



# News from the Criminal Division

April 2012



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## Message from Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh



*On April 27, my office will participate in the annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes to benefit the Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties. This is a fun event that raises awareness about a very serious issue: sexual violence against women.*

*Why the strong focus on women? Certainly men can be victims of sexual violence. However, the vast majority (more than 90 percent) of rape and sexual assault victims are women.*

*The pre-walk festivities start at 5:00 p.m. at Lock 3 in downtown Akron. Come on down to show your support or even walk!*

April is an important month for me because it highlights two causes that I champion: Sexual Assault Awareness and Autism Awareness.

While we have been making progress through sexual assault education and prevention, even one assault is still too many. Yet there were 188,380 sexual assaults or rapes of people aged 12 or older in 2010.

My office works with community groups like the Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties and



Summa's DOVE unit to educate law enforcement and the community about sexual assault -- from the causes and signs of assault to interacting with victims and preventive education.

According to a recent study, one in 88 children born in the U.S. will be diagnosed with autism. My son is one of those children.

While researchers work to identify the cause, advocacy groups like the Greater Akron Autism Society work to provide support to affected families and educate the community.

I'm doing my small part through my office's Take Me

Home program, which helps law enforcement interact during an emergency with people who have difficulty communicating because of a disability such as autism or



Alzheimer's.

This month I ask you to think about the many people in our community who have been affected by sexual assault or autism. Check out the National Sexual Violence Resource Center ([www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)) and the Greater Akron Autism Society ([www.AutismSocietyGreaterAkron.org](http://www.AutismSocietyGreaterAkron.org)) to learn more.

Stay safe,

*Sherri B. Walsh*



# National Crime Victims' Rights Week

April 22-28 marks National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Started in 1981, it recognizes the advancements made by the victims' rights movement and the work that still needs to be done to ensure that all crime victims have the resources they need to achieve justice and move on with their lives.



Victim services is a priority in my office, because I believe it is my office's duty to provide victims with a voice. We have a strong and active Victim Services Division, with eight full-time and one part-time victim advocate. The advocates provide support to victims and ensure that they are aware of and understand every step of their case. The advocates attend court with victims, provide referrals to partner agencies, help them apply to the Ohio Victims of Crime Compensation Program, notify them of upcoming parole hearings and provide transportation to court.

I am extremely proud of the work my entire office does on behalf of victims. When I was first elected County Prosecutor in 2001, I created a true Victim Services Division with the recognition that *all* victims of crime deserve our attention, not only those who are the victims of violent crimes. The victim advocates certainly understand that every victim deserves to be treated with respect and understanding and allowed to process what happened in their own way. And after observing the thought and sensitivity toward victims demonstrated by the assistant prosecutors in my office, I am confident that they also understand the meaning of victims' rights.

We also closely partner with Victim Assistance Program, a local organization that has provided support for victims of crime for the past four decades. The organization kicked off National Crime Victims' Rights Week with a candlelight vigil at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on West Market Street in Akron. It will also hold a luncheon with keynote speaker Steve Derene, executive director of the National Association of Victims of Crime Act Assistance Administrators, on April 24 at the Greek Community Center on South Union Street in Akron. For more information, visit [www.VictimAssistanceProgram.org](http://www.VictimAssistanceProgram.org).

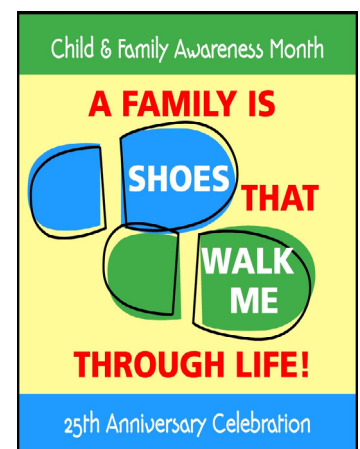
## Agency Spotlight

Summit County Children Services aims to strengthen families. While it is true that SCCS is sometimes forced to intervene when children are found to be living in unsuitable situations, the agency works hard to reunite families whenever possible. That involves working with the family, the Juvenile Court and the Juvenile Division of my office to provide parents with the structure and education they need to become stable, responsible role models for their children.

But SCCS is much more than that. The agency provides training and support for foster and adoptive parents, helps foster children transition out of agency care into independent living, places foster children into homes and engages in extensive community education and outreach.

This month marks SCCS' 25th annual Child & Family Awareness Month. My office and numerous other community agencies and organizations are taking part in the month-long festivities. You can learn more about the planned events by visiting the agency's website at: [www.summitkids.org](http://www.summitkids.org).

On behalf of the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, I thank you for all you do to help and protect the children in our community!



## April Top Cop

**Top Cop:** Hudson Police Sgt. **Christopher Roch** and Stow Police Officers **John Ginther** and **Michael Murphy**

**Nominated By:** Assistant Prosecutor Greg Peacock

On August 17, 2011, 34-year-old Gerome Burns robbed a man at gunpoint outside a home in Hudson. After taking the victim's wallet, Rolex watch and gold wedding band, Burns ordered the victim to walk behind the house. The victim, afraid he was about to be killed, refused and instead walked toward the street. The victim watched Burns drive away and then drove himself to the Hudson Police Department, where he gave a detailed account of the robbery and suspect.

Hudson police officers, led by Sgt. Roch, spotted Burns driving and chased him on Routes 8 and 77 and through residential parts of Hudson, Stow, Silver Lake and Akron. Officers Ginther and Murphy joined in the chase. Akron police were finally able to stop Burns in the Summit Lake area. Burns was found with the victim's wallet, watch and wedding band and was ultimately sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Car chases are extremely dangerous to the public and especially the officers involved. A pursuit like this requires a great deal of skill to navigate both highways and residential streets without harming a single bystander. And that is exactly what these officers did.

That's why Officers John Ginther and Michael Murphy from the Stow Police Department and Sgt. Christopher Roch from the Hudson Police Department are April's Top Cops.

**Way to go, Officers Ginther and Murphy and Sgt. Roch!**



## Harvest for Hunger

Since March 1, my office has been participating with other Summit County employees in the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank's annual Harvest for Hunger. In addition to collecting food and monetary donations and creating gift baskets for a raffle, CSEA came up with a fun way to support the cause. In a riff on the old game show "Shop 'Til You Drop," CSEA employees divided themselves into two teams. Shoppers from each team raced through the office seeking nonperishable food. The first team to fill their green barrel won a pizza party.

But the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank was the true winner -- it received two large barrels and one small barrel filled with food!

Employees in the criminal, tax and civil divisions will hold their own Shop 'Til You Drop on April 30.

Feeling inspired? Visit the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank's website at [www.akroncantonfoodbank.org](http://www.akroncantonfoodbank.org) to learn how you can support this worthy organization.





# Meet Assistant Prosecutor Elliot Kolkovich

**Name:** Elliot Kolkovich



**Hire Date:** I started working in the Juvenile Division in June 2011 and transferred to the Criminal Division in February 2012.

**Title:** Assistant Prosecutor

**Hometown:** Staunton, Illinois

**Education:** I graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2002 with a B.S. in Journalism and in 2003 with an M.S. in Journalism. I earned my J.D. from Saint Louis University School of Law in 2010.

**Background:** After graduating from college, I was a freelance writer making no money. I moved to Washington, DC in 2005 to intern on Capitol Hill and got the public service bug, which led me to go to law school.

**Fun Facts About Me:** I finished second in the Macoupin County Spelling Bee when I was in the fifth grade. I'm the first person in my family to graduate from college. The town I grew up in has neither a stoplight nor a McDonald's.

**Job Duties:** As a courtroom prosecutor, I try felony criminal cases in Judge Teodosio's courtroom.

**Most Memorable Case:** When Children Services files a complaint, the Juvenile Court holds a shelter care hearing on the next business day to determine if there is a level of risk to a child that requires removal of the child and/or Children Services' involvement. A contested shelter care hearing usually lasts an hour or two and has one witness: the social worker who filed the complaint. A Dependency/Neglect prosecutor gets two to three shelter care hearings a week and has about 15 minutes before the hearing to sit down with the social worker before she testifies. Within 90 days of the complaint, the Court holds an adjudication, in which the State must prove that the child was either abused, neglected or dependent (a situation in which the primary caregiver, through no fault of his own, is unable to meet the needs of the child) at the time Children Services filed the complaint. A contested adjudication generally takes, at most, a few hours.

About three weeks into my job in the Juvenile Division, I had a shelter care hearing that lasted about nine hours and involved multiple witnesses. The following adjudication took two full days after a six-hour pre-trial hearing.

It was by far my most time-consuming, intense and combative case in the Juvenile Division, and it was an excellent initiation into this career.

## Guilty at Trial

Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors for obtaining guilty verdicts at trial in March:

Jay Cole

Joe Dangelo

Joe Fantozzi

Tom Kroll (3)

Brian LoPrinzi

Kevin Mayer

Dustin Roth

Dan Sallerson (2)

Colleen Sims

### Help us go green!

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