



FROM THE OFFICE OF
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR
SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

THE SENIOR NEWS

TIPS FOR A SAFE HOLIDAY!

As the holiday season approaches, be mindful that shoppers overloaded with packages are a prime target for thieves.

Remembering these simple tips during the holidays can keep you safe:

1. Make sure you are always aware of your surroundings and try to plan errands for early in the day so you are less likely to have to go out at night.
2. When shopping, make sure you lock your doors and have all valuables hidden from sight.
3. Keep the doors and windows of your homes locked.
4. During the night, leave a light on if you will not be returning home until after dark.
5. Purse snatchers and pickpockets are on the loose. Keep your purse tucked close to you and never let phones or money hang out of pockets.
6. Identity theft is another issue that becomes more prominent during the holidays. If you are getting telephone calls from restricted or unknown numbers, or emails from a sender that you do not know, never respond! To prevent these bothersome calls and emails in the first place, never give out your information to anyone!

While putting criminals away protects you right now, being educated in prevention will always keep you safe.



THE ROLE OF THE PROSECUTOR

The popularity of TV crime shows, both fictional and reality-based, has led to a greater public interest in the judicial system. An informed public is crucial to my goal of seeking justice for and protecting crime victims and the community. However, the tendency of these shows to highlight the more dramatic aspects of the judicial system has also created some confusion for those who have never been involved in a criminal case.

Jurors, for example, are often surprised by the calm atmosphere of the courtroom. Contrary to the usual TV drama, most prosecutors and defense attorneys are able to maintain a calm and civil demeanor toward one another. Witnesses often refuse to cooperate, having bought into the sensationalized “snitches get stitches” mentality. Even children are not immune, often believing prosecutors are the villains trying to break up their families.

My office has adopted a courtroom to community approach of participating in school and community programs to better educate the community about the judicial process and the rights of the victims, witnesses and defendants, as well as crime prevention strategies. By going out into the community and interacting with the public, we can better present the reality of the judicial system.

We also try to cultivate relationships with the adults in our community by speaking at senior group and community organization meetings and participating in public events like National Night Out Against Crime. By personally interacting with community members, we can not only dispel myths about who we are and what we do, but we can also highlight the many services and programs we offer.

I truly feel that if we reach out to the community at every age, we can better help the people we serve. When citizens are fully informed of the judicial process, we can all work together for justice more effectively and with greater understanding.

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[www.co.summit.oh.us/
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Steve Barry, newly elected sheriff, assists Lt. Chad Cunningham in a self-defense move for a mother-daughter class in Tallmadge.

VIEW FROM AN INTERN

One way we educate students is through our internship program. Each semester, 10 to 20 students assist us by listening to jail calls, helping prosecutors prepare for cases, observing trials and touring the Summit County Jail, Juvenile Court and Summit County Court of Common Pleas. Weekly brown bag lectures provide our interns with an opportunity for in-depth discussions with assistant prosecutors and victim advocates about what their jobs entail.



Amanda Apicella from Hudson High School recently did an internship with our office. When asked about her experience with the office, Amanda said, "Before I started my internship, I had no clue what a prosecutor's office did. Throughout the months I have been here I have learned so much. The Victim Services Division supports victims through the entire court process and directs them to various agencies for help with the many issues they face - financial, emotional and legal. I cannot describe how rewarding it is to work with these selfless prosecutors; they taught me so much and now I will further educate my peers. They are all friendly individuals who made a scared high school intern walking into a big professional world she knew nothing about feel a little less nervous."

Although our internship program is unpaid, students receive a rewarding educational experience of the criminal justice system as well as an experience they will never forget, and one that will benefit them in future endeavors.

LEARN TO PROTECT YOURSELF

An important role of my office is crime prevention. I am committed to educating Summit County's seniors so that they have the tools they need to be safe.

Every September, my office sponsors self-defense classes for senior citizens as part of our Senior Safety Awareness Month. In August, we expanded the self-defense classes. With the help of Lt. Chad Cunningham from the Akron University Police Department, my office sponsored four mother-daughter self-defense classes. Participants were taught easy get-away techniques that could one day save their lives.



If you have a gut feeling that someone or something is not quite right, do not ignore that feeling, because your instinct is probably right. Most victims of crime have told me that they had a bad feeling about the criminal and wish they had not ignored their instinct.

Check our website regularly for upcoming speeches, self-defense classes or other senior events. If you would like to receive Alerts from our office, please call Melanie Hart at 330-643-2800.



Participants line up to practice the trachea push maneuver on Lt. Cunningham.