



Student reports assault on High Street

At 9 p.m. Tuesday, officers reportedly met with a Miami University senior who said he had been assaulted in front of Jimmy John's.

The male reportedly told police he and his girlfriend were walking on the sidewalk in front of the restaurant when a short, possibly tan male bumped into him for no reason. As he continued walking, a tall, black male in a blue shirt reportedly punched him in the throat.

The student told police he began to run away but was struck in the back. When he continued to run, the taller male reportedly chased him for some time but eventually stopped.

The victim reportedly told police the taller male had yelled the shorter male's name but he didn't remember what it was.

There are currently no suspects in the case.

Juniors return to burglarized home

At 9:10 p.m. Sunday, officers met with residents of 116 E. Vine St. regarding a reported burglary that occurred sometime between March 11 and 12.

One of the residents, a Miami University junior, reportedly told police she returned home Friday and found mail scattered in the yard. When she entered the home, she reportedly found things thrown about the house and food and alcohol missing.

According to police reports, all of the doors and windows in the home were locked.

Another junior reportedly returned to the home later and found that her bathing suit was missing.

The landlord reportedly told police he had found a door open in the basement that would allow access to some of the house, but the person who entered the house would have had to have access to a key to get to the rest.

Both of the residents of the home reportedly told police they have had unfriendly interactions with a former student who may have had access to a key for the residence.

Police are continuing to investigate the case.

Restaurant employee discovers break-in

At 7 a.m. Tuesday, officers reportedly met with an employee of DiPaolo's restaurant regarding a case of breaking and entering.

The employee reportedly told police they had entered the office at 6 a.m. and found the safe tampered with and the door ajar.

Officers reportedly found the office in disarray and heavy damage done to the safe.

An undetermined amount of money totaling more than \$500 was taken from the vault.

Police are continuing to investigate the case.

Suspicious male talks to children in park

At 4:10 p.m. Thursday, officers were dispatched to the Oxford Community Park regarding a suspicious incident.

Officers met with a mother who said while her two kids were swinging a male approached her son and asked if he could hold his little sister.

The boy reportedly told the man no and he walked away.

According to police reports, the boy described the subject as an 18-year-old male with dark hair wearing jeans, a gray T-shirt and a black jacket.

Officers were reportedly unable to locate a suspect matching the description in the area.

By Abbie Harper
Senior Staff Writer

When Ohio residents go to the polls May 4, they will have the option of choosing Jennifer Brunner, a Miami University alumna and Ohio's first ever female Secretary of State, to be the Democratic nominee for Ohio's one available Senate seat.

If Brunner wins the primary, it will mark the first time in history a woman has ever been a nominee for an Ohio Senate seat.

"I can't believe it's 2010 and Ohio has never had a woman governor or a woman senator," Sandy Theis, public relations representative for Brunner, said.

Ohio is in the majority, as 23 states have had a female senator, and none of those has had more than three women serve in the U.S. Senate in their entire history.

Ohio will or will not become a part of that progressive minority,

pending the May election.

Brunner's closest competition in May's democratic primary will be Lee Fisher, Ohio's Lieutenant Governor. Governor Ted Strickland has officially endorsed Fisher. Theis said despite the fact that Fisher has the advantage in this election, Brunner's campaign is still going well.

"The fact that (Fisher) has all that money and support and Jennifer's still in the race is very impressive," Theis said.

John Collins, campaign spokesman for Fisher, said Fisher's campaign is focused on "rebuilding Ohio's middle class."

He said Fisher's main goal is to create better paying jobs for Ohioans. Collins said Fisher is not focusing on whom he's running against, but rather what he wants to change if elected.

"Regardless of who's in the race, Lee's going to be focused on saving jobs, creating jobs and attracting jobs to Ohio,"

Collins said.

While Fisher is banking on grassroots support, Brunner is hoping to appeal to Ohio's female voters.

"We think there will definitely be a gender gap for Jennifer," Theis said. "That will really help because there are more women than men and there are more women who are democratic primary voters."

Theis said supporters of Brunner's campaign are doing a lot of phone banking and going door to door at democratic households to rally further support.

Collins said Fisher's campaign is focusing on personal conversations with Ohioans and they have a lot of supporters at Miami University.

"We're out talking to voters every day about Lee's ideas," Collins said. "And we actually have a lot of Miami students working a grassroots campaign for us, too."

Aaron Bly, president of Miami

College Democrats, said they are currently supporting both Democratic candidates.

"We're staying pretty neutral right now," Bly said. "We're certainly not endorsing either candidate. We had Fisher come out in Oxford in May, and Brunner came out in August."

Bly said their goal is simply for a democrat to win, so they aren't favoring one democratic candidate over the other.

The winner of the democratic primary will face Republican Rob Portman in the main election Nov. 2.

The most recent poll conducted by Ramussen Reports placed Fisher and Brunner neck and neck, both led by Portman. The poll featured two main surveys, one with Portman facing Fisher, the other with Portman facing Brunner. In the first, Portman led Fisher 44 percent to 39 percent. In the second, Portman led Brunner 43 percent to 37 percent.

Mental illness course educates county families

By Amelia Carpenter
Features Editor

A free 12-week course called Family-to-Family, sponsored by the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) in Butler County, began March 8 in Fairfield, Ohio.

Family-to-Family is designed to help family members understand and cope with a relative who has a major mental health disorder. Teachers are family members who have completed the course previously and have been trained by NAMI. All attendees receive a free resource handbook.

Sally Fiehrer, executive director of NAMI Butler County, said for more than 20 years Family-to-Family has helped family members with friends or relatives struggling with a major mental health disorder to understand and cope.

"It's kind of a self-care program for families to learn how to take care of themselves," Fiehrer said. "(It creates) empathy toward the person that has the illness so they understand what's going on."

Throughout the 12 weeks, self-care, medication, medications management, coping skills and communication skills are addressed. Then specific illnesses are discussed, according to Fiehrer. Some illnesses include schizophrenia, bipolar illness, depression and anxiety disorders.

Fiehrer explained the level of misunderstanding for some families that are not educated about mental disorders.

"These are brain disorders by chemical or neurological disorders of the brain," Fiehrer said.

Fiehrer said sometimes families feel very much alone because of the stigma of these illnesses.

"They might not talk about it," Fiehrer said. "(And they might) not have a group of friends discussing it. In NAMI and Family-to-Family, (people) feel comfortable discussing these disorders. It's that instant message that they're not alone. These illnesses can happen to any family."

Jim Jones, a Butler County resident, heard about NAMI's Family-to-Family five or six years ago, and has since been giving back to NAMI by teaching the course. Jones and his wife have a son that suffers from bipolar disorder.

"(The class) helped me understand the situation that people suffer from mental disorders and the things they go through, (and you) get a new understanding of what your loved one is experiencing," Jones said.

Jones said the course was extremely helpful to him and his family and he sees that for others.

"The program overall just gives families overall suffering with a loved one with mental illness tools and coping skills to make them feel better, how they're doing and how their loved one is," Jones said.

Because the course is in a group setting, Jones was able to bond with the others in his course that were going through the same thing. Jones said it was difficult to talk about mental illness with a neighbor who perhaps didn't understand what he and his wife were going through with their son.

"I think there's comfort in togetherness," Jones said. "There's a certain bonding with the families suffering from the same thing. It helps a lot of people when they go through the course."

NAMI also has a follow-up support group for graduates of Family-to-Family.

"(The follow-up is) to keep that bonding growing," Fiehrer said. "It would be too bad if they just dropped it there."

Although membership is not required, NAMI teachers encourage attendees to join NAMI and the follow-up support groups.

NAMI also offers a program called Hand-to-Hand for families who have children under age 18 with one of the major mental illnesses.

Fiehrer said by late March or early May, NAMI would offer a Peer-to-Peer program for individuals with the illnesses. The Peer-to-Peer program is meant for those with mental illnesses who are steadily recovering; they also teach others with mental illnesses. Location and transportation logistics are in the works for the Peer-to-Peer sessions, according to Fiehrer.

Fiehrer said NAMI Butler County is available by phone for compassionate listening as well.

"We are available to families when they need us," Fiehrer said.

Fiehrer said NAMI Butler County feels the work Family-to-Family is doing is positive for the families taking part.

"It makes a difference in their lives," Fiehrer said. "They are armed with information maybe for the first time in their lives. That it really has helped thousands of people and thousands of families."

Registration limit is 20 people and at least nine spots remain. Classes are held once a week on Mondays from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the NAMI Butler County Office in Fairfield starting March 8. Membership is not required, but encouraged. NAMI membership costs for \$35 can be paid online. See <http://www.nami.org> for more information and other session dates and locations.

Call center to provide human services information

By Leslie Scott
Staff Writer

Butler County residents will no longer have to worry about finding resource centers as United Way plans to create a 24/7 phone service, which will allow access to an informational referral line.

By dialing 211, the phone service will connect anyone to various human services.

"A person can call the number and say 'My elderly mom is new to town and needs someone to help her during the day with meals,'" Maureen Noe, president of Butler County United Way, said. "211 would then find resources that provide in-home care for elderly people and transfer the caller over."

The group got the idea to create the call service in 2003. Before that time, Butler County United Way operated referral systems.

Another organization called the Community Crisis Hotline Center also provided a phone service to the people of Butler County. In 2003, the call center gained federal funding which allowed United Way to adopt the phone service.

Though United Way began working on the new phone service, 211 was not able to run the way they wanted. When people call 211 now, they are directed to a recording. The pre-recorded message redirects the patrons toward three other numbers: Cincinnati United Way, Butler County United Way and the Oxford Crisis Center.

In an attempt to offer people 24-hour access, United Way provides a Web site (<http://www.connectyou.org>) which has similar features.

"The site is good because it is another form of access," Noe said.

"People don't have to call and it is more private."

However, Noe said United Way feels a 24-hour phone service would be more beneficial overall. In order to get 211 back to some of its old habits, United Way has decided to pull together resources and make 211 a tri-county-run organization, which will involve Butler, Warren and Clinton counties.

"We want to raise money to provide this 24-hour care," Noe said. "It is all in the planning stages right now. It will hopefully be worked out in the next few months. We just received a grant from Ohio United Way towards the marketing plan. Therefore, we expect to launch our marketing campaign this summer."

The three county's United Ways are not merging together, but the three separate organizations are pooling resources toward creating the call center.

"The tri-county idea is very beneficial because it allows us to pull our money together which makes it very cost effective," Noe said. "It also works because it doesn't matter where the person is who answers the phone, as long as it is being answered. This process cuts down on service duplication."

Noe said the call center provides a great opportunity for the counties to work together. It allows call volume to be increased which means the call center will be helping more people overall.

The Community Crisis Hotline Center used to receive about 500 calls a week. The 211 call center is currently receiving about 350 calls a week. Due to the new funds United Way received from the state for marketing, 211 plans to reach numbers that far exceed 500.