

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Elyria police deserve praise for handling of standoff

Police are too often the front line for health crises like suicide. Mental health care, though, is not just for first responders and clinicians. The person most likely to prevent a mental health crisis is a loved one, friend or alert community member. If anyone and everyone learned to identify and respond appropriately to mental health concerns, many crises could be prevented.

As I write this, there are 28 people in our training center at the Lorain County Board of Mental Health, receiving free mental health first aid training, learning skills to help their loved ones before distress becomes crisis. Before a call to police needs to be made.

We also provide specialized crisis intervention training for police officers and emergency responders in how to interact with people who have had trauma in their lives, or who are in an active mental health crisis.

In an Oct. 17 story headlined "Standoff ends quietly," The Chronicle-Telegram reported that the Elyria police responded to a man experiencing suicidal thinking. I applaud that the officers recognized the man's mental health crisis, created a safe, clear space and gave multiple hours to de-escalating the situation. I am grateful to Elyria police and to our many first responders who demonstrate skill and sensitivity when a person is experiencing an active mental health crisis.

Any community member can follow

their example of learning skills to prevent tragedy, by taking a free training course. For more information visit www.lcbmh.org or call (440) 233-2020.

Thank you to the Elyria police. Our board is grateful for your life-saving support of those experiencing a mental health crisis.

KATHLEEN KERN
Lorain

Dr. Kathleen Kern is the executive director of the Lorain County Board of Mental Health.

Thanks to all those who helped at spaghetti dinner

On behalf of the North Ridgeville Office for Older Adults I would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to North Ridgeville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9871 for generously sponsoring our October spaghetti dinner. The VFW generously stepped up and covered the costs for our fundraiser allowing us to net almost \$2,000. Once again we had a wonderful response and were able to serve over 250 people in less than two hours thanks to all their help.

I would like to especially thank members of the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary who came out and helped us serve that evening. We couldn't have handled the crowd and served all those people without your help. Thank you so much.

The community, especially our senior population, looks forward to these delicious spaghetti dinners held several times throughout the year. All proceeds raised will be used to support services of the Office for Older Adults and Senior

Center including: Meals-On-Wheels, transportation and other activities.

Thank you to everyone for all your support of the older adults in our community, and we look forward to seeing everyone at our next spaghetti dinner the on last Friday of January.

RITA PRICE
North Ridgeville

Rita Price is the director of the North Ridgeville Office for Older Adults and Senior Center.

Bravo to Elyria Catholic theater production

I'd like to congratulate Mr. Kevin Juguilon, his cast and crew, and all the faculty and staff advisors who helped create a wonderful night's entertainment in their production of William Shakespeare's comedy "Much Ado About Nothing." It is rare that a high school theater group attempts a work of Shakespeare. But these young people under Juguilon's direction were up to the task and presented a fresh, delightful offering last week on the Elyria Catholic stage.

Performing arts at Elyria Catholic began a renewal about 13 years ago under Nan Mahoney. That renewal has continued with Juguilon's vision, bringing major works such as "Les Miserables" into the school's repertoire, as well as this challenging work, and an original musical planned for this spring entitled, "Crossing Stars." The young performers are thriving under this renewal, and local theatergoers are the beneficiaries.

JOE GELETKA
Elyria