

May 8, 2013

Dear Resident,

There is a growing population in West Houston of “street people” who can be divided into two groups, the genuinely homeless population, and the panhandlers who take to the streets for cash.

The two groups are very different. The **homeless** may be living with a friend, in a car, or elsewhere, and could have a child attending school. The **panhandlers**, loitering at intersections and street corners, are more likely looking for cash, possibly to support a drug or alcohol habit.

The Eldridge/West Oaks Super Neighborhood 17 homeless committee is looking for ways to address the needs of the genuine homeless, while dealing with the growing number of panhandlers, and would like to enlist the help of the individual neighborhoods, HOAs, that make up the Super Neighborhood. This effort is a part of a larger effort by the City of Houston.

SN17 has three major objectives:

1. To connect the genuinely homeless with organizations that provide opportunities for shelter, keeping families together, and finding employment.
2. To clear the West Houston streets and neighborhoods of street panhandlers who seek money, possibly supporting alcohol or drug habits. They would also be directed and encouraged to seek organized help.
3. To work with Houston Police (HPD), governmental agencies, and faith based organizations, as well as private charitable organizations, to accomplish these objectives.

Recommendations of the SN17 Homeless Committee:

1. Stop giving cash, food, or anything else to those soliciting on a street corner or intersection.
2. Do not engage in a discussion with those soliciting, and try not to make eye contact.
3. Maneuver your car carefully when solicitors are present at an intersection so as not to injure any persons.
4. As a pedestrian, do not engage solicitors in conversation and continue on to your destination.
5. If you must offer assistance yourself, a **Help Card** is attached listing the various locations for help.
6. Do not offer transportation to solicitors and call 911 if there is an emergency or a crime is being committed.
7. Keep in mind that encouraging people to seek help is more charitable than perpetuating bad behavior.

Thank you.

Terraces on Memorial HOA