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More than 18 graduates of the Burleson Police Department's Citizens Police Academy signed up for more training and are now certified as members of the department's Citizens On Patrol program. The students received their certificates during a ceremony Oct. 3.

The graduates include Kevin Bell, Lisa Bennett, Alice Ehlers, Paul Faulks, Mark Fleming, Patricia Fleming, Derald Freeman, Robert Kinney, Phyllis Lavender, Julie Maceyra, Carla Martinez, Colleen Mink, Jill Nix, Lynda O'Rourke, Sandra Smith, Mark Solomon, Nathan Thompson and Tina Thompson.

Training for the COPs program includes a 16-hour certification course, four-hour orientation and riding out with a patrol officer. COPs are trained to patrol neighborhoods, parks, and businesses; report suspicious people and vehicles; report traffic hazards; perform traffic control at special events such as the City's July 4th fireworks celebration; complete vacation checks and close patrols; co-host community events and fund raising activities; educate the community about crime prevention; report City ordinance violations such as junk vehicles, curfew violations, and park violations; and patrol major retail parking lots during the holidays.

COPs can also become certified, via a four-hour class, for handicapped parking enforcement. COPs are trained to recognize violations and write citations to put on the windshields. COPs do not confront drivers.

COPs recruits must be at least 21 and a graduate of the department's Citizens Police Academy (36-hour course). COPs undergo a criminal background check before they are trained by members of the police department. Recruits must have a valid driver's license, must be of good moral standing in the community (at least two references are required), and vision that is correctable to 20/30.

For more about the Citizens On Patrol program, call Sgt. Brian O'Heren at (817) 426-9881.