



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

## A MESSAGE FROM PROSECUTOR WALSH

# NEW SCAM WARNING— ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

I pride myself on my office's ability to keep up with the latest crimes. Technology is quickly evolving, with criminals doing everything they can to find new ways to steal your money and identity.

However, the latest scam to pop up is extremely difficult to avoid. Criminals are now using Artificial Intelligence to trick people into thinking a phone call is from a relative in need, or a government agency. Criminals are able to artificially create a person's voice and use that in a phone call to scam the person they called. And those over 60 are the main targets.

According to the FBI, more than 88,000 people over 60 lost \$3.1 billion to scammers last year. Over the past two years, losses from digital theft alone doubled with the number of elderly victims increasing 84-percent from 2021 to 2022. On average, a victim was scammed out of over \$15,000.

According to the FBI's most recent elder fraud report, Ohio is ranked sixth in the country for the number of scam victims over the age of 60. Last year, 3,099 Ohioans over 60 were victimized by a scammer.

One of the biggest problems is that so few victims report what happened. Many are embarrassed or are afraid a family member will question whether they can live independently and on their own. In fact, studies show only one in 20 senior victims report the crime to police.

So what do you do if you receive a phone call, text message, or email and it's asking for something sensitive and urgent?

Stop.

Breathe.

Think.

If someone is forcing you to take immediate action, the alarm bells should go off. One expert suggests just taking a moment and check if the caller is the person they say they are. The expert calls it being "politely paranoid".

If you are a victim of one of these scams, I urge you to call your local police department as quickly as possible.



Local law enforcement might be able to see if there is a pattern of activity in your community. The information can also be passed along to the FBI which has the ability to track incidents from around the country and focus on what might be a large criminal enterprise.

Many of you are celebrating special occasions, like graduations and weddings. It's a time of year where families take vacations. Make sure you aren't also leaving relatives open to be scammed. Check in with them regularly and make sure they know to call you immediately if they get a message asking for money.

We all must work together to make our community a safer and better place to live.

As always, be safe.

*Sherri B. Walsh*



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# IN THE COMMUNITY

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office is always looking to interact with the next generation of talented attorneys.

Prosecutor Walsh spoke with members of the University of Akron’s Pre-Law Society group and discussed her experiences as Summit County Prosecutor, as well as her time in law school.



The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office also provided safety information to two separate groups of seniors.

First, Mickey Valdez, the office’s sexual assault specialist, spoke with seniors at Summit Pointe Senior Living. Mickey spoke about the Office’s Start By Believing program and the best ways to respond if someone tells you they were a victim of crime.



Prosecutor’s Office employees provided safety information at the recent Senior Safety Fair at the Twinsburg Senior Center.

Attendees learned how to avoid the latest scams and how to protect their homes and families from criminals.

Thank you to the Twinsburg Police Department for their assistance and presentation.



## GUILTY VERDICTS

### April 2023

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

- Ben Carro**                      **Jennie Shuki**
- Chris Delisio**                **Emily Williams**
- Joseph Mittica**

## GREAT JOB PROSECUTORS!

## TOUGH PROSECUTIONS

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

### Gustave Sapharas, 78

- Murder
- **LIFE IN PRISON**

### Andrew Collum, 22

- Rape
- **17 YEARS IN PRISON**



# FATHERHOOD CONVERSATION EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

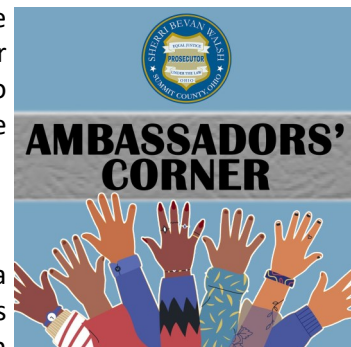
The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office Child Support Enforcement Agency recently received a grant from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for the Ohio County Fatherhood Mobilization Initiative. Representatives from over 20 Summit County agencies gathered recently to discuss the challenges of fatherhood in Summit County as well as identify fatherhood needs in the community.

The collaborative effort was spearheaded by Summit County’s Child Support Enforcement Agency.



Thank you to the following agencies who took part in the event—Fathers & Sons of Northeast Ohio, Just a Dad from Akron, Man 2 Man, House of the Lord, Community Legal Aid, Birthing Beautiful, Summit County DR Court, Summit County Sheriff, Early Childhood Resource Center, Summit County Children Services, Summit County JFS, Ohio Practitioner’s Network for Fathers & Families, Ohio Commission on Fatherhood, South Street Ministries, Summit County Public Health, AMHA, Truly Reaching You, Child Guidance and Family Solutions, Minority Behavioral Health Group, Open M, Greenleaf, Project Ujima, and the United Way of Summit County.

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office “Ambassadors for Equity & Social Justice” was formed to work toward bringing people of different backgrounds and cultures together. Each month the Ambassadors share thoughts in making our community a better place to live. Here is an article from one of the group’s members.



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This month we celebrate a number of different cultures and ethnicities. May is Asian American And Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Jewish American Heritage Month.

Established in 2006, Jewish American Heritage Month celebrates the many contributions Jewish Americans have made to American culture. The website [jewishamericanheritage.org](http://jewishamericanheritage.org) dives deep into the celebration, providing engagement, education, curriculums, family history, cultural resources, and ways to combat antisemitism.

The first recorded Jewish community in the U.S. was 23 adults and children who came from Brazil in 1654. From that time, Jewish Americans have made great contributions to our country’s success. Irving Berlin was a Jewish immigrant who wrote the anthem “God Bless America” in 1918 while serving the U.S. Army during WWI. In 1993, Ruth Bader Ginsburg became the first Jewish American woman appointed to the US Supreme Court. The list goes on and on.

The month is also a time to reflect on the struggles and current situation of being a Jewish American. Although some may believe antisemitism ended with WWII, the American Defamation League (ADL) reports antisemitic incidents at an all-time high—up 36% in 2022.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month began as a week-long celebration in 1978. In 1990, it expanded to a month-long observance.

The month focuses on the rich history of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

You can learn more about ways to celebrate by heading to <https://www.asianpacificheritage.gov/>

**Summer Pet Safety Tips**

- DO NOT LEAVE PET IN CAR
- PROVIDE ENOUGH WATER
- PROTECT FROM SUNBURN
- AVOID HOT PAVEMENT
- CHECK FOR TICKS
- WATCH TEMPERATURE
- GIVE A HAIRCUT
- SHOWERING / BATHING

LONG BEACH ANIMAL CARE SERVICES

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Help Us Go Green!

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



# TOP COPS

## AKRON POLICE DET. ARON HANLON, SGT. ANDREW BOWMAN, OFFICER ROBERT JACKSON, OFFICER JAMES SANDERS NOMINATED BY ASST. PROS. BAILEY COLE & PATRICK KABASINSKI

Many times local law enforcement will work separate cases involving the same defendant. This can pose certain challenges, especially when it comes to making sure the facts of each situation are thoroughly investigated.



Officer Robert Jackson literally “broke” the aggravated robbery case. Officer Jackson was flagged down by the victim just moments after the incident and took swift action.

That was the case recently as we honor four Akron Police Officers for their hard work investigating three separate incidents involving the same juvenile defendant.

Officer James Sanders was involved in an incident separate from the aggravated robbery, but with the same juvenile offender. Officer Sanders was with his partner when they pulled over a vehicle with three juveniles. The juveniles denied having any weapons, yet Officer Sanders noticed one was in possession of a gun. The juveniles were all taken into custody. Officer Sanders attended prosecutor meetings and court hearings and was able to identify the defendant.

One incident was an aggravated robbery involving a weapon. Akron Police Detective Aron Hanlon was on the case. His communication with assistant prosecutors was key. Det. Hanlon also had to sort through a lot of evidence and played a crucial role in making the community safer.

These investigations were crucial in having the juvenile committed to the Department of Youth Services for two years and off the streets.

Sergeant Andrew Bowman played a significant role in the same aggravated robbery case. Sgt. Bowman’s communication with the juvenile’s mother was vital in this case. He was professional and calm in explaining the situation to them.

**Great job and congratulations Det. Hanlon, Sgt. Bowman, Officer Jackson, & Officer Sanders!**

## SKIN CANCER AWARENESS

## EMPLOYEES TAKE A HIKE!

The weather is getting warmer. That means more time outdoors! But before you head outside, we want to make sure you are safe.

One way to do that is to have sun screen with you. May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month. It’s a good time to remind people about preventative skin care habits.



Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States—and it’s also the most preventable.

Before you head outside, grab sunscreen, even on cloudy days! Find some shade, and wear sun-protective clothing. Also, have your doctor check moles on your skin to see if they’re cancerous.

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office is also looking out for the health and well-being of its employees.

Recently, the office’s Wellness Committee organized a hike on Earth Day.

Employees and their friends and family wandered the woods at the beautiful F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm in Akron.



# WHY I'M A PROSECUTOR

## EMILY WILLIAMS

"Why I'm A Prosecutor" gives our prosecutors the chance to tell their own story and why being a prosecutor is so important to them.

As we continue into 2023, their dedication to the community, and to finding justice, hasn't changed.

Assistant Prosecutor Emily Williams, who works in our Criminal Division, talks about 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 making an impact. My goal is justice. My biggest responsibility is to make sure a victim is ok and to help them grow from their experience. If I can help somebody do better or be better, that is my ultimate

goal.

### • WHY DID YOU BECOME A PROSECUTOR?

I started my career as a personal injury and medical malpractice legal secretary in Washington, D.C. I came back to Ohio to go to law school, and eventually got an internship at the Summit County Prosecutor's Office. Once here I fell in love with it. I'm love rules and consequences. I'm a firm believer that if you break the law there are consequences and sentences.

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

The most difficult part of being a prosecutor is that this job can lead to distrusting others. I sometimes have a tendency to be very paranoid about certain things. I'm a firm believer in "trust but verify". Many times I question why someone is doing what they're doing.

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

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Our community has been through a lot lately. We are also still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mental health is also a concern during this unprecedented time. May is National Mental Health Awareness month—a time to bring greater attention, support, and education about the impact of mental illness.

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office works closely with the Summit County Court's Mental Health Court.

"Hope Court" is dedicated to helping offenders who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness which contributed to their arrest. Defendants have access to treatment and resources to help improve their overall quality of life. "Hope Court" is the first felony specialized court for people diagnosed with a mental illness.



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