



FROM THE OFFICE OF
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR
SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

A MESSAGE FROM PROSECUTOR WALSH COVID-19 IMPACT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives forever. Many of us have lost loved ones due to the disease. The pandemic has led to higher levels of anxiety. In many editions of this newsletter, as well as in safety speeches I give throughout Summit County, I urge people to reach out to others for help.

The pandemic has also lead to concern over an increase in domestic violence cases. **October is Domestic Violence Awareness month.** I am here to tell you my office is doing everything it can to stop the cycle of violence.

Recent newspaper articles have pointed to an increase in the number of domestic violence cases as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The statistics are eye-opening. One in four women and one in seven men have been victims of severe physical violence; beatings, burnings, and strangulations by an intimate partner in their lifetime. That concern becomes even greater if a weapon is involved. The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500 percent.



My office prosecutes around 4,000 felony criminal cases a year. Of those between 350 and 400 are a result of intimate partner violence. Of all the murder-suicides in the U.S., 72-percent involve an intimate partner. And over 90-percent of the victims of these murder suicides are women.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month began in October 1987. Understanding some of the many reasons victims stay in an abusive relationship helps raise awareness and minimizes the amount of victim blaming which can happen.

- Many victims fear the abuser's actions will become more violent and may become lethal if the victim attempts to leave.
- A number of victims have unsupportive friends and family.
- Victims understand the difficulties of single parenting with reduced financial circumstances.
- Victims feel the relationship is a mix of good times, love and hope along with the manipulation, intimidation and fear.

- Victims could also lack knowledge of or access to safety and support.
- Victims fear losing custody of their children if they leave their abuser. They also fear the abuser will hurt, or even kill, their children

You can help break the cycle of violence. Listen without judging and let them know the abuse is not their fault. You may be the first person to tell them that.

Encourage them to develop a safety plan and refer them to resources in the community like Hope and Healing Survivor Resource Center (Battered Women's Shelter).

Be a part of the shift in the question to "why do abusers do what they do?" instead of "why doesn't the victim leave?". This places the responsibility on the abuser.

Summit County's Hope and Healing Survivor Resource Center is great resource to learn more. <https://hopeandhealingresources.org/battered-womens-shelter/>. Or call 330.374.0740. As always, stay safe.

Sherri B. Walsh



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IN THE COMMUNITY

As more and more people are getting vaccinated for COVID-19, we are able to do more in-person safety speeches.

Prosecutor Walsh recently spoke with seniors at the Nordonia Hills Seniors Club during one of the group's meetings.



Those in attendance had lots of great questions about staying safe and the latest scams.

Prosecutor Walsh reminded folks the best way to stay safe is to pay attention to what's going on around you. Keep an eye on vehicles and acknowledge people as they walk past. If someone is thinking of robbing you, they might continue going for fear that you could recognize them.

We were so happy about the return of the annual Senior Safari at the Akron Zoo. We had a great time meeting new people and saying hi to old friends.

The weather was perfect as Leslie Knoblauch, who oversees our Take Me Home program, provided safety information and details about Take Me Home. Take Me Home is a secure database for people who have a difficult time communicating and could potentially wander, such as those with Alzheimer's, dementia, and Autism.



Congratulations to everyone who competed in last month's Akron marathon, including Assistant Prosecutor Ariana Zimcosky, seen here with former Assistant Prosecutor Crissy Sibley.

Ariana finished the race in about two-and-a-half hours. Way to go!



CRIME & PUNISHMENT

GUILTY VERDICTS September 2021

Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors for obtaining convictions at trial.

Joe Dangelo

Brian LoPrinzi

Jamila Mitchell



TOUGH PROSECUTIONS

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

Marquis Felder, 20

- Aggravated Murder
- LIFE IN PRISON

Timothy Sargent, 42

- Aggravated Murder
- LIFE IN PRISON





AVERY'S CORNER

AMBASSADORS' CORNER

I'm so happy. I passed my re-certification test. I get tested a few times to make sure I remember what I'm supposed to do. Things like sitting and waiting and helping. The hoomans who tested me said I did great!



That means I can still help people who come to the Summit County Prosecutor's Office. I also got a new vest and collar - and they look great!

Hoomans have some fun celebrations and I'm happy I can take part too!

Coffee is apparently a popular drink for hoomans. So much so that there's even a day set aside to celebrate. And I got to go to one of my favorite places because of it. I got to see my friends at Starbucks.



Here I am at Starbucks for national coffee day. I didn't get coffee—just a pupaccino!

I got to see one of my favorite hoomans last month. Kelsie works at Pet Supplies Plus! and takes good care of me as she cuts my hair and my nails. She makes me look handsome!

And take a look at this. Kelsie put together this sweet picture montage. She wrote that it was my "Spaw Day".



She is so nice. You should go visit her too. Give them a call at 330.644.4036.

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The Summit County Prosecutor's Office "Ambassadors for Equity & Social Justice" was formed to bring people of different backgrounds and cultures together. Each month the Ambassadors will share thoughts in making our community a better place to live.



As part of mental health month, one question the group is discussing is—can we protect our mental health while fighting social injustice?

On a national level we have seen young black students, who have been active peaceful protesters, join in demonstrations calling for an end to police brutality. During a demonstration they joined, police used tear gas on the crowd. Although they were not harmed, witnessing mistreatment can lead to out-of-character hypervigilance that's commonly associated with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Activism and advocacy work against injustice can take a toll on mental health. Fighting oppression includes putting yourself in vulnerable positions which can be upsetting, alarming and traumatic. In standing for what is right you must always preserve your mental health and build a resilience if you are to continue the fight for justice.

HALLOWEEN SAFETY

Halloween is coming and we want you to be safe when you hit the streets.

Remember these simple tips if you or your kids are on the hunt for some tasty sweets—or if you are handing out candy.

- Go with friends only in well-lit areas.
- Teach your children to never go into a home for candy.
- Use reflective tape on your child's costume so drivers can see them.
- Have children carry a glow stick or flashlight.
- Have fun!



Help Us Go Green!

Contact Melanie Hart at hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net to receive this newsletter by e-mail



TOP COP

AKRON POLICE OFFICER BRENT HELLER

NOMINATED BY ASST. PROS. ANGELA WALLS ALEXANDER

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It is an opportunity for us to re-emphasize our efforts in holding offenders accountable and fighting for the rights of victims.



Under Prosecutor Walsh’s direction, the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office fights for victims of domestic violence. Our efforts are echoed by law enforcement throughout Summit County.

Domestic violence cases can be very difficult to prosecute because many times victims do not report. And the reasons why a victim may not report are many; fear of safety for their children, financial concerns, shame, fear that they will not be believed, or they will be blamed.

Another concern is the victim could decide to change their story. Local investigators receive training to better understand the reasons why domestic violence victims may change their story or not report. That is why I nominate Akron Police Officer Brent Heller as this month’s TOP COP.

Officer Heller investigated a disturbing case of domestic violence. The defendant, Corey Jones, was recently found guilty of assaulting his pregnant girlfriend and sentenced to prison.

During the investigation, both the victim and the defendant were angry at Officer Heller. Both screamed at him. But Officer Heller remained calm and thoroughly did his job. Because of that

we were able to secure a conviction and prison sentence.

I have worked with him for many years on Domestic Violence cases and he is an excellent officer.

Thank you Officer Heller for your work and dedication to keeping our community safe.

Great job and congratulations Officer Heller!

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. As a strong advocate for victims, the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office does everything it can to end the cycle of violence. The office has several highly trained prosecutors dedicated to assisting domestic violence victims.



Prevention begins with education. The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office has provided community education to highlight the importance of prosecuting domestic violence related crimes. You can help stop the cycle of violence.

The Battered Women’s Shelter of Summit and Medina Counties is a great resource. The agency’s 24-hour crisis hotline is 888.395.HELP (4357) for Summit County and 877.414.1344 for Medina County.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Our employee spotlight this month focuses on a Child Support Enforcement Agency employee who brings joy to everything she does.

Yvonne Lee-Johnson has worked at CSEA for 19 years. There is not a day that goes by where she doesn’t lift the spirits of her co-workers. Her positive attitude is such a blessing.



Yvonne takes on many challenges, and is always a team player. She goes the extra mile for her co-workers and is truly a genuine person.

Yvonne is also part of the office’s Ambassadors for Equity and Social Justice Committee. Her contributions, experience, leadership, and wisdom is truly appreciated.

Thanks and congratulations Yvonne!!

WHY I'M A PROSECUTOR

ASST. PROSECUTOR TANIA NEMER

Each month one of our Assistant Prosecutors discuss why being a prosecutor is so important to them. "Why I'm A Prosecutor" gives them a chance to tell their own story.

Assistant Prosecutor Tania Nemer, who is also the office's Community Outreach Prosecutor, provides insight into why being a prosecutor is so important to her.



• WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF BEING A PROSECUTOR?

The best part of being a prosecutor is being one of the first people to help a victim. The Prosecutor's Office is involved early in the process and we do everything we can to ensure a fair process. The Summit County Prosecutor's Office takes this role very seriously.

• WHAT'S THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF BEING A PROSECUTOR?

The most difficult part of being a prosecutor is that sometimes the community thinks our job is to just put people in jail. We want people to know that we are here to care for the community and to follow the law. Sometimes justice is served when someone is in jail and sometimes justice is served when someone does not go to jail. Either way, we are here to help ensure fairness in our courts and keep our community safe.

You can watch Tania's complete video on our website, Facebook and YouTube page.

• WHY DID YOU BECOME A PROSECUTOR?

I became a prosecutor because I wanted to serve my community and one of the best ways to do that is to be a prosecutor in the justice system. I have been privileged enough to have firsthand knowledge of all sides of our criminal justice system: I was a defense attorney for many years, a magistrate for the Akron Municipal Court, and now a prosecutor. These perspectives help me appreciate the struggles that each person in the courtroom works through and be a better prosecutor for our community.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Health advocates use the month to raise awareness about the disease and urge people to take a closer look at their health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, an estimated 255,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year, and 42,000 women die from the disease.

Men can also get breast cancer, however it is not very common. About one out of every 100 cases of breast cancer diagnosed in the U.S. is found in a man.

Early detection is key to survival. If you notice any changes to your health, or if you have a family history, reach out to your doctor or local medical clinic. Mammograms are the best way to find breast cancer early, and you may not have to pay for a mammogram.

To learn more about free breast cancer screenings call the Ohio Department of Health Breast and Cervical Cancer Project at 1.800.381.2489.



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