



Rick Staly, Sheriff

## FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Sheriff Staly and Domestic Violence Task Force Give a Community Update on Progress since 2017**

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) hosted a follow-up Domestic Violence Summit on Wednesday via Zoom. Over a dozen virtual attendees tuned in to hear the reports from four presenters.

Sheriff Rick Staly opened the meeting by thanking the participants for continuing the initiative to combat Domestic Violence that began in 2017 under his leadership when he asked members of the agency along with the public to focus on developing a multi-disciplined, community response to reduce domestic violence in Flagler County. In that time, domestic violence cases have dropped 12%, even during a global pandemic that is keeping more and more people at home. Victims now know they have a community-wide system in place that puts their protection first.

FCSO's Commander of Investigative Services, Jen Taylor, lead the meeting and began by introducing FCSO's lead detective in domestic violence cases, Fiona Ebrill, and dedicated crime analyst Nikki North along with FCSO's Victim's Advocates Kathy Vazquez, Mary DiNardi, and Nicole Farmer.

Assistant State Attorney Jason Lewis of the 7th Judicial Circuit gave credit to Detective Ebrill and Crime Analyst North for putting so much effort and dedication into each case, allowing the State Attorney's Office to prosecute more of the cases due to their diligence.

The Family Life Center's CEO Trish Giaccone spoke about new advances for victims of domestic violence, including the ability to text the helpline when a voice call may not be possible. The crisis helpline is available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week by calling or texting 386-437-3505. Trish also shared that the domestic violence shelter is adding an on-site kennel set to open in 2021 so that victims are able to bring domestic animals along when they seek shelter from an abuser.

Flagler Humane Society Director Amy Carotenuto spoke about the link between animal abuse and domestic violence. There are warning signs to look for in animal abuse and those tendencies can transfer over to child abuse or domestic abuse. All suspicious activity, whether involving animals or

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people, should be reported immediately.

Alison Ogden and Kristine Gromlovits from Child Protective Services spoke about signs of child abuse including physical, sexual, and malnutrition. They also spoke about the most common form of child abuse which is child neglect.

"I couldn't be more pleased with the progress we have made over the past three years," Sheriff Rick Staly said. "Even going through a global pandemic and having to change a lot of the ways we operate, approach situations, and work together, we've still managed to drive down domestic violence. Our work is not done and I thank every person, organization, and agency that has partnered alongside us to continue this fight."

To view the 2020 Domestic Violence Summit, please follow this link: [YouTube](#)

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. To learn more or donate to the Family Life Center in Flagler County, please visit: <https://familylifecenterflagler.org/>

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