



## OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**KEVIN R. STEELE**

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**EDWARD F. McCANN, JR.**

FIRST ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY**

COURTHOUSE

P.O. BOX 311

NORRISTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

19404-0311

**SAMUEL J. GALLEN**

CHIEF COUNTY DETECTIVE

**JESSE S. KING**

CHIEF OF STAFF

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S FAX**

**COUNTY DETECTIVE BUREAU**

**(610) 278-3090**

**(610) 278-3095**

**(610) 278-3368**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA Contact: Kate Delano o: 610-278-3148, c: 610-312-3487

### **“OPERATION SAFE HOMES,” FREE GUN TURN-IN EVENT, SCHEDULED BY MONTGOMERY COUNTY DA, POLICE CHIEFS FOR SEPT. 12 & 15**

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (August 22, 2018) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, Abington Township Police Chief Patrick Molloy, Lower Merion Township Police Superintendent Michael J. McGrath, Lower Salford Township Police Chief Thomas A. Medwid, Pottstown Borough Police Chief Michael Markovich, Upper Merion Township Police Chief Thomas Nolan and Whitpain Township Police Chief Kenneth Lawrence announce a free, gun collection event on Wednesday, Sept. 12 and Saturday, Sept. 15 at six police departments throughout Montgomery County. There is no payment for the guns. This event, called “Operation Safe Homes,” is a public service to help people get rid of unwanted guns.

Consider several facts:

- 13 million households in the United States contain both young children and a gun;\*
- Eight children are unintentionally killed or injured by a gun at home every single day in the United States—that’s 3,000 children in 2016.
- 127 of those children died.
- In our region (Philadelphia/Wilmington), three children—a 2-year-old, 4-year-old and 12-year-old—shot themselves in their own homes since last November. Two died.\*\*

“The accidental death or injury of a child due to a gunshot is a family tragedy that is avoidable, and it happens eight times every single day in the United States when a child finds a gun in his house and accidentally shoots himself or herself,” said Steele. “It’s a tragedy we are hoping to avoid in Montgomery County. This is an event to get unwanted guns out of houses and have them safely destroyed so they don’t end up in the hands of curious little ones or the hands of criminals.”

Whether it’s a couple of guns left to the family by a grandparent, an old hunting rifle that’s seen better days or a handgun no longer wanted in the house in the suburbs, any firearm will be accepted from 4 to 8 p.m. on Sept. 12 and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sept. 15 at one of six police departments in Montgomery County serving as “Operation Safe Homes” drop-off locations

The locations are:

- **Abington Township Police Department**, 1166 Old York Road, Abington;
- **Lower Merion Township Police Department**, 71 E. Lancaster Ave., Ardmore;
- **Lower Salford Township Police Department**, 349 Main Street, Harleysville;
- **Pottstown Borough Police Department**, 100 E. High Street, Pottstown;
- **Upper Merion Township Police Department**, 100 West Valley Forge Road, King of Prussia;
- **Whitpain Township Police Department**, 960 Wentz Road, Blue Bell.

All *unloaded* firearms will be accepted, and all collected firearms will be melted down and permanently destroyed. No bullets, magazines or clips will be accepted.

“Many people have both guns and children or grandchildren in their homes and are uncomfortable with that fact. We are making it easy to get rid of unwanted guns and make sure they are destroyed rather than being sold on,” said Steele. “Protect your children from what is now being called ‘family fire’ by getting unwanted guns out of your house at our free Operation Safe Homes gun turn-in event. ‘Family fire’ is a bullet you can dodge.”

On August 8, 2018, the “End Family Fire Campaign” was launched by the Ad Council with its stated mission being to put safety first and promote responsible gun ownership by raising awareness of the accidental gun-related injuries that occur in or near the home, especially those involving children. A commercial public service announcement was released on 8/8 to note that eight children are killed or injured each day in “family fire.” The powerful video can be accessed at <http://endfamilyfire.org/> or on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63Ip-SrUoIQ>.

For questions about the “Operation Safe Home” event, citizens can call the Montgomery County Detective Bureau at 610-278-3368 or any of the six participating police departments.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele

\* Firearm Storage in Gun-Ownning Households with Children: Results of a 2015 National Survey, Journal of Urban Health (June 2018) <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11524-018-0261-7>

\*\* Aug. 3, 2018: 12-year-old in Wilmington, Del., shot himself in the chest and died; April 1, 2018: a 4-year-old in Philadelphia shot himself in the leg and survived; and Nov. 10, 2017: a 2-year-old in Philadelphia shot himself and died.