

# Senior Citizens Fight Crime

## Local woman takes new approach on crime fighting in Akron

by Leanna Ross

University students have a new ally against crime.

Grandparents Against Sexual Predators, or GASP.

Little may be known about GASP by university students, but not for long.

The local organization has grown since its start in June, 2006 into a constantly growing faction of active advocates for child and student safety.

GASP has gone door-to-door passing out over 4,000 fliers containing safety tips to the citizens of Akron, and they've got more action on the horizon for Summit County.

Saturday, a Volunteer Social was held at the Chapel for the members of GASP to unite and get to know each other on a more personal level.

The founder of GASP, Fran Doll, and other board members were speakers at the event.

This group is a surprising cluster of not only grandparents, but people of all ages who want to promote safety and become actively involved in their community.

Doll, a highly motivated networking mastermind, founded the organization after seeing a report on Jessica Lunsford while she was with her husband in Florida.

Lunsford was a nine-year-old kidnap victim who was discovered raped and buried alive in February of 2005. Lunsford's story greatly moved Doll.

She said she felt "helpless," wondering why ordinary citizens weren't able to train for Amber Alerts in order to help search and rescue victims.

She wanted to put a stop to such violence. After realizing her networking capabilities and passion for helping others, Doll founded GASP, and has made tremendous progress since the idea first came to fruition.

The GASP members volunteer their time to helping in cases of sexual-abuse as well as many other dangerous threats to the community such as gun enforcement, abducted persons cases and anything where they can lend a helping hand,

Members are expertly trained by the Summit County Sheriffs Department in matters such as fingerprinting. They've fingerprinted over 1,000 children in the community as a means of keeping them safe, and have no plans of stopping.

On Feb. 2, the organization will be doing more hands-on training with the police to better equip themselves.

The Summit County Sheriffs Department isn't just giving GASP good advice and training lessons; they've also aided in other ways.

Besides giving Doll her own office at their station as a way of further involving GASP, the department also donated yellow safety vests for the search cases GASP is involved in. Other local organizations and businesses are also donating all they can to support the growing organization of over 157 volunteers.

Although the organization currently is limited to Summit County, Doll is hoping to one day target all of Ohio and perhaps go national.

This is not just the dream of one woman.

Doll has stated that she's been fortunate enough to have the support of America's Most Wanted; she emailed the TV show in hopes of getting tips to start her organization.

"They're in contact with us all the time, ready to take it national whenever we are," Doll said,

As for future prospects in Summit County, Mrs. Doll said that she's hoping to fingerprint all UA students in order to stop this violent "rash" of sexual assault and burglary cases in which UA students are involved. According to Doll, the campus police seem eager to help with this issue.

"There's still so much to do," said Doll. "With so many victims in the surrounding areas, and GASP's growing number of volunteers, it seems only a matter of time before the University of Akron is safety-ready and case-free."