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# News

Shelby - Utica

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# Call to action yields 148 pounds of unused meds

BY SARAH WOJCIK

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**SHELBY TOWNSHIP** — A local restaurant owner issued a challenge that if the Shelby Township Police Department could collect 100 pounds of prescription medications during May, he would donate \$1,000 to its Drug Abuse Resistance Education program.

The final counts are in, and the community dropped off 148 pounds of unused prescription medications last month.

“This is what makes our community great,” Shelby Township Supervisor Rick Stathakis said. “Anytime we issue a challenge to make the township a better place, the people of Shelby Township go above and beyond. We thought we might be able to collect 100 pounds, but to see 148 pounds turned in was truly amazing.”

In an average month, the Police Department collects 50 pounds of medications in a drop box in its lobby. The drop box is accessible 24/7 at 52530 Van Dyke Ave., south of 24 Mile Road.

The challenge came as a result of the Police Department’s 167-pound prescription medication takeaway during the township’s annual hazardous household waste collection event April 30, for a total haul of 315 pounds.

Domenic Belcastro, owner of Da Francesco’s Italian Cuisine and Taverna, issued the 100-pound challenge in conjunction with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency’s National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. In 2015, the nationwide

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Photo provided by Brad Bates

From left, Shelby Township Police Chief Robert Shelide, Da Francesco’s Italian Cuisine and Taverna owner Domenic Belcastro and Shelby Township Supervisor Rick Stathakis stand behind unused prescription drugs collected from the community at the Shelby Township Police Department.

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Photo provided by Brad Bates

**A bin contains unused, unwanted or expired prescription medications collected from the community during the month of May.**

## Meds

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initiative collected 350 tons of prescription drugs.

“Our family has been blessed enough to be part of the Shelby Township community for more than 25 years, and it feels really good knowing we can help give back a little,” Belcastro said. “This is a terrific place to live and do business because the people here genuinely care about one another and the community.”

Police officials destroyed the prescription medications before they could contaminate the environment or enter the hands of potential abusers.

Disposal of pharmaceutical controlled substances, such as hydrocodone, is regulated by the DEA and must be done according to specific standards. The most common form of disposing of pharmaceutical controlled substances is incineration.

“There is no doubt that, as a region and nation, we have problems with drug abuse, and a lot of that starts with prescription drug abuse,” Shelby Township Police Chief Robert Shelide said. “What’s really gratifying about the success of this challenge is that, as police officers, we know our community is just as committed to fighting drug abuse as our officers.”

According to the DEA, 4 out of 5 heroin users start with prescription drug abuse, often obtaining the medication from family members or acquaintances. In

2014, more than 24,500 fatalities nationwide were due to heroin and prescription opioid overdoses, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



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