



Times Tribune photo by Vern Fisher

East Palo Alto Mayor John Bostic tells an anti-drug rally on the 2100 block of Oakwood Drive Saturday that officer Joel Michael Davis' death should not be in vain.

Anti-drug rally held Saturday

A different party at a crack house

By Jeff Brazil
Times Tribune staff

Anti-drug crusader Bob Hartley stood in front of a "crack" house in East Palo Alto Saturday and smiled ear-to-ear.

"I can tell you one thing, they didn't do any business today," said Hartley, founder of COPE, the Community Organization for the Prevention of Drug Abuse.

Hartley and his band of reformed drug addicts Saturday marched into one of the hottest drug-dealing spots in East Palo Alto and threw a block party against drugs.

In a festive, revival-like atmosphere, more than a hundred residents converged on the 2100 block of Oakwood Drive to sing, dance and hear testimony from people who said they were once addicted to "crack."

Some of the residents of the block were not amused.

"The dealers stood in front of their 'crack' house and gave us a

few sneers," Hartley said. "But that's no big deal. We're having a good time."

Saturday's anti-drug party was the first of a series to be held throughout the summer in different parts of the city.

Hartley hopes it is the beginning of a citywide grass-roots movement where residents will band together to reclaim drug-infested neighborhoods.

The crusaders plan to throw a party in each of the city's worst drug spots.

Next on the agenda is Jack Farrell Park, where crack trafficking and violence are a way of life.

"We're going to pick all the high cocaine areas," Hartley said. "We're going to kick these dealers out of here."

Residents blocked off the 2100 block of Oakwood for eight hours Saturday, decorating it with paper streamers, ribbon and the works.

They swayed, clapped their hands and crooned as a gospel band, Children of the Rock, played

tunes urging people to get their lives together.

"The people here realize we need this," said party organizer Eddie Robinson, block captain for the 2100 Block Neighborhood Against Drugs.

Asked about the revival mood, Robinson, wearing a cowboy hat and holding a Pepsi, said, "There's a lot of sin out here, so we've got to do something special."

At one point, the atmosphere became somber as they held a memorial service for slain East Palo Alto police Officer Joel Michael Davis, who was shot to death Wednesday.

Mayor John Bostic urged the people to begin to combat the city's colossal drug problem, saying that Davis' death should not be in vain.

About 80 people signed up to help at the next block party.

At the end of the bash, a teen-age boy grabbed a microphone and said, "I just want to say to everyone, drugs are a bad habit."

Said Robinson, "Thank you, young man."

Funeral for Officer Davis is Monday at Frost Amphitheater

Funeral services will be held Monday for Joel Michael Davis, the 26-year-old East Palo Alto policeman killed in the line of duty Wednesday.

The funeral, expected to be attended by 1,500 police officers from around the state, will be held at Stanford University's Frost Am-

phitheater at 1 p.m.

Davis, who was single, died at Stanford University Hospital after being shot in the head and shoulder while chasing a gunman in East Palo Alto.

He had been on the force only six weeks. He was the first San Mateo County police officer to die

in the line of duty since 1981.

Police have arrested the man they believe killed Davis.

For further information about the funeral, contact the Roller, Hapgood and Tinney funeral home at (415) 328-1360.