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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Prosecutor Heck's Annual Violence Prevention Project Awards Ceremony Held**

**DAYTON, OH (5/2/2018)** – Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney Mat Heck, Jr. held the 28<sup>th</sup> annual Violence Prevention Project Award Ceremony today at the Dayton Masonic Center, 525 W. Riverview Avenue, Dayton, Ohio.

Approximately 1,400 students submitted entries for the contest, and prizes and awards were given to the top 150 winners of the project. Those students were invited to attend the ceremony and enjoyed a free pizza lunch, courtesy of Dayton's Original Pizza Factory. Prosecutor Heck also recognized many area teachers, noting that next week is National Teacher Appreciation Week. All the teachers in attendance received a gift certificate to Coco's Bistro.

The Violence Prevention Project's primary goal is to reduce the incidence of violence in Montgomery County by teaching school-age children that there are alternatives to using violence as a means to resolve personal or interpersonal problems. The Project encourages Montgomery County's youth to submit a poster or write an essay describing how violence affects our community and suggest constructive ways to prevent violence.

Many essays this year addressed the topic of school shootings. The students expressed their fears and concerns about the number of shootings and the ripple effects of violence. A significant number of the essays this year addressed the topic of bullying. Students recognize that classmates who are victims of bullying may turn to violence as a way to handle conflict.

Every student who entered the contest will receive a prize. Today's ceremony recognized some of the best entries, and those participants were awarded additional prizes. Continuing support for the Violence Prevention Project came from Montgomery County Sheriff Phil Plummer, Dayton Police Chief Richard Biehl, the Centerville and Kettering Police Departments, Arby's, Aullwood Audubon Center, the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery, Buffalo Wild Wings, Chick-fil-A, Coco's Bistro, Cold Stone Creamery, Firehouse Subs, Grater's Ice Cream, King's Island, the Kroger Aquatic Center at The Heights, Mike-Sells Potato Chips, Poelking Lanes, Sam's Club, Shumsky, SportClips Haircuts, Submarine House, Wal-Mart, Yogurt Mountain, and the University of Dayton.

Photos from the event and the winning posters will be featured in Prosecutor Heck's annual Violence Prevention Calendar, which is distributed each year.

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