

DISTRICT ATTORNEY ZAPPALA SPECIAL NEEDS OUTREACH

The Office of the District Attorney has participated in many community awareness/legal/safety events and provided various trainings to school faculty related to special needs programs (Sunrise School-Monroeville, Alliance for Infants and Toddler - Carrick and Every Child, Inc. – Downtown Pittsburgh).

2012 – Present - The **K-9 for Kids** program provides service dogs to children with Autism. To date, 11 service animals have been provided.

2013 – Present – Police Roll Call Training DVD – a 20-minute roll call training DVD was provided to all police departments in Allegheny County and incorporated into police recruit training.

Numerous departments throughout the Commonwealth, other states and countries outside the United States have requested copies of the DVD or have viewed the DVD on the Allegheny County Chiefs of Police Association *YouTube* channel/site.

2013 – Present - Premise Alert Packets - All police departments in Allegheny County have been provided with these packets for residents. Packets are created and issued, as needed.

These packets contain a number of safety (car seat safety and how to prepare for an emergency) and informational brochures (The Autism Society and Project Lifesaver) in addition to a Premise Alert Form.

The Premise Alert form can be used by residents to register their home address with Allegheny County 911/Emergency Services to alert first responders present during an emergency that specific circumstances may exist at the residence. This is a paper form of the special needs registry offered electronically through the Allegheny County website.

In addition, the packets contain stickers for both the residence and vehicles. The stickers advise that a person with special needs may reside at the residence or be an occupant of the vehicle.

2014 – Present - Project Lifesaver – A program available to caregivers who are responsible for a resident of Allegheny County who has a tendency to wander.

Individuals in this program can include children with special needs, those suffering from Alzheimer’s or other form of dementia, or veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

All qualified families receive a radio transmitter that emits a unique tracking signal.

There are over 50 Officers within **16** departments that have been trained/certified to track the wanderers.

The participating departments are:

Aspinwall	Indiana Township	Moon	Pittsburgh
Bethel Park	Jefferson Hills	Munhall	Ross
Elizabeth	McKeesport	Northern Regional	South Fayette
Harrison	Monroeville	Ohio	Swissvale

The tracking equipment and training have been provided free of charge.

Since 2014, **247** participants have been enrolled. Currently, we have **160 active participants**.

In the last 6 years, we have had 24 requests for service. All participants were located and reunited with their caregiver(s).

Recently, we received a Federal Grant for Project Lifesaver. We plan to expand the number of participants and to purchase additional equipment for the departments.

Project Lifesaver has been showcased at Parent/Teacher conferences, First Responder Day at Kennywood, the National Down Syndrome Congress Convention event, Representative Dan Miller’s Disability and Mental Health Summit and at various local education facilities/organizations.

2020 – Prosecutors have access to **Resource Specialists** at the Magisterial District Judges.

These specialists work for Allegheny County DHS and make efforts to provide resource support and referrals to Justice Related Services for those with a mental health diagnosis. The specialists are available at the arraignment and preliminary hearings throughout the County.