

The News Eagle

Advocate hired to serve child crime victims

By Peter Becker / Managing Editor

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MILFORD - Child victims of crimes in Pike County have a new advocate, Sara Loeb, who was introduced April 4 at the commissioners meeting by Pike County District Attorney Raymond Tonkin.

Loeb was hired through the Victims of Crime Act, a federal funding source. This is a newly created position. She has worked nervously for the District Attorney's Office. Tonkin said that as Special Victims Advocate, her main focus will be the Children's Advocacy Center that opened in 2017 in conjunction with the nonprofit agency, Safe Haven of Pike County, Inc.

Sara will be communicating with families of children who have been either abused or neglected, to help steer them to services available in Pike County, or in some cases outside the county.

Children's Advocacy Center is headquartered in the Safe Haven of Pike County offices in Milford. Children's Advocacy Center is described as providing minimal, organized trauma-sensitive investigation to child abuse cases in the county. The service was put in place in coordination with the Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Team. The team is a program put into place to:

- Promote the safety and best interest of the child
- Minimize the trauma experienced by the child
- Avoid duplication of fact-finding, including the child's exposure to multiple or leading interviews
- Preserve the integrity of justice
- Support justice and healing.

Tonkin said that introduction of the Special Victims Advocate dovetails with National Crime Victims' Right Week, April 8 - 14, 2018. The commissioners passed a resolution to support it. The theme this year is "Expand the Circle" referring to providing a broader effort to link victims with resources to help

them to recover. Those resources include, in part, healthcare providers, community leaders, faith organizations, educators and businesses to provide new links between victims and services that improve their safety, healing and access to justice.

For more information on the Children's Advocacy Center, contact Safe Haven of Pike County at 570-296-2827 (their 24-hour crisis line is 570-296-4357).

Sexual Assault Awareness

Christina Byrna is the newly hired executive director of Safe Haven of Pike County.

She reported that Safe Haven is noting Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April with several ways to participate:

- Child Safety Fair, Sat. April 7, 1-4 p.m. Lehman Park, Bushkill.
- Open Mic Night, Sat. April 14, 6:30 p.m., Frisky Goat Coffeehouse, 611 Broad St., Milford.
- Paint & Sip, Sat. April 23, 4- 5:30 p.m., Safe Haven, 402 Broad St., Milford.
- Clothesline Project, Sun. April 22, 1- 3 p.m., Lufty Lawn, 406 Broad St., Milford.
- Sacred Drumming, Wed., April 25, 7- 8:30 p.m., Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, 110 W. Catherine St., Milford.
- Take Back the Night, Thurs., April 26, 6:30- 8 p.m., Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, 110 W. Catherine St., Milford.

Other events are ongoing in April. Contact Safe Haven for more details.

[See the Wednesday print edition for more meeting items.]

Pike County Commissioners meet on the first and third Wednesday at 9 a.m. at the Administration Building, 506 Broad St., Milford.