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Victim advocate begins work at KSP

By JUSTIN STORY jstory@bgdailynews.com Oct 19, 2019

Shannon Pickett

After 27 years shaping young minds as an educator, Shannon Pickett has moved into a new line of work, and she hopes the skills acquired as a teacher and administrator can transfer to her new job.

Pickett, a Glasgow resident, began work Wednesday as the victim advocate for Kentucky State Police Post 3 in Bowling Green.

As a victim advocate, Pickett will connect crime victims with necessary resources such as legal support, mental health services or crisis intervention.

If, for instance, domestic violence victims need a safe place to stay or someone from out of town totals their car in a crash investigated by KSP, Pickett can help direct those people to what they need.

Pickett will also act as a liaison between law enforcement and victims.

Before joining KSP, Pickett had been a high school English teacher and later an assistant principal at a high school and elementary school in the region.

“When I retired from education, I knew I wanted to do something else that was the right fit, and I wanted to provide assistance to people who need help, not just children in education,” said Pickett, a Munfordville native and Western Kentucky University graduate with a master’s degree in secondary education. “As an assistant principal in the school system, I’ve dealt with a lot of victims, whether it was a victim of bullying or some kind of abuse outside of school.”

The victim advocate program is a new initiative at KSP, launched last month under the official name of Victim Advocate Support Services.

Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Victims of Crime Advocacy program, the initiative will place a trained victim advocate at each of KSP’s 16 posts.

A total of \$2.5 million was awarded to the program, with KSP providing a \$632,000 match.

The grant funds vehicles for each position, a program director and training in the areas of advocacy, trauma-centered case and compassion fatigue.

“This will enhance our agency’s ability to assist victims of crime, domestic violence and large-scale incidents,” said Trooper Daniel Priddy, KSP Post 3 spokesman. “They can help victims of violent crimes or sexual abuse find resources and help in navigating the criminal justice system.”

Pickett said she has made contact with April Fulcher, the Bowling Green Police Department’s longtime victim advocate, and is looking forward to getting to know people in other agencies, such as Hope Harbor and Barren River Child Advocacy Center, who can help in her new position.

“I think what’s most important is I want to develop a relationship with victims so they know they can trust me to help them get the services they need to heal from whatever trauma they’ve gone through,” Pickett said. “I just hope that I can make a bad situation better for those involved.”

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Justin Story

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