

The PROSECUTOR'S POST

APRIL/MAY 2025

SUMMIT COUNTY, OH



IN THIS ISSUE:

Kolkovich's Corner
Scam Alerts

In the Community
Upcoming Events

Adam's Yard
CSEA Highlights

Top Cops

Successful Trial Prosecutions

New SCPO Staff

The CROWN Act



Elliot Kolkovich

Summit County Prosecutor

A NOTE FROM THE PROSECUTOR



According to Summit County Public Health's April 2025 Assault Data Brief, there is one emergency room visit every 2.4 days related to sexual violence. And yet, more than two-thirds of sexual assaults go unreported, according to the Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey.

That's why we need to start by believing.

Whether you're a friend, family member, law enforcement officer, medical professional, or prosecutor:

when we start by believing, we make it easier for survivors of sexual violence to report what happened to them and access the care they need.

This doesn't mean we throw away our objectivity, or the presumption of innocence. It means that we take all allegations seriously and as the beginning of a professional, thorough, and evidence-based investigation. When we start by believing, it allows a survivor to share their experience without judgement or blame, and encourages them to participate in the investigation.

When we shift our focus from skepticism to understanding, we not only empower survivors, but also ensure more thorough investigations, encourage more people to report crimes, and ultimately make communities safer. Your reaction when someone discloses to you that they experienced sexual violence makes a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Kolkovich'. The signature is fluid and cursive.



LAW ENFORCEMENT IMPERSONATION SCAMS

Summit County residents continue to receive intimidating and convincing calls from scammers posing as law enforcement officers, including as deputies from the Summit County Sheriff's Office. Please remember:

- The Sheriff's Office does **NOT** call residents to notify them of outstanding warrants or unpaid fines.
- The Sheriff's Office does **NOT** issue warrants for missing a jury summons.
- The Sheriff's Office does **NOT** ask for or accept payment for anything over the phone, through PayPal or similar apps, or through pre-paid credit cards.

New technology allows scammers to mask their phone numbers and make them appear as trusted numbers. If you receive a suspicious call, hang up and call the Sheriff's Office Dispatchers directly at (330) 643-2181.

UNPAID TOLL BILLS

Many Ohioans have also been receiving texts asserting they have "unpaid toll bills." Do NOT click on any links in these texts. Ohio Turnpike officials have issued the following guidance:

- Phone numbers appear to be randomly chosen and do not have to be associated with toll road use.
- Ohio Turnpike E-ZPass does not request payments by text. Collections of unpaid tolls and/or toll violations do not occur by text.
- All links associated with Ohio Turnpike E-ZPass will include www.ezpassoh.com and www.ohioturnpike.org.
- If you're concerned, call the Ohio Turnpike's E-ZPass customer service center directly at (440) 971-2222.



START BY BELIEVING

April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and the first Wednesday in April each year is Start By Believing Day. Created in 2011 by End Violence Against Women International, Start By Believing is a national campaign to end the stigma and shame survivors of sexual violence face by responding with compassion and empathy. This year, we hosted a community press conference to launch our 2025 Start By Believing campaign. A local survivor—Karla—courageously shared her experience of surviving sexual violence, and how not being believed when she initially came forward had lasting impacts on her life. We want to give special thanks to Karla for being willing to speak and be a voice and advocate for other survivors. We would also like to thank everyone who has signed our pledge to Start By Believing!





SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Our engagement around Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) and Start By Believing didn't stop after the first Wednesday in April. Here are some other highlights from our continued work to support survivors of sexual violence.



TURN SUMMIT TEAL

Teal is the color of SAAM. Thank you to all of our community members who helped us to Turn Summit Teal in honor of Start By Believing and SAAM.



LUNCH AND LEARNS

We hosted virtual "lunch and learns" geared towards those involved with the foster care system and faith leaders to help create supportive environments for survivors.



RESOURCE FAIRS

We participated in several resource fairs, including University of Akron's SAVE Team Fair for SAAM, and the Undergraduate Student Government's Take Back the Night walk.

PROSECUTOR
ELLIOT KOLKOVICH



SHERIFF
KANDY FATHEREE



TAKE ME HOME



April was also Autism Acceptance Month. The Summit County Prosecutor's Office is proud to offer our Take Me Home program. Take Me Home is a voluntary database only accessible by law enforcement personnel that can help them identify an individual when he or she is not able to communicate their identity in another way. We launched this initiative with the Summit County Sheriff's Office in April 2007 at a park where an autistic child had previously gotten lost. The child was unable to communicate his name or address to law enforcement officers. You can register for the database by scanning the QR code above.



SUPPORTING OFFICERS

Prosecutor Kolkovich continues to offer and present trainings to law enforcement agencies throughout Summit County, including how to testify in court and fill out Victim Rights Request Forms.



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Another important initiative recognized in April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Staff from all of our divisions wore blue on April 9 in support of Summit County Children Services campaign to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect.



EVENTS FOR SENIORS

Senior Summit 2025 Conference

May 16, 2025, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

St. George Fellowship Hall
3204 Ridgewood Road, Fairlawn 44333

Hudson Senior Fair

June 11, 2025, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Hudson City Hall
1140 Terex Road, Hudson, 44236

Senior Safety Speech

June 16, 2025 at 1 p.m.

Silver Lake Village Hall
2961 Kent Road, Silver Lake 44224

Senior Expo

June 26, 2025, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Kenmore Community Center
880 Kenmore Boulevard, Akron 44314



**Interested in hosting a safety speech in your community?
Call (330) 643-2800**



Upcoming Events

APRIL/MAY 2025

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

Do you have child support concerns? Come see CSEA out in the community for assistance with general questions, DNA testing, job assistance, license reinstatements, and more.

Akron Ward 6 Community Meeting

May 15, 2025 at 6 p.m.

Ellet Community Center

Questions?

Travis Johnson (330) 643-8468

James Brewer (330) 643-8703

“Justice Bus” Free Legal Clinic

June 13, 2025, 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Maple Valley Branch Library

OTHER EVENTS

National Missing Children’s Day

May 17, 2025, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Summit Mall

FREE Women’s Self-Defense Class

May 20, 2025 at 6 p.m.

Copley High School

Concealed Carry Workshop

May 27, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Northwest Family Recreation Center

24th Annual Pet Expo with SCPO

Facility Dog, Adam

June 7, 2025, 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

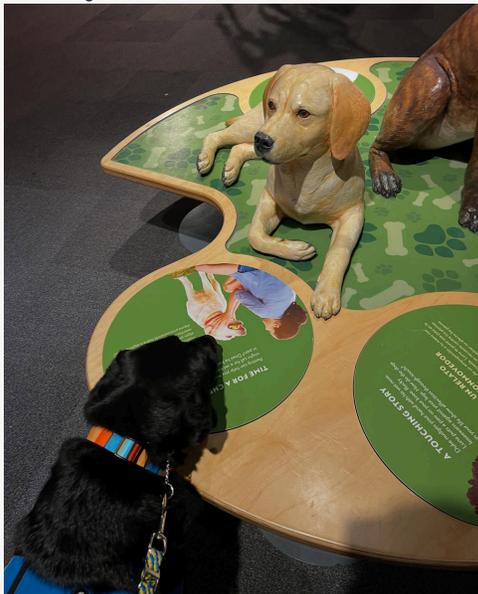
Hardesty Park



NEWS FROM OUR FACILITY DOG

I sure am glad it's spring! While playing in the snow is fun, I get to spend more time outside when the sun is shining and the weather is warmer. I've gotten to do all sorts of fun things over the last couple of months, like go to the Great Lakes Science Center for their exhibit about dogs and meet lots of new friends. And, of course, I always look forward to my job every day to help people who have to talk to my coworkers, or in the courtroom, feel better and safer.

March was Social Worker Appreciation Month, so I went over to Summit County Children Services to celebrate with my friends there. April 11 was National Pet Day! I wanted to meet all of my co-workers' pets, but apparently none of the other pets are "working" so they couldn't come in. I think all pets do important work! Maybe I'll be able to bring everyone in next year.



CSEA IN THE COMMUNITY

The Child Support Enforcement Agency's dedicated outreach team continues to be active in Summit County communities, providing access to child support information and case assistance for those who aren't able to come to the office. Throughout April, the outreach team presented at various Akron City Ward community meetings, so that residents understand what services CSEA provides and issues they may be able to assist with. CSEA has already presented in Wards 3, 4, 5, and 7. These presentations will continue into May, beginning with the Ward 6 meeting on May 15.



In addition to the Ward Meetings, the CSEA outreach team continues to work to meet individuals where they're at. This includes hosting "After Hours" events in the community outside of regular business hours for those who can't make it to the office during normal times, tabling at community events, and even providing a class on child support for individuals in community based correctional facilities. These events are opportunities for Summit County residents to get assistance with genetic testing, jobs, modifying payments, license suspension, missed court hearings, Family Support Matters, and any other general questions about a case.

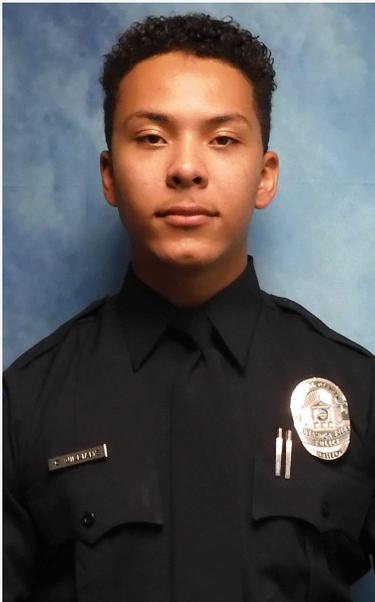
TOP COP: DETECTIVE RYAN KELLACKY Richfield Police Department



Detective Ryan Kellacky was nominated for Top Cop by Assistant Prosecutor Bailey Cole, and Juvenile Division Victim Services Coordinator Kristen Soltis. Detective Kellacky went above and beyond to support a juvenile survivor in a violent sexual battery and exploitation case. Detective Kellacky regularly checked in with the survivor to make sure she was doing okay, and would even bring her to meetings and court when she didn't have a ride. He worked diligently to try to track down every lead that could corroborate the survivor's statement. Detective Kellacky's thorough investigation was critical to the conviction of the offender in this case, and his professionalism and dedication to always go the extra mile helped the survivor feel safer and more comfortable by always having a familiar face throughout the legal process. Congratulations Detective Kellacky! Thank you for your service.



TOP COP: OFFICER GREG WILLIAMS Cuyahoga Falls Police Department



Officer Greg Williams was nominated for Top Cop by Assistant Prosecutor Tamara Brooks. We want to commend Officer Williams for his diligence and eagerness to show up and cooperate in criminal cases. Officer Williams always makes trials a priority, and shows up as needed for meetings and subpoenas. He is dedicated to seeing the entire process of each case through. We want to thank Officer Williams for his service and commitment to justice. Congratulations Officer Williams! Thank you for your service to Cuyahoga Falls and Summit County.



SUCCESSFUL TRIAL PROSECUTIONS

Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors who obtained convictions at trial during March and April:

BEN CARRO

JOSH RAU

CHRIS DELISIO

CHARLES ROMAN

AMANDA KOREN

JEREMY VEILETTE

ZACHARY NEUMANN

EMILY WILLIAMS (2)



New SCPO Staff

APRIL/MAY 2025

We are excited to welcome the following new employees to the Summit County Prosecutor's Office!



Kevin Day
Assistant Prosecutor
Criminal Division



Mycheala Holley
Law Clerk
Civil Division



Jamie Morris
Assistant Prosecutor
Criminal Division



Tania Nemer
Deputy Chief
Civil Division



Christopher Reece
Assistant Prosecutor
Civil Division



Christina Sickinger
Assistant Prosecutor
Criminal Division



Joe Vance
Assistant Prosecutor
Criminal Division



Lisa Woods
Admin. Secretary
Reception



THE CROWN ACT



In February, the Akron Civil Rights Commission held its first hearing on a case related to the CROWN Act—a law that protects people from race-based hair discrimination in the workplace and schools. The Commission unanimously found that a car dealership violated a Black man’s civil rights by racially discriminating against his hairstyle.

The employee, Seleke Korleh, had begun working at the dealership in 2022. When he was first hired, Korleh wore his hair in short locs and often covered his hair with a hat. Locs are a protective hairstyle for naturally coarse and kinky hair that promotes hair health and growth by minimizing manipulation of the hair and reducing its exposure to the elements. As Korleh’s locs grew longer, he stopped wearing the hat and began attaching beads and shells to his hair.

According to the Commission’s decision, a sales manager told Korleh that his hair was unprofessional and needed to be more “professionally conservative.” Korleh’s bosses told him his hairstyle violated the company’s personal appearance policy and that he needed to either cut his hair, wear a hat, or work a non-customer-facing position. His employment was terminated when he did not accept these options.

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THE CROWN ACT

The concept of “professional” or “good” hair is deeply rooted in racism, colonialism, and the lasting effects of slavery. It typically refers to hair that is straighter, finer, and more like European or white features, in contrast to hair that is coarser, kinkier, or more tightly curled. During the transatlantic slave trade, enslaved Africans were often forced to conform to European beauty standards in various ways, including their grooming and hair. Many Black people today still feel pressure to straighten or change their hair to match the styles of their white counterparts.

However, the natural hair movement has played a significant role in reclaiming pride in Black hair and challenging outdated standards of beauty and professionalism. The Civil Rights Movement and the rise of Black pride and cultural identity in the 1960s and 1970s helped Afro hairstyles become a symbol of racial pride, and many began to embrace their natural hair textures.

The CROWN Act was created to continue this progress and extend statutory protections to hair texture and protective styles such as braids, locs, twists, and knots in the workplace and public schools.

The Akron Civil Rights Commission provides residents with the opportunity to resolve discrimination issues at a local level. It was created in 2017 to investigate complaints of discrimination based on background, beliefs, or identity in employment, housing, public accommodations, and city contracts. The Commission is composed of seven volunteer members who are appointed by the Mayor and approved by Akron City Council.

For more information about the Akron Civil Rights Commission, please visit www.akronohio.gov.

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office’s Ambassadors for Equity and Social Justice bring together coworkers from different backgrounds and cultures, and foster education and engagement to make the community a better place.





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