



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

# October Celebrates Domestic Violence Awareness

## A Message From Prosecutor Walsh

Regardless of background or income level, one in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). Between 2003 and 2012, domestic violence accounted for 21% of violent victimizations according to NCADV.

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), legislation that President Clinton signed into law on September 13, 1994. Since its inception, VAWA has helped raise awareness to domestic violence crimes that Americans perceived as don't ask, don't tell or no one else's business because it occurred primarily in the privacy of the victim's residence.

Because of VAWA, police officers no longer drive offenders around the block or issue warnings about what they will do if they have to return to the residence.

With the advancement in law enforcement training and evidence-based prosecution, the State is able to pursue a domestic violence case without the cooperation of the victim. This is especially important in do-

mestic violence cases as these victims get caught up in the cycle of abuse and retract their statements.

Nationally, the Domestic Violence rate decreased from 13.5 per 1,000 persons in 2003 to five per 1,000 persons in 2012. In 2013, Summit County's domestic violence rate was

approximately 3.8 per 1,000 persons.

In 2003, my office obtained grant funding to

start a Domestic Violence Unit. My office and my team of prosecutors aggressively prosecute these cases and remain dedicated to VAWA's goal – the complete end of domestic violence. This dedication resulted in the establishment of a Felony Domestic Violence Court in October of 2011. This is the first court of its kind in Ohio and one of only a few in the United States.

If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, please call the Battered Women's Shelter of Summit & Medina Counties at (888) 395-4357 for immediate assistance.

Stay Safe,

*Sherrri B. Walsh*



### Statistics for the Summit County Domestic Violence Court

2009	
DV Cases	377
Conviction Rate	96%
2010	
DV Cases	478
Conviction Rate	95%
2011	
DV Cases	404
Conviction Rate	97%
2012	
DV Cases	383
Conviction Rate	99%
2013	
DV Cases	333
Conviction Rate	98%
2014	
DV Cases	222
Conviction Rate	98%



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## Dr. Jackson Katz



Where does sexual violence stem from and how can we create a culture of non-violence? Dr. Jackson Katz, popular author and educator, and one of America's leading anti-sexist male activists, believes strong male leaders can guide the way to ending domestic violence.

Dr. Katz recently delivered his "The Macho Paradox" presentation to a crowd at The University of Akron, on October 7, 2014. Katz's visit was sponsored by the Rape Crisis Center in partnership with UA student organizations.

Dr. Katz touched on a number of issues related to domestic violence and sexual abuse. He feels strongly that we need to stop blaming the victim and start blaming the abuser. He considers violence against women a men's issue and one that they can help solve through strong leadership by educating our young and taking a proactive role in society as ACTIVE bystanders.

My office aggressively prosecutes these cases but I agree with Dr. Katz that more male leaders speaking out and educating our children on what is acceptable behavior towards one another is needed to end this vicious cycle.

I welcome the opportunity to work with local leaders and agencies to improve the quality of life for those who struggle with abuse.

## Avoid the Green Dot Card Scam

Reports of telephone scams in our area seem to be increasing. One of the common scams involves Green Dot cards (cash-loaded cards).

These Green Dot cards make the transfer of money quick, easy, and virtually untraceable. Customers can purchase and load the cards right at the store register with amounts that typically go up to \$1,000.

Green Dot scams include hoaxes such as family members claiming to be in trouble or jail, police officers calling and demanding payment for release of a loved one who has been jailed, debt collectors threatening court proceedings if immediate payment is not made via the prepaid cards, and callers claiming the victim has won a cash prize which they can collect after paying the taxes or fees.

The scam artist then asks the victim to scratch off the back of the card and provide them with the card number. When the victim complies, he or she gives the scam artist instant access to the cash loaded onto the card.

Our office urges everyone to be wary of any telephone calls by anyone requesting payment through the use of Green Dot or any other prepaid debit cards. Remember, utility companies and government agencies will not contact anyone demanding immediate payment by Green Dot cards.

## Avery II's Corner



I'm the Summit County Prosecutor's facility dog. I help crime victims & witnesses overcome the fear & stress of participating in a criminal case. I have had a busy and rewarding month here at work. I was lucky enough to help two special kids get through their fears about testifying. I was also able to spread some happiness to some great kids at the Summit County Battered Women's Shelter and the Haven of Rest. I can't wait to see what's in store for me next month!

**Follow Avery II on Facebook at :**

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

**Help Us Go Green!**

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



## October Top Cop

### Detective Stephen Coburn

**Nominated by: Assistant Prosecutors Elliot Kolkovich & Greg Peacock**

On February 1, 2014, Michael Person raped and beat his girlfriend. He then directed Deandra Thomas, an associate, to rape her as well which he did, twice. Person then kept her at his house for the next two days, through intimidation.

On the afternoon of February 3, 2014, the victim escaped Person's house while he was away. She went to the hospital and reported these events and the hospital contacted the local police.

Det. Stephen Coburn of the Barberton Police Department responded to the hospital. He took a statement from the victim which allowed him to identify Michael Person and get a physical description of the other assailant.

Det. Coburn subpoenaed hospital records, followed up on a series of text messages between the defendant and victim and subpoenaed the phone records. Additionally, he gathered physical evidence and sent it to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation for analysis. Det. Coburn laid all the groundwork for an excellent case before speaking with Person, en-

suring that he would have a good case whether Person cooperated or not.

Because of Det. Coburn's hard work, Deandra Thomas was convicted of two counts of Rape and one count of Felonious Assault at trial on August 26, 2014. On September 29, 2014, he was sentenced to 13 years in prison.

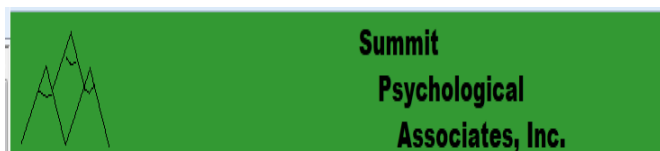
Michael Person was convicted of one count of Rape, two counts of Complicity to Commit Rape, one count of Felonious Assault, and one account of Kidnapping at trial on October 3, 2014. He was sentenced to 41 years to life in prison.

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, it is important to note that a victim's safety is not secured just because a police report is filed or because someone has called 911. Sometimes, it takes a little extra effort on all of our parts to ensure the safety of victims who come forward, much like Det. Coburn did in this case.



**Way to go Top Cop!**

## Agency Spotlight: Summit Psychological Associates, Inc.



Summit Psychological Associates, Inc. works in collaboration with the Summit County Domestic Violence Court. It is a private agency founded in 1984, with a mission to provide the highest quality, cost-effective behavioral healthcare to individuals, couples, families and organizations.

Their staff consists of professionals who are dedicated to helping people live healthier, happier and more productive lives.

They provide psychological evaluations for issues including intimate partner abuse, guardianship, child custody, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, substance abuse, and pain management.

Their psychiatrists are experienced in assessing and treating a broad range of psychiatric disorders.

They provide services to organizations including, pre-employment screening, promotional evaluations, career counseling, work place seminars, management consultation, and fitness for duty evaluations.

Emergency telephone consultations are also available by contacting them at anytime and indicating that you urgently need to speak to a therapist.

## Meet Our Employee Leslie Knoblauch



**Hire Date:** September 1, 2007

**Title:** Outreach Coordinator-Take Me Home Program

**Hometown:** Hudson, Ohio

**Fun Fact About Me:** I have a great sense of humor!

**Education:** I hold a bachelor's degree in Business from Ohio Dominican University and an Activities Certificate in Gerontology.

**Background:** I worked at Ross/Abbott Labs before starting a family. I have been a party planner and gymnastics teacher for kids with special needs. My husband and I are in our seventh year running a soccer program, Soccer4all, for kids with special needs. I also spent time at both Suicide Prevention Services and CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence. I have a wonderful family with my husband Jeff: three children, a son and two daughters. My oldest daughter has autism.

**Tell us about your program:** The Take Me Home Program is sponsored by Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh and Sheriff Steve Barry. The program consists of a database of individuals who may have trouble communicating their name and where they live-such as people with autism, Down Syndrome, non-verbal individuals with cognitive disabilities or senior citizens with dementia or Alzheimer's. The Take Me Home database contains a photo, identifying characteristics and contact information. It is a valuable tool for law enforcement agencies as well as families and caregivers. In the event a person is lost or separated from their loved ones, a search of the database on the individual's name, phone number or physical characteristics will allow law enforcement personnel to match their Take Me Home record to their contact information. Only law enforcement personnel can access the Take Me Home database. We currently have more than 1,500 individuals registered in Summit County.

**Comments to the Agency:** Help spread the word about such an important program. If you know anyone that would benefit from being in the Take Me Home program (personal or case related) please give them a brochure!



### Guilty at Trial

Congratulations to these Assistant Prosecutors for obtaining guilty verdicts at trial last month:

Mike Cody

Pete Daly

Joe Dangelo

Brian LoPrinzi

Great job, Prosecutors!

### Tough Prosecution

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

**Jeffrey Haught, 56**

- Pandering Sexually Oriented Material to a Minor-seven counts
- Sentenced to **28 years in prison**

**Michael Person, 34**

- Rape
- Complicity to Commit Rape-two counts
- Felonious Assault
- Kidnapping
- Sentenced to **41 years to Life in Prison**

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