



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

## A Message From Prosecutor Walsh

### “An Angel in Blue”

In this month's issue, I recognize Akron Police Officer Justin Winebrenner as our “Top Cop.” He is a true example of an officer who sacrificed his life for the safety and sake of others. He was the son of retired Barberton Officer Rob Winebrenner. Like his father, Justin was trained to protect us and defend us. His sacrifice has left a father without a son, a sister without a brother and a daughter without a father. The dedication of Officer Winebrenner and his family is shared by each officer in our service. This Christmas we will all think of the unwilling sacrifice of his 4-year-old daughter and realize that his story is an unfortunate reality in the life of law enforcement today.

Every life is precious. It would be hard for me to think of a better phrase to apply to what is going on in our country. We are a country that was created, and continues to pride itself, on the mantras of liberty and freedom. Unfortunately, not everyone respects our rights to that liberty and freedom. As a nation, we entrust that “the rule of law” we spoke about last month, will be enforced by the brave men and women who make up our law enforcement. This is why we can work hard, buy nice things, and sleep soundly. Over the holidays, we will drive our families from one house to the next expecting that officers who have given

up their family time will keep our streets and highways clear of drunk drivers. We know that these men and women will protect and defend us.

Being the granddaughter of a police officer, I was taught at an early age that the importance of Law Enforcement Officers in our society can never be underestimated. Yet, many people today focus on the negative rather than the positive and forget that these men and women put their lives on the line for us every hour of every day. It is easy for law-abiding citizens to get annoyed about being stuck in line at a traffic checkpoint. Most people stopped for traffic violations even try to come up with an excuse to “get out” of the ticket. But these are usually citizens who respect the job of our officers. They do not consider pulling a gun on that officer or trying to take the officer's gun. It is those that do not have that respect who concern not only the officers, but their family members. Officers and their families all know that tomorrow is promised to no one, and yet they continue to take risks with their tomorrows to protect us today.

There are situations where individuals break the law and challenge the officer trying to enforce that law. Courts have ruled that police officers

are legally empowered to use force to uphold the law and deadly force when an officer believes they are at risk of “imminent physical harm.” We must understand that an officer's perception of danger in the line of duty is in a context that we, the untrained and untested public, may not realistically be able to understand. Further, the “talking-head” reporters on our televisions have been known to only give us bits and pieces of the truth. As in our trials, it takes time for a full and complete story to be presented, and presented in its proper context.

All cases deserve a full review and public accounting. In these horrific situations, this full review and public accounting can only occur after a complete investigation. Shedding light on these dangerous situations, examining the policies and procedures related to such events - and when legally permissible - releasing findings publicly may be the best way to ensure safety not only for our police officers, but for suspects and our citizens. This Holiday Season may God keep watch over all those who protect us, and bless our families with the hope each New Year brings.

*Sherri B. Walsh*



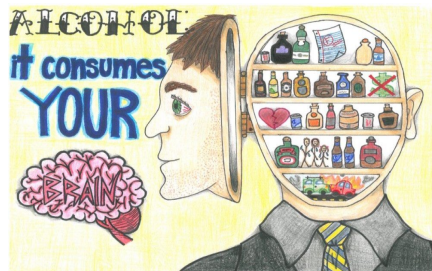
[facebook.com/SummitCountyProsecutorOffice](https://facebook.com/SummitCountyProsecutorOffice)  
[facebook.com/SummitCountyProsecutorAveryII](https://facebook.com/SummitCountyProsecutorAveryII)

[co.summit.oh.us/prosecutor](http://co.summit.oh.us/prosecutor)



Follow us on Twitter  
[@ProsecutorWalsh](https://twitter.com/ProsecutorWalsh)

## 2015 Safety Calendar



Each year Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh invites students in grades six through eight to submit a poster for her annual Safety Kids Calendar contest. The Safety Kids Calendar highlights the 12 rules for staying safe.

The first place posters are featured in the calendar, on billboards throughout Summit County and on a public service announcement airing on the WBNX-TV: The CW. This year more than 1,200 students submitted posters.

Like every year, judges had the difficult task of selecting a first, second and third place winner, as well as an honorable mention for each category.

Winners were announced at an awards ceremony on October 29 at the Summit County Public Library.

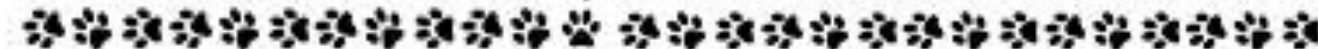
Prosecutor Walsh, along with emcee Tim Daugherty from WONE-

FM, presented congratulatory certificates and Amazon gift cards to winners in each category. Laney Lucas, an eighth-grader at Tallmadge Middle School, won this year's grand prize.

Her poster advises kids to stay away from alcohol. Her winning entry will appear on the cover of the 2015 Safety Kids calendar.

Congratulations to Laney and this year's Safety Kids contest winners!

Would you like a 2015 Safety Kids Calendar? Contact Crystal Baker at [baker@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:baker@prosecutor.summitoh.net) or (330) 643-8141.



## Avery II's Corner

**Follow Avery II on Facebook at:**

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/SummitCountyProsecutorAveryII>



I have one of the best jobs in the world! I provide unconditional love, and alleviate fear and anxiety in stressful situations. That's why 2014 was such a remarkable year for me. I am very proud of all the new friends I met and helped, especially the children; who hold a special place in my heart.

Let me share with you some of the exciting work I did. I helped more than 55 victims, most of them children, feel safe and comfortable. To me, helping children is so rewarding. We sometimes hung out in my room, or around the office. I even accompanied them to court to help them relax when they testified at a trial.

I went to Valor Court 19 times and met a lot of veterans who served our country. Many of our veterans return to

civilian life with serious trauma, both physical and mental, which may lead to their involvement with the criminal justice system. Through this specialized court, veterans are given access to programs and treatment. They also interact with mentors utilizing a team approach to enhance their chances of success.

I attended "The Turning Point Program" (previously named Summit County Felony Drug Court) 28 times. I had the pleasure of congratulating graduates of the program who worked hard to abstain from the use of alcohol and drugs. One of my favorite tasks at the graduation was presenting the graduates with a special gift; a coffee mug that says, "Success is a journey not a destination. We wish you continued success on your journey."

These graduates worked hard to overcome their addiction and are prepared to serve as positive influences in our community. As a result, the graduate's guilty plea is vacated and their case dismissed. Those offenders who failed to successfully complete the program were sentenced on their felony conviction.



**Help Us Go Green!**

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



# December Top Cop

## Officer Justin Winebrenner

**Nominated by: Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh and Staff**



Officer Winebrenner left us all too soon. The senseless loss of his life has left us all with a void and wondering why?

In the last hours of his life he did what heroes do. He unselfishly placed himself last and placed the safety of others first.

University of Akron and worked at the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center where he enjoyed helping youth in crisis.

He joined the Akron Police Department in 2007. His accomplishments on the force included commendations for breaking a burglary ring and bravely pulling a man from a burning car before it exploded.

Officer Winebrenner and his family will forever be in our thoughts and prayers, especially his precious daughter, Barberton's little "Cherry Blossom Princess," Charlee.

Thank you Officer Winebrenner for your incredible courage and putting your life on the line in the face of danger to keep us all safe. You paid the ultimate sacrifice.

On November 16, 2014, Officer Winebrenner was shot and killed while at a pub with friends. We will never forget his courage and how seriously he took his oath in and out of uniform.

Officer Winebrenner graduated from Barberton High School in 2001. He followed in his father's footsteps by pursuing a career in law enforcement. He studied at the

**Rest In Peace  
Officer Winebrenner  
APD Officer - 2007 to 2014**



### Guilty at Trial December 2014



- Kassim Ahmed
- Jay Cole
- Felicia Easter
- Tom Kroll
- Kevin Mayer
- Seema Misra
- Jaime Syx

**Great Job Prosecutors!!!!**



### A Few Holiday Safety Tips

- Lock all of your windows and doors whether you are leaving the house or staying home. Use alarms when possible.
- Always lock your vehicle and store all items out of site. Breaking into an empty car isn't worth a thief's time.
- Dispose of your garbage wisely. Do not leave boxes from recent purchases or gifts visible to others outside. Try to dispose of such things by taking them to a recycling destination or by putting them in the garbage collection right before pickup.



## Meet Our Employee Faye Nicholson



**Hire Date:** November 17, 2014

**Title:** Director of Communications

**Hometown:** Akron, Ohio

**Fun Fact About Me:** I've turned into my mother. In the spring and summer I love planting flowers. I hated this as a kid.

**Education:** I have a bachelor's degree in Business and Organizational Communications/Public Relations and a Master's degree in Communications.

**Background:** I've worked in public service most of my career. My last position was with Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services. I served

there for 13 years. I also worked for the City of Cleveland and Richland County Mental Health Recovery Board.

**Job Duties:** To manage all communications from the Summit County Prosecutor's Office by ensuring the public is aware of all programs, initiatives and news. This includes writing news releases, newsletters and articles for various publications; community outreach and building and maintaining media relations.

**Comments :** It's the most fascinating place I've ever worked.

### Agency Spotlight: The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army of Summit County works every day to elevate men, women, and children from despair and to provide hope. This organization provides assistance through many helpful services and programs. Services include food, clothing, shelter, utility assistance, Christmas assistance and counseling. Programs include recovery and support, spiritual support, and life skills. The goal of the life skills program is to provide individuals with an opportunity to maximize their

physical, emotional and spiritual being in hopes of effecting permanent, positive change.

On December 6, 2014, volunteers from the Summit County Prosecutor's Office participated in the Salvation Army's most famous Christmas campaign, the "Red Kettle." Donations received from this campaign serve needy families, seniors and the homeless. Donations and financial assistance provide Christmas dinners, clothing, and toys for families in

need, including families of prisoners. Volunteer staff from Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh's office will be at Acme #10, on State Road in Cuyahoga Falls, on December 13. Stop by and see us! We will ring the bell again.

*To learn more about the Salvation Army and how you can get involved call 330-762-8481 or visit their website at [www.salvationarmyakron.org/](http://www.salvationarmyakron.org/)*



Staff featured from left to right: Mary Spitali, Leslie Bilby, Carolyn Wilson and Mary Spitali's daughters, Ellie and Brooke Frazier.

Office of Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh  
53 University Avenue  
Akron, Ohio 44308