



FROM THE OFFICE OF  
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR  
**SHERRI BEVAN WALSH**

## A Message From Prosecutor Walsh

# Personal Safety & Self-Defense

As May arrives, many of you are preparing for some special occasions. May is prom season. It is also time for high school and college graduations. And summer vacation season is right around the corner.

As loved ones venture out to discover new experiences, make sure they take some safety advice with them.

The safety of our community is one of my main priorities. In this newsletter, as in past newsletters, you will see pictures from our many safety speeches and monthly self-defense classes. Since I took office, we have conducted thousands of these events. All in the hopes of making our community safer.

Here are some things to remember as you enjoy the warmer weather.

### BE AWARE

It may sound simple, but knowing your surroundings could be the best and easiest way to stay safe. Keep your personal items close to you and watch those around you. Trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, find a safe location as quick as you can, or call police. And stop walking with your eyes glued to your phone!

### SAFETY AT HOME

We all love to have our windows and doors open with the warmer weather. But that could also be an invitation for criminals. When you leave your home during the day, or when you go to sleep at night, make sure all first floor windows are closed and locked.

### SCAM WARNING

The warmer weather also means more people are outside working on their homes. That could also be an invitation for scammers and criminals. Many times, criminals will work in pairs to try and distract you. If someone comes up to you soliciting their business, saying they have left over materials from another job, do not allow them in your home. You might want to think twice if someone claims to have a great deal. If it seems too good to be true—it probably is.

### SELF-DEFENSE CLASSES

Just last month, University of Akron Lieutenant Chad Cunningham led our latest FREE women's self-defense class at the Akron Turner Club in Tallmadge. Close to 75 people attended and learned vital,

potentially life-saving information. These simple, but vital moves could prevent you from becoming a victim. These girls learned firsthand some simple moves—and how much fun the classes are!



**Our next FREE Women's Self-Defense class is scheduled for Thursday May 26 from 6pm-8pm at the Lakeside Christian Church, 3535 Knollwood Lane in Akron.**

My passion for personal safety goes beyond the pictures. I was a victim of crime myself. Years ago, as a prosecutor for the city of Akron, I was attacked by a serial rapist. I was able to fight him off, using many of the same techniques we teach at our self-defense classes.

Keep these tips in mind when heading out and about this summer. And remember to stay safe!

*Sherri B. Walsh*



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# In The Community

April was a busy time for the Prosecutor's Office. Much of our staff was involved in events impacting our community.

**Prosecutor Walsh** was honored as a 2016 Model of Justice by the Ohio Crime Victim Justice Center. The award was for Prosecutor Walsh's continued commitment to help victims of crime.



Thank you to **Deputy Chief Counsel Margaret Scott** for her inspiring introduction during the awards ceremony. You can learn more about the Ohio Crime Victim Justice Center, and how the organization helps crime victims, by visiting <http://www.ocvjc.net>.



Also in April, Prosecutor Walsh was featured on two television programs.

The first is the nationally syndicated **Crime Watch Daily**, which airs in the Cleveland area on FOX8 beginning at 2pm. The show interviewed Prosecutor Walsh about Richard Beasley and Brogan Rafferty, who were both convicted of killing three people and shooting another in what was known as the Craig's List case. It was very interesting to be involved in such a big production.

You can watch the full episode by logging on to [www.crimewatchdaily.com](http://www.crimewatchdaily.com).

Prosecutor Walsh was also featured on **WKYC Channel 3**. Anchor Sara Shookman profiled Prosecutor Walsh for her "Sara's Circle" segment.

The two discussed a number of topics, including why Prosecutor Walsh feels so strongly about her job, fighting for victims, as well as her recent battle with breast cancer.

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office is also involved in keeping the community safe. We held two FREE Women's Self-Defense classes recently, and have more planned for the future.



Summit County employees took part in our FREE self-defense class at the Balch Street Community Center.

Members of the Prosecutor's Office, including Deputy **Chief Counsel Margaret Scott**, helped teach key techniques which could save a life.

Then on April 27, at the Akron Turner Club in Tallmadge, close to 75 people gathered to learn more on how to protect themselves.



Thank you to everyone who attended the event. And a very special thank you to members of the Prosecutor's Office and Domestic Relations **Magistrate Ron Cable** for assisting.

Our next FREE Women's Self-Defense class is scheduled for Thursday May 26 from 6pm-8pm at the Lakeside Christian Church located at 3535 Knollwood Lane in Akron.

# Avery's Corner

# Keeping The Community Safe



I just love helping people. Whether it is in the office, courtroom, or out in the community, my tail wags every time I can put a smile on someone's face.

That's what happened when I was on my weekly visit to Akron's Haven of Rest Ministries. There were lots of smiles when I walked in with my human. I got to meet lots of people, including a tiny human. She let me lick her arm and hand. She was very cute!



And I also had a great time visiting a Neighborhood Watch Group in Barberton. These folks are doing so much to keep the community safe. Thank you to everyone who came to the meeting.

**Follow Avery II on Facebook at:**

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## GUILTY VERDICTS

### April 2016

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office had a 100% conviction rate for April. Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors for obtaining convictions at trial. GREAT JOB PROSECUTORS!!!!

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Teri Burnside</b>   | <b>Angela Poth-Wypasek</b> |
| <b>Joe Dangelo</b>     | <b>Justin Richard (2)</b>  |
| <b>Heaven Guest</b>    | <b>Dustin Roth</b>         |
| <b>Jon Hart</b>        | <b>Dan Sallerson</b>       |
| <b>Tom Kroll</b>       | <b>Jaime Syx</b>           |
| <b>Kevin Mayer (2)</b> |                            |

## Tough Prosecutions

These defendants will be locked up for a lengthy period of time thanks to our dedicated Assistant Prosecutors:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Yolanda DeBruce, 48</b>   | <b>Justin Garrett, 29</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felonious Assault on a Police Officer</li> <li>• Failure to Comply</li> <li>• <b>10 YEARS IN PRISON</b></li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggravated Arson</li> <li>• Burglary</li> <li>• Injuring Animals</li> <li>• <b>10 YEARS IN PRISON</b></li> </ul> |
| <b>Thomas Moore, 34</b>  | <b>Jurmaine Brinkley, 18</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggravated Robbery</li> <li>• Robbed Wheelchair-Bound Man</li> <li>• <b>10 YEARS IN PRISON</b></li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggravated Robbery with Gun Specification</li> <li>• <b>13 YEARS IN PRISON</b></li> </ul>                        |
| <b>Jeffery Brown, 23</b>   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggravated Robbery</li> <li>• Robbed Grandmother in front of Grandson</li> <li>• <b>10 YEARS IN PRISON</b></li> </ul> |   |



**Help Us Go Green!**

Contact Melanie Hart at [hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net) to receive this newsletter by e-mail



## National Missing Children’s Day

## Walk A Mile Fundraiser

This month commemorates the third anniversary of what many call a miracle. The discovery of three women in a Cleveland home—after a decade of captivity. The incredible escape of Amanda Berry, Gina DeJesus and Michelle Knight has given hope to many families who have had loved ones disappear.



May 21st is National Missing Children’s Day. This is the 10th year for an organization known as GASP—Guardians Advocating Child Safety and Protection. GASP was created in 2006 in response to an increase in the number of child abductions, offenses, and abuses.

Please call GASP at 330.247.1402 for more information.



**EDUCATION + PREVENTION = CHILD PROTECTION**

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office continues to fight for the rights of crime victims. And last month we took that fight to the streets.

“Prosecutors in Pumps” took part in the 11th annual Walk A Mile In Her Shoes fundraiser for



the Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties at Lock 3. The office raised \$600 for the cause.

Since 2005, the Rape Crisis Center has used this event to increase awareness of sexual assault and raise money for programs to help victims and inform the community of ways to prevent sexual assault.

For more information about the Rape Crisis Center of Medina & Summit Counties please call 877.906.7273.

## Paint Therapy Helping Trafficking Victims

Using art as therapy has been a growing trend over the past few years. From local groups to national organizations, people using art as a tool to ease stress or provide an outlet for people dealing with difficult situations.

The American Art Therapy Association (AATA) represents more than 5,000 professional art therapists around the country. Those professionals use art to help people explore their feelings, develop social skills, manage behavior, and reduce anxiety.



So, when we recently heard about several survivors of human trafficking needing some assistance, we took action.

Assistant Prosecutors Heaven Guest and Angela Walls Alexander facilitated an art therapy program last month at the Summit County Juvenile Court for

a small group of girls who are in the Court’s Restore Program.

The group gathered to paint their own interpretation of a blue flower. Even our facility dog Avery took part!

The art therapy session is just another way the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office focuses on the needs of crime victims.



# May Top Cop

## Copley Detective Mike Yovanno

Nominated by Assistant Prosecutor Nik Buckmeier  
& Victim Advocate Alyse Ziga

You work your whole life to retire in comfort. Many dream of staying in the home where they lived for decades and raised a family.

That was the dream of a Copley couple. Then the husband and wife, both in their late 70's, decided to have some repairs done to their home, so they hired independent contractor Allan Vertucci. After two years, the couple gave Vertucci \$80,000 dollars. All they got in return was a destroyed home.

Vertucci left behind unfinished rooms, destroyed furniture, and the home's septic system violated city code. City investigators found a puddle containing human waste in the home's front yard.

Vertucci was recently found guilty of theft from the elderly and sentenced to three years in prison. That would not have happened without the investigative

work of Copley Police Detective Mike Yovanno. That is why Detective Yovanno is nominated as this month's TOP COP.



The investigation involved gathering piles of evidence. Officers looked over hundreds of photographs of the couple's home, obtained dozens of bank records, spoke with the insurance company, a building inspector, a window company representative, and finally speaking with the victim's family and the defendant.

Through Detective Yovanno's experience, training, and intuition, the investigation led to our office ultimately receiving a conviction.

### Good Work Detective Yovanno & Congratulations!

### Mental Health Month

May is National Health Month. The awareness campaign was started 67 years ago by Mental Health America (MHA), to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of good mental health for everyone.



For more information about mental health, contact the Summit County Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Board (ADM) at 330.434.9144 or [www.admboard.org](http://www.admboard.org).

### Memorial Day

In honor of Memorial Day, the Summit County Court of Common Pleas and the Summit County Prosecutor's Office will be closed on Monday, May 30.

Please have a safe holiday weekend, and remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for protecting our country and being a voice of freedom everywhere. Thank you to members of the military and their families for your service.



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