



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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FCSO Hosts Follow-Up Domestic Violence Summit **Five Sub-Committees Present Recommendations for Community Driven Solution**

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office hosted a follow-up Domestic Violence Summit on Friday, three-and-a-half months after the kick-off Summit Sheriff Rick Staly initiated. Over sixty people filled the meeting room at the Hilton Garden Inn in Palm Coast to hear the reports from five sub-committees that formed from the June summit.

"I wish I had good news to report but since we met back in June, we've had another domestic related homicide," Sheriff Staly said. "As you can see we have a long way to go to solve this problem but we're here today to hear from five sub-committees who have met at least five times since June to discuss this issue."



Sheriff Staly at the Domestic Violence Summit on Friday.

Social Services chairperson, Carrie Baird, presented their recommendations to provide training of signs and symptoms of domestic violence to social service staff and community sectors as well as increasing the capacity of critical support services. "We want to make sure anyone who may encounter a victim of domestic violence would know enough about the resources in our community to assist," Baird said.

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The medical sub-committee, chaired by Jonathon Tanenbaum, spoke about a Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) for Flagler County aimed at educating the public on awareness and debunking myths surrounding domestic violence. The committee also suggested working with the state to establish mandatory mental health evaluations of offenders.

Sergeant Christopher Ragazzo, education chair, presented their report which focused on creating community awareness of the domestic violence problem and educating youth on the issue in order to engage and empower them to live free from domestic violence – but also avenues to report the problem if it does arise. “We have a domestic violence curriculum in middle and high schools, but we also need to implement it at the elementary level because, sadly, it’s also impacting that age group,” Ragazzo said.

The faith-based sub-committee is chaired by Reverend Ed Reistetter, also an FCSO Chaplain, urged the faith based leaders in our community to get involved and watch for signs of domestic violence. Reistetter also spoke on the need for faith-based leaders to be educators on the topic of domestic violence. “We need to offer and conduct training for clergy on domestic violence.”



From left: Carrie Baird, Jonathon Tanenbaum, FCSO Sgt. Ragazzo, Rev. Ed Reistetter and Undersheriff Bisland.

Jack Bisland, Undersheriff and chair of the criminal justice sub-committee, presented the recommendation to have a full-time detective dedicated to domestic violence cases only – which Sheriff Staly has approved starting January 2018. This will enable stronger cases and potentially greater prosecution rates. Also presented was the Batterers Intervention Program (BIP), which is now available in Flagler County as a result of the Domestic Violence Summit. This 29-week course is court ordered and paid by the offenders at no cost to the taxpayers. In the past, the course was only offered in St. Johns or Volusia counties, making transportation arrangements difficult for participants.

Sheriff Staly closed the summit by thanking all members of the sub-committees for their diligence and dedication to this cause. “This will not become a report that sits on a desk collecting dust,” Staly promised. “What I intend to do is have a real impact on domestic violence but that will require an entire community and a partnership to deliver that.”

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The summit ended with the unveiling of a new public service announcement directed towards the problem of domestic violence. The PSA was created in partnership with the Sheriff's office and the Family Life Center, www.familylifecenterflagler.org.

For more information on the Domestic Violence Summit or the sub-committee recommendations, or to view the new PSA, visit www.flaglersheriff.com and www.facebook.com/flaglercounty.sheriffsoffice.



Flagler leaders stand united against domestic violence. From left: Flagler Beach Police Chief Matt Doughney, Bunnell Police Chief Tom Foster, Family Life Center Director Trish Giaccone, and Sheriff Rick Staly.

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