

First posted on www.nextdoor.com – April 22, 2017

This is just a follow up to the report of a "Break-In" from yesterday, April 21. There was actually only one break-in, albeit a rather brazen one, that happened a little before 5 pm on Oak Hills Parkway. The suspects were seen at another home on East Lakeview Dr. (near the corner of Chester) a little before the break-in, but did not break in to that residence.

Summary-A little after 4:40 pm, a concerned neighbor saw a black, possibly dark blue SUV (believes it to an older Ford) back into the driveway across the street. Two black males in their 20's got out of the vehicle, and one went to the front door and began knocking while the other went towards the rear of the home. The neighbor thought it odd since no one is currently residing at the home, and called the Sheriff's Department to report them. They got back in their vehicle and left, driving to a residence on Oak Hills Parkway near the intersection with South Lakeview. Again, they backed up into the driveway of the home and exited the vehicle. They went to the back door and forced it open, setting off the house alarm. The homeowner was notified and called a neighbor, who in turn, went to the home and met the Sheriff's Department deputies when they arrived. At this point, it is unclear whether anything was taken, and we can only hope that the alarm scared them off before anything was taken. All of this happened within a 20-30 minute window around 5 pm yesterday.

Personal Thoughts-

First- I think the most recent episode reinforces the old adage that a "good neighbor is the best security system", and that we need to be vigilant in keeping an eye not only on our own home, but those of our neighbors. Please make note of suspicious vehicles or individuals around your home or in the neighborhood. Report disturbing activity to law enforcement, and try and jot down a license plate, or better yet, take a picture of a vehicle that you feel may be involved. As a homeowner, always remember to put tools/bikes away in your garage or carport so that your yard doesn't become a large "Steal Me" sign to a prospective thief driving by.

Second- Having an alarm or monitoring system in your home is also crucial to protecting your home. Once a thief hears the sound of an alarm, he/she knows that their time to steal and for escape is limited, and that they will have to leave a little earlier than planned. It also alerts neighbors that something is amiss, and allows witnesses the ability to see the criminal. Obviously, it also allows the police to become involved much sooner. Additionally, there are features that alarm companies can install for you that also help: doorbells that also function as cameras and allow you to answer from your smart phone as well as camera systems.

Third- Try and get involved in some way with your neighborhood association so that there can be a unified approach to fighting crime. The members of the Greater Oak Hills Civic Association are aware of these recent incidents and have been discussing ways to make our neighborhood safer. Rest assured that these types of property crimes are not just happening in Oak Hills, and that our neighborhood is actually way down statistically for the number of incidents that occur. It is happening all over South Baton Rouge, and the neighborhoods that address the issue and take positive steps to fight crime will prevail. GOHCA has discussed several ideas for combatting crime in the neighborhood, and this will be the main topic of discussion at our next Board meeting in May. We would love to hear from the rest of the neighborhood about other ideas. The next GOHCA Board meeting is Tuesday, May 16 at 6:30 pm at the Hilltop Arboretum.

Brian Hanchey
Greater Oak Hills Civic Association