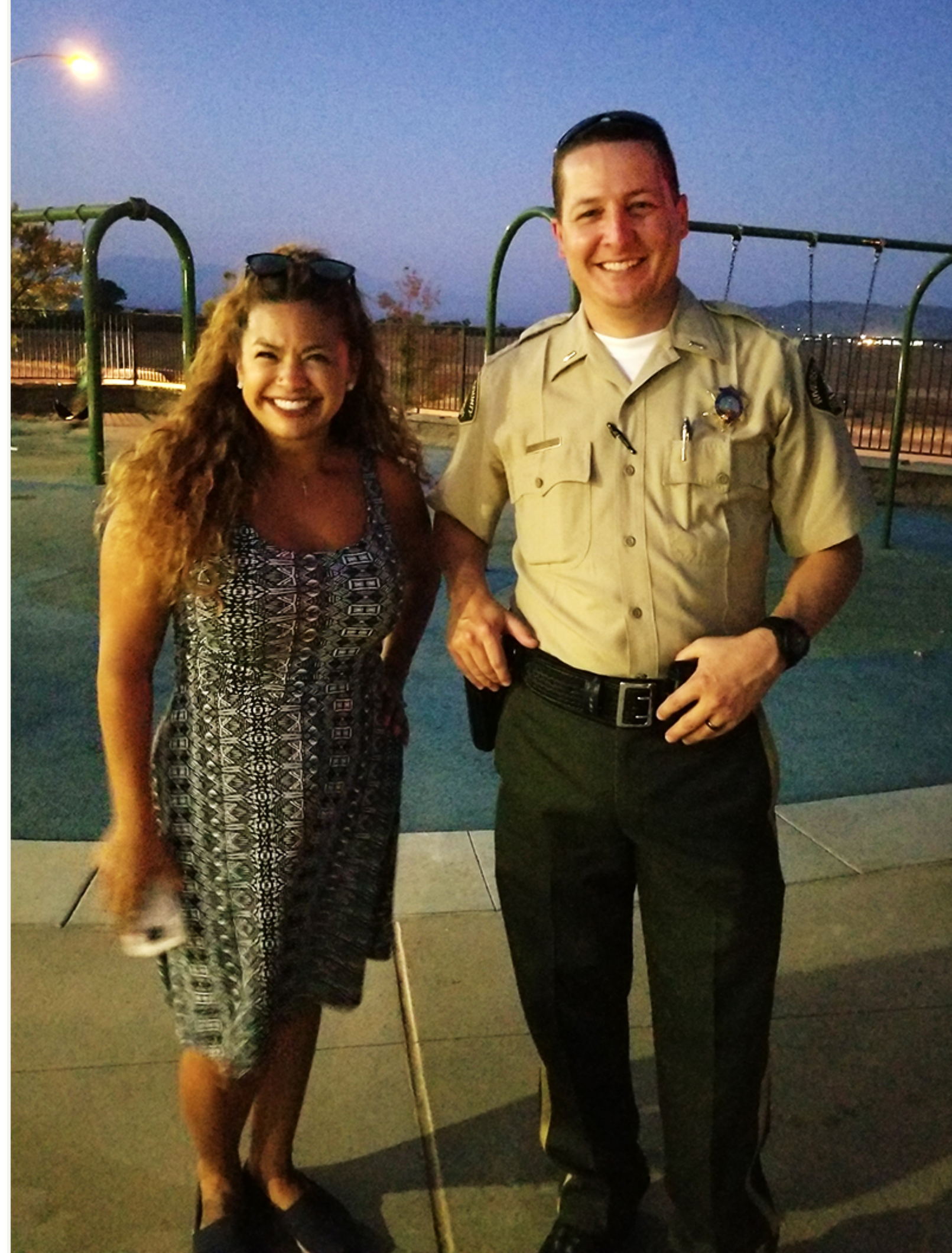
This year's outreach marked a change from previous years, when the event was staged in a local park.

Police Chief Greg Fellows said the department wanted to go mobile and go to various communities rather than having residents drop in at one location. Cops visited May Ranch and Monument Park in north and south Perris, the Hunt Club Apartments near Downtown and the Redlands Towne Square Apartments near Perris High School.

Authorities brought their police-issue motorcycles, forensic science team officers and members of the Special Enforcement Teams. Department K-9 Rx, a Belgian Malinois and his handler, James Ray, also put in an appearance.

"National Night Out is a great opportunity to let people know the police are there to serve them," Fellows said. "Police officers don't just work in Perris—many live here. We are moms and dads, friend and neighbors."

Fellows summed up the cop-community relationship by saying, "one team, one spirit, one mission."



Perris City Clerk Nancy Salazar chats with Perris Police Lt. Matt Sims during the National Night Out Event at Monument Park in south Perris. Salazar brought her daughter, Khloe, to the event.

Getting to know you

Perris Mayor Michael Vargas attended the May Ranch community meeting while City Clerk Nancy Salazar dropped by the Monument Park gathering. Both events drew 40 to 50 residents as did the Hunt Club and Redlands Town Center get-togethers.

Vargas, a retired police officer, said events like National Night Out give residents a better insight into law enforcement and provide the opportunity to meet and get to know local cops.

"One of the great benefits of National Night Out is that it gives the opportunity for the community to familiarize themselves with our police department," Vargas said. "It gives officers the chance to explain how and why they do their job."

Resident Natalie White, who helped organized the Neighborhood Watch group, said many people who live in her May Ranch neighborhood located to the area within the last two years. It's a great neighborhood and one she and her fellow Neighborhood Watch members would like to keep that way.

"We're here to establish roots," White said. "We want to protect each other's property."

Homeowners told Fellows and fellow officers of their concern for street racing and speeding cars through their community.



Hunt Club Apartments residents Marta Aguilar, Adelina Aguilar and Alfredo Aguilar met Perris Police Officers during the Aug. 7 National Night Out event at the complex on South Perris Boulevard.

But they were pleased that City Council action resulted in reducing speed limits on nearby Evans Road from 55 mph to 45 mph. Police officers attending the event urged people to call if they see or hear any sort of suspicious activities, no matter how seemingly minor.

Community barbecue

Monument Park residents hosted a barbecue and pizza party in their fashionable South Perris community. City Clerk Salazar walked from her home to meet Perris police at the park. She brought along her daughter, Khloe.

"This is a great event for the entire City," Salazar said. "It makes people feel safe when they talk to police and tell them their concerns."

Several residents voiced concern about illegal street-racing along Ethnac Road. Police Lt. Matt Sims said police are well aware of that situation but face challenges.

Racers using social media send out alerts about approaching police and disappear before the law arrives. Nonetheless, Sims said, Perris cops are committed to doing everything possible to curb the problem.

In touch with people



May Ranch resident Jackson Bobo, 5, got the chance to sit on a Perris Police motorcycle during the National Night Out program in May Ranch.

At the Hunt Club Apartments on South Perris Boulevard, manager Travis Alexander Sr. welcomed Perris police representatives who chatted with residents, invited kids to sit on police motorcycles and handed out stickers to the youngsters.

Alexander's son, Travis Alexander II, is a Riverside County sheriff deputy. He was on hand as well.

"This is a great way of putting cops in touch with the community," the elder Alexander said. "It's a great way for our residents to meet their police."

Hunt Club resident Marta Aguilar attended the get-together with husband, Alfredo, and daughter Adelina, 5.

She said the family loves living in Perris and appreciates the City working with law enforcement to keep people safe. Aguilar and her family have front-row seats to the skydivers who land regularly at the Perris Valley Airport and they also visit the world-renowned Orange Empire Railway Museum. Adelina loves playing in the water at Mercado Park.

"We love it in Perris," Marta Aguilar said. "It's a great place for all of us."

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