

Dear Community Members:

Each year on the first Wednesday of April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we celebrate Start by Believing Day. This annual event provides an opportunity for communities across the country, and around the world, to unify with a single voice for those who have been victims of sexual violence: **We hear you.** On this day, we gather to end the silence and change the way we respond to sexual violence: **We see you.** Help us celebrate Start by Believing Day by participating in our **Turn Summit County Teal** challenge!

Every 73 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted. Unfortunately, as few as 1 in 5 victims report their sexual assault. While there are many reasons victims of sexual assault may not want to come forward, the most prominent reason is fear of not being believed. We can change this, but we need your help. Please join us in taking the Start by Believing pledge and helping us **Turn Summit County Teal**.

Start by Believing is a public awareness and action campaign created by End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) in 2011 to end the cycle of silence and change the way society responds to sexual assault. In April 2019 the Summit County Prosecutor's Office joined this movement by launching our campaign to improve Summit County's response to survivors of sexual violence. The movement focuses specifically on support for survivors, rather than doubt, shame, or blame.

### **Turn Summit County Teal Challenge**

We are asking for your support by getting your company, organization, or group involved in our **Turn Summit County Teal** challenge. In a show of solidarity, we would like as many buildings as possible in Summit County to light up in the color **teal** on the evening of April 2, 2025. If you are unable to light up your building, turn on a lamp in the window, just make it shine teal! Take a picture of your building participating in the **Turn Summit County Teal** challenge and send it to our office at [media@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:media@prosecutor.summitoh.net). We will be posting your pictures on our social media and website throughout the month of April.

Here are other ways you can show your support this April:

- Ask your staff, volunteers, and/or group members to sign our pledge form.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfjTiHlLvXL31yh71sMld3Eg5QuzZ5e6WGo9mudtVTwFy-6jg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfjTiHlLvXL31yh71sMld3Eg5QuzZ5e6WGo9mudtVTwFy-6jg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

- Take a selfie or video with the attached **Start by Believing** placard, and send it to our office at [media@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:media@prosecutor.summitoh.net)
- Promote our challenge on your social media account(s) by using our hashtags **#SummitCountyOHBelieves** or **#StartbyBelieving**.

Let's all do our part to create a more supportive environment for victims of sexual violence. Let's take a stand to end the cycle of silence. Let's show the world that **#SummitCountyOHBelieves!** If you would like more information about Start by Believing or are interested in providing training for your staff, volunteers, or group members, please contact our Community Outreach Coordinator, Mickey Valdez, at [mvaldez@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:mvaldez@prosecutor.summitoh.net).

Sincerely yours,



**Elliot Kolkovich**

Summit County Prosecutor