

Good afternoon and thank you for coming.

It is a wonderful feeling to stand here before you at a press conference and discuss an event that is not grim and dark like a homicide, an unsolved homicide, a wiretap, or major violators. It is a wonderful feeling to stand here and discuss with you something that is hopeful and bright: making a difference in people's lives in Bristol County through volunteer efforts outside the courtroom and outside the investigation room. I am very pleased and proud to be able to announce today the beginning of the volunteer initiative by the Bristol County District Attorney's Office.

I am very pleased because this is a culmination of many months of hard work by the Director of the Community Affairs Division Pamela Cruz, the coordinator for this project, Michael Ramos, the Director of Communications Gregg Miliote, the assistant to Pamela Cruz, Josette Fernandes, Community Affairs staff member Ron Frenette and the assistant for special projects Lisa Rowell. I

am very proud because this initiative is possible due to the willingness of all of the prosecutors in my office and all of the management staff to volunteer their time after work hours to try to make our communities safer and healthier.

Last year, during my campaign for this office, I said repeatedly that the community outreach division which I have renamed “community affairs,” could do more and spend less money doing it. And obviously, the only way that could happen is through volunteer efforts. At the beginning of this year when I took office, I decided to complete the programs in the schools and at the Boys and Girls Clubs, considering that it was the middle of the school year. But, after the school year ended, we set about fulfilling our pledge to go in a different direction with the community affairs division.

Over the summer Pam and Mike worked diligently to reach out to social service providers throughout Bristol County to begin the

process of connecting a volunteer opportunity to a volunteer. At the same time that this was being done, the 50 prosecutors in my office and the additional half dozen or so members of the leadership team began to discuss with Pam and Mike what they wanted to volunteer for in the community. To use again a word that I'm going to use a few more times, today I am extremely proud to say that everyone involved was genuinely enthusiastic about this opportunity. And now I can announce to you the following partnerships between the individual prosecutors and managers, and the community organizations. In the Superior Court where there are approximately 20 prosecutors, these are the programs they are going to be participating in:

Basket Ball and Soccer Coaching – Easton

Bristol Community College – CORE

Bristol Elder Services – Fall River and Taunton

Coalition for Buzzards Bay

Coastline Elderly Services

Fall River Boys and Girls Club

Friends of Buttonwood Park

Global Learning Charter Public School

Milliken-Silva Basketball League Fall River

New Bedford SMILES

New Bedford Substance Abuse Task Force

New Hope – Attleboro

Taunton Boys and Girls Club

Tree City – New Bedford

Youth Build Fall River

Youth Build New Bedford

In the District Court, where there are approximately 20 prosecutors, these are the programs they will be involved in:

Attleboro GED Program

BOLD Coalition

Bristol Elder Services – Fall River and Taunton

Community Development Recreation Pee Wee Soccer

Fall River Boys and Girls Club

Fall River SMILES

Faxon Animal Rescue League

Friends of Buttonwood Park

New Bedford Boys and Girls Club

New Bedford SMILES

Peoples Inc. Board of Directors

Tree City – New Bedford

In the Juvenile courts, where there are 3 prosecutors, these are the programs they will be participating in:

Bristol Elder Services – Fall River and Taunton

New Hope – Attleboro

New Bedford SMILES

In the Appellate Division, where there are 5 prosecutors, these are the programs they will be participating in:

Coalition for Buzzards Bay

Friends of Buttonwood Park

New Bedford SMILES

YMCA South Coast

And finally, the dozen or so members of the management staff and leadership team will be participating in the following programs:

Fall River SMILES

Friends of Buttonwood Park

Global Learning Charter School

Greater N.B. Workforce Investment Board Youth Council

NBCC Task Force for Foster Care Support

Operation Clean Sweep

YMCA South Coast

As you can see, these programs span the county, serve both young and old, and encompass individuals from all walks of life. My deepest thanks to all of you in my office for making this possible. If you're interested, I will be volunteering for Youth Build New Bedford and my wife, Dottie Sutter, will be volunteering with SMILES in Fall River.

If I can get philosophical for a moment, which I now get to do more than ever, there are three reasons why I believe this is such an important event for the Bristol County District Attorney's Office. The first reason is that this will demonstrate to the people of our county that we are dedicated to the idea of trying to prevent crime as well as investigating crime, and prosecuting crime - preventing crime by trying to make a difference in individual lives and communities. All of us standing here before you recognize that the primary responsibility of a District Attorney's office is to prosecute the cases given to us by the police, and to investigate

homicides, drug trafficking and gun selling. But we also recognize that we have the potential to make a difference in lives and communities through volunteerism. And by doing that, we can change individual lives, and we can also demonstrate to people how deep our concern is for our county.

I choose to believe that there are future victims and future witnesses out there who will see what we are doing here today and what we are committed to doing in the future and will say to themselves, “I will testify about this case because I believe in these people.” That is reason number one.

Reason number two is for the impact that all of these initiatives - and let me pause here and tell you that every single one of these people have pledged at least one hour, every other week, or 26 hours a year, to one of these programs, for a total of almost 1,500 hours - are going to make in individual lives and communities.

And reason number three is that all of us that stand before you today are idealistic enough, some might say naïve, to think that we can lead by example and inspire more people to get involved. That is an important part of what we stand for here at the District Attorney's Office. In the final analysis, I think most of us agree that the most effective way to improve our communities is to get more people involved in that effort at the grassroots.