



PRESS RELEASE

Livingston County Declares June 15 Elder Abuse Awareness Day

JUNE 15, 2021. On this day, communities in the USA and all over the world sponsored events to highlight solutions to this systemic social challenge. The Livingston County Elder Justice Coalition proudly hosted a POP (Put on Purple) for Elder Abuse Awareness education and proclamation signing; proclaiming every June 15 to be Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Livingston County.

The event was held on the lawn of the Howell Courthouse on June 15th from 1:30p-2:30p and included special speakers along with the proclamation signing.

Lee, a Livingston County Senior shared her story about being taken advantage of and being exploited by someone she thought was her friend. In addition to monetary abuse, this person played on her emotions, her weakness, and vulnerability and used that to get their hooks into Lee. She reached out to Livingston County Catholic Charities because she was not sure if she was being abused and her neighbor told her to call us and talk to someone in senior services.

Scott Ehlfeldt, of the Prosecuting Attorney's Association of Michigan, shared his heartfelt gratitude for the work being done to protect seniors from abuse and exploitation in Livingston County. He talked about how we all have people in our lives to look out for and that *"if you see something, say something."* Abusers are often family members or friends who will use a person's isolation to prey upon their emotions. Even if they can see the abuse, the seniors are often too embarrassed to say anything. "We are here today because we can intervene and put a stop to it."

The Proclamation was read by Beth Newman, Senior Community Liaison with Livingston County Catholic Charities. It was then signed by Mona Shand, Livingston County Representative for Representative Elissa Slotkin.

In our senior services programs at LCCC we have been seeing the tremendous growth in seniors being abused, neglected or exploited. This resulted in the creation of our Prevention of Elder Abuse Neglect and Exploitation (P.E.A.N.E.) program in 2017. The Elder Abuse Coalition includes staff from LCCC, Livingston County Prosecutor's Office, Livingston County Sheriff's Dept., Adult Protective Services/DHHS, Ombudsmen/AAA1-B, PAAM, Fowlerville Police, Foguth Financial and the Crime Victims Legal Assistance Project.

As Americans, we believe in justice for all. Yet we fail to live up to this promise when we allow older members of our society to be abused or neglected. Older people are vital, contributing members of American society and their maltreatment diminishes all of us. Just as we have confronted and addressed the social issues of child abuse and domestic violence, so too can we find solutions to address issues like elder abuse, which also threatens the well-being of our community. We can and must create healthier and safer living environments for older adults, including their homes, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities.

To learn more about elder abuse, neglect and exploitation, how you can recognize it, what you can do to protect yourself or loved one, how to report suspected abuse and local community services and supports, call Beth Newman at Livingston County Catholic Charities at (517) 545-5944 or visit the National Center on Elder Abuse <https://ncea.acl.gov>.