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National Night Out in Opelika

Posted: Aug 03, 2015 4:20 PM CST

Updated: Aug 03, 2015 5:30 PM CST

By: Dorothy Sherman

Opelika, AL - The city of Opelika taking a stand against crime with National Night Out. It's an event that's all about bringing the community closer together.

"...it's all about the criminals know that we're gonna be able to walk out streets we're going to be able to sit on our porch...community is going to work together cause we can't get rid of crime unless the community going to work together..." event coordinator Mattie Clark said.

Clark said last year over 300 people attended the event, and this year she's expecting 500.

Here's a rundown of what you can expect Tuesday night. A unity march from Antioch Baptist Church to Covington Recreation Center at 5:30p CT gets things started. Then at the rec center there will be a block party lasting until 8:30p CT and a victims memorial service.

"...also we're going to have balloons for the ones that are incarcerated because those moms and dads are hurting too, not as much as those who have lost their loved ones, but we want that too..." Clark said.

At the block party there will be over 22 community organizations on hand. Organizations like the Opelika Housing Authority, East Alabama Mental Health, and The Lee County Sheriff's Office.

"...it's gonna be an opportunity for folks to begin to build a relationship or to expand upon an existing relationship and it will be a festival type atmosphere with all the games and food and all that..." Opelika Mayor Gary Fuller said.

And, of course the Opelika Police Department will also be at National Night Out.

Opelika Police Captain Shane Healey said events like National Night Out are important to the department as it helps develop good relationships between police and the community, which is important in fighting crime as police often rely on witnesses or community members when an incident happens.

"...hopefully be building this rapport, building these relationships we're going to have people that feel comfortable coming to us and speaking to us and letting us know what happened, because without that a lot crimes are going to go unsolved..." Capt. Healey said.

If you can't make it to the event you can still participate by locking your doors and turning on your outdoor lights at 5:30p CT.

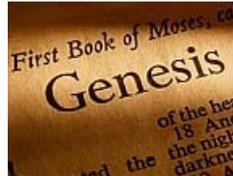
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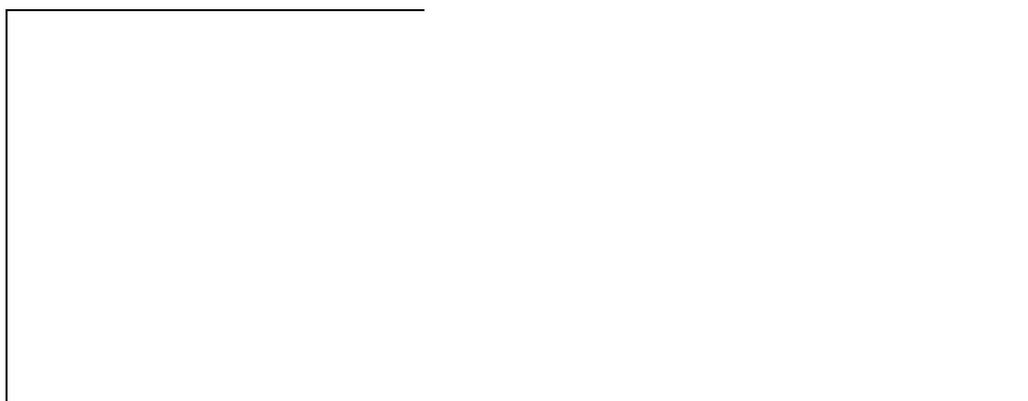


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