

# Police unite to help those with opioid struggle

NH  
11/7/18

By Andrew Cass

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Hillcrest-area police departments are uniting for a new initiative aimed at helping to expedite placement into treatment, without fear of arrest, for those struggling with opioid addiction.

The police departments of Richmond Heights, Highland Heights, Lyndhurst, Mayfield Heights and Mayfield Village have launched what they're calling the "Safe Passages Initiative."

Residents in those communities struggling with addiction can walk into any of those

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## Police

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police stations from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and receive expedited placement into an appropriate detox or treatment program, without fear of arrest, according to a news release.

Those seeking help will be interviewed by a department member who has received special training, according to the release. Paperwork and a short interview will be completed, followed by arrangements for placement with the most appropriate detox or treatment provider. Placement may not be immediate, but it is expected to take less than 72 hours, officials said,

In 1972, the departments joined together to form a law enforcement partnership called the Suburban Police Anti-Crime Network, or S.P.A.N. The departments have shared training and resources to "maximize law enforcement and crime prevention services,

### PARTICIPATING POLICE DEPARTMENTS

#### Highland Heights Police Department

5827 Highland Road  
440-442-1221

#### Lyndhurst Police Department

5301 Mayfield Road  
440-442-1234

#### Mayfield Heights Police Department

6154 Mayfield Road  
440-442-2323

#### Mayfield Village Police Department

620 SOM Center Road  
440-461-1234

#### Richmond Heights Police Department

27201 Highland Road  
216-486-1234

while reducing costs."

The Safe Passages Initiative will be overseen by S.P.A.N.'s Drug Enforcement Unit, which will "continue to aggressively target drug traffickers who prey on our communities and our residents," according to the departments.

Members of the unit recently participated in the

inaugural law enforcement summit hosted by Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative, or PAARI, in Boston, Massachusetts.

"Our officers were able to network and learn best practices from law enforcement professionals who traveled to Boston from 27 different states, sharing with us how they manage and implement their outreach and intake programs," S.P.A.N. Drug Enforcement Unit Commander Michael Scipione said.

Similar programs are currently in use by the Berea, Olmsted Township, Bedford, Newburgh Heights and Strongsville police departments according to the release.

Cuyahoga County continues to be hit hard by the opioid epidemic. At least 822 people in the county died of drug overdoses in 2017, up from 666 in 2016. Opioids — especially fentanyl — are the No. 1 contributor to overdose deaths in the county.

Outside of the walk-in hours, the departments said residents can call any time for more information.

## Mayfield

**Crime detail investigation, SOM Center Road:** A 23-year-old resident reported Jan. 4 she discovered there were sexually explicit photos of herself and some of her friends posted on a website. She believed some of the photos were taken when she was under 18. Officers are working with the website to get the photos removed and to discover who uploaded them. The incident was said to affect multiple women in different cities.

**Theft, SOM Center Road:** A Geneva woman, 27, was arrested at Heinen's Jan. 5 for the suspected theft of \$120 worth of groceries she concealed in an oversized bag.

**Suspicious activity, Beta Drive:** Officers stopped a pickup truck at 2:22 a.m. Jan. 3 that had a motorcycle in the back of it. They suspected it may have been stolen but confirmed it belonged to a passenger in the truck.

**Departmental information, Hanover Road:** A resident said Jan. 3 she left a greeting card for her garbage man, and someone took it. She believed it may have been taken by a scrapper.

**Suspicious activity, SOM Center Road:** Around 6:15 p.m. Jan. 8 a girl, 17, reported there was banging on the door of her home, and she believed someone entered and then left the home. She said she was home alone with just her dogs and was scared. Upon investigation, it was determined the girl's ex-boyfriend, an 18-year-old man, had left a note for her. Officers contacted the man and told him the girl wanted no further contact with him.

**Suspicious activity, Wilson Mills Road:** Officers responded to True North Shell around 9:30 p.m. Jan. 7 for a report of three or four suspicious males wearing black hoodies who were seen entering the store. They did not locate them anywhere in the area, and a store employee said three or four males had come into the store to purchase tobacco products.

There was nothing found to be suspicious.

**Harassing communication, Meadowood Drive:** A man, 23, reported Jan. 7 his ex-girlfriend continues to harass him by sending text messages, emailing and calling him. He said he blocks her through email, but she makes up new addresses to use to contact him. He said he would not seek charges if she stopped. Officers contacted the Novelty woman, 22, and advised her of the complaint. She said she would comply.

## Students learn from, inspired by doctor on medicine

JEFF PIORKOWSKI  
*Special to Sun News*

A program held Tuesday at Mayfield High School may prove to be a driving force in inspiring a group of students to follow career paths into the medical field.

Yes, a visit by a cardiac anesthesiologist may well lead to future medical technologists and doctors springing from Mayfield High School, and it all started last summer with a move into a new house.

"The story is that my son bought a new house in Cincinnati [in July], and I went down there to help him move his furniture," said Mayfield Schools Superintendent Keith Kelly. "We started talking about artificial intelligence, and it eventually led to me saying, 'Why don't we do something at the school?'"

Kelly's son, Dr. Brian Kelly, 31, who grew up in Cincinnati, is in his first year of practice at Christ Hospital. The younger Kelly said he was in favor of his father's suggestion and, as luck would have it, he met the very next day representatives of Siemens Healthineers, a health care technology company.

Kelly asked Siemens if the company would help if a one-day program were conducted at Mayfield High. The company responded by providing for the day \$2.5 million worth of equipment so that students could learn first-hand.

On Monday, a day the school was closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Dr. Kelly and two Siemens representatives spent eight hours setting up equipment that would be used the following day.

In two 150-minute sessions, 60 top Mayfield High students taking classes in anatomy, math and art studies were invited to learn about the heart.

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## DOCTOR

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"It was really cool," Dr. Kelly said of the students' first program experience in the large lecture area of the Mayfield Innovation Center at the high school. "[Students] put on goggles and walked through a virtual heart. This is something the school already had."

Next, students took part in dissecting a cow's heart, which is about three to four times the size of a human heart, making it easier to see its parts.

Then, using ultrasound 3-D imaging equipment and laptop computers that Siemens provided, students were shown an actual case from Christ Hospital, the image of a man's beating heart.

Students were given information about the man's case, the amount of blood passing through the man's heart and its rate of flow and were given the task of trying



JEFF PIORKOWSKI | SPECIAL TO SUN NEWS

**Dr. Brian Kelly instructs Mayfield High School student Ishita Mathur, of Mayfield Heights, on the use of an ultrasound machine Tuesday at the school. Kelly is a doctor at Cincinnati's Christ Hospital and the son of Mayfield Schools Superintendent Keith Kelly.**

to determine if surgery was needed.

Anatomy teacher Michael Verdi was thrilled with the program's results, saying the levels of interest and enthusiasm his students showed will make his coming weeks

of teaching easier.

After the second group of 30 students had completed the program, their comments showed that the experience had, indeed, opened their eyes.

"It was great," said junior

Ishita Mathur, of Mayfield Heights. "I wanted to be a heart surgeon, but it looked like it would be too much studying. But I might want to go ahead with being a heart surgeon after seeing this. It was really interesting."

Mathur said she grew up in India and came to the United States when she was a freshman. "I never thought when I was growing up in India that I would someday be in the United States studying this," she said.

Gia Cannavino, a senior from Mayfield Heights, said her mother and other relatives are nurses, so she has been leaning toward pursuing a job in the medical field.

"It was so interesting to see this all from a real doctor and not just something on TV," Cannavino said. She found particularly interesting the ultrasound Dr. Kelly did on his own stomach and the walk through the virtual heart. She said her plans, as of now, are to become a physical therapist.

"It was really cool," said

advanced digital media student and junior Ashleigh Kazeka, also of Mayfield Heights. "I didn't know we'd be dissecting an actual heart."

Kazeka said she enjoyed examining the imaging and working on the blood flow problem with which students were challenged better than handling an actual cow's heart.

Dan Stanley, a clinical specialist for Siemens, who is based in the Dayton area, said the Mayfield High program was unique.

"I've never done this type of thing before. We have lent equipment to schools but not worked with students like this."

Stanley and the Siemens colleague who accompanied him to Mayfield usually work with doctors in explaining equipment use.

Superintendent Kelly said the program helps further the district's vision to "prepare students to be successful and to train them with the tools they need for

their world."

Dr. Kelly said a cardiac anesthesiologist not only puts to sleep heart patients before surgery but also provides surgeons with needed information before and during surgery about the patient's condition and the best ways to go about getting ultimate surgical results.

He said that he wants to come back again next year and that he is eager to teach high school students for very practical reasons.

"We're showing them what we're doing now in the medical field and to look for flaws and improvements in the process," he said. "We're very early on in 3-D imaging technology, so it's going to be their job in the future to determine where we can make improvements.

"We have grainy images now, but that will be improved upon in the future to where we'll have clean images. It's going to be their job to make those improvements. That's the challenge for the future."