

## **Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association Safety Kids Taskforce**

Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association held Safety Kids Taskforce workshops this past April during the children's spring break. This is the second year these workshops were held. Cervantes applied for a Neighborhood Match Fund to continue the series, building on the work of her predecessor, Rocio Rodriguez. Cervantes and Rodriguez demonstrate good partnership between leaders and the passion to carry on good traditions from one year to the next.

"Safety was a general concern and it was so we could keep our kids busy and doing great stuff and focusing on their community and not doing other things they shouldn't be. And it's a good way to get them together during Spring Break. Instead of doing other stuff, focusing on things they can learn and helpful tips," said Cervantes.

"Since it was my first year last year, it was my first day when I started here, so it was like my anniversary. Rocio gave me the chance to coordinate and take care of everything. She had a great idea of it and I really liked coordinating it and want to give a shout out to her because it was her thoughts that brought this to them and it was very important to them."

The Safety Kids Taskforce was two morning workshops held April 2 & 4, 2019 during the GRPS spring break for kids ages 6-15. Each day at 9 a.m. started with breakfast for the children and their families. This allowed them a chance to talk and get to know each other. From 9:30 a.m.- 11 a.m. was the workshop. On the first day, community officers from the GRPD came and talked to the children about physical safety and self-defense tactics. Cervantes said the kids loved having the officers there and were excited to ask them questions about their jobs and their gear.

On the second day, the workshop focused on cyber safety. Cervantes was particularly pleased with how both the kids and parents engaged this topic and opened up to each other even more than the first day. The children were taught how to deal with fake accounts, the importance of looking up someone who wants to be their friend and comparing notes with friends and family to make sure that person is who they say they are, and safety tips like not posting about events or places until you've already left the event.

"36 kids came the first day and 30 came the second day, with parents coming both days, too," said Cervantes. "They love the workshops. They loved it. They didn't want to leave, they wanted to stay and keep talking. It was really good and a great turnout."

On the results of the workshops, Cervantes said, "They feel safer because their parents were there and so they feel safer telling their mom and that she won't get mad. They feel safer now expressing themselves if something is going on, to be able to come to their parents. And even the parents talked about how it was good to come to the workshops. The parents assured the kids they would not be mad and will be there for them, so it was a great interaction all at once."

Cervantes is really pleased with how the workshops facilitated community by providing space for the kids and parents to talk to each other. "I didn't expect that, it just happened in the end

when the kids were all asking questions and said their struggles and how they overcame them. It helped other parents realize they have to make time for these conversations and if their kids like the phone apps, how to make them safer.”

Cervantes is also really happy to see the leadership the children are taking concerning future workshops, activities and taking responsibility to share their new knowledge with their friends.

“They are going to tell their friends about it so they can join if we have it next year. They really, really loved it. They said it was great stuff and maybe we can do something different next year, that it would be fun to bring all their friends.”