

Alan J. McCarthy
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CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Dear Cecil County Citizens,

Thanksgiving is just a few days away. Time passes at such amazing speed as everyone is so busy with efforts addressing multiple priorities that there doesn't seem to be enough time to satisfy them all. This is the holiday that we traditionally believe is the opportunity to express our appreciation, relax and refocus. Thanksgiving is an American holiday created to do just that. I hope that you and your loved ones are facing this holiday season with joy, optimism and confidence, but truth be told, all is not well in our "world."

As an example, two weeks ago a sixteen year old student attending Saugus High School in Santa Charita, California, took a revolver to school, shot and killed two students and wounded three others before turning the gun on himself.

It's very tough to imagine how the families of the students involved are approaching this Thanksgiving holiday with a positive and optimistic outlook. In interviews with reporters, students shared that they had recently gone through active shooter training and had taken appropriate actions to avoid the shooter. Two students noted that they were in possession of implements prepared to throw at the shooter and then attack him, again as instructed in their recent training.

Do you think that's far away and doesn't impact us? The Cecil County Sheriff's Office provides active shooter training for the students attending our local schools. Active shooter drills are conducted on a regular basis. The training under the A.L.I.C.E. program is taken most seriously by students, teachers and staff.

Just recently, the County Government Administrative Complex was closed to the general public for a few hours so County government employees could participate in an active shooter drill. Mass shootings have become so frequent in schools, workplaces or at social gatherings that one could easily become depressed. The reality suggests however, that we have become callous with these tragedies and quickly move on to our daily routines.

We, you and I, cannot let that happen. We must refuse to allow this tragic intrusion into our lives and work to restore a sense of order and sanity. We have no choice. We must acknowledge, but not accept the realities of the present day. When visiting with family and friends next Thursday, yes, be thankful for the many blessings we receive but re-commit and pledge your resolve to make our world a better place. It is a difficult task individually, but together we will succeed.

I ask that each of us, during this Thanksgiving holiday, remember those in need and, if able, contribute our time and resources to organizations that strive to assist those less fortunate. We are blessed to live in the United States and I hope you feel the same about residing in Cecil County.

We do have much to be proud of, but at the same moment must acknowledge that we each have a duty to insure that tomorrow is better than today for each of us.

Happy Thanksgiving, Cecil County!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan J. McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and "M".

Dr. Alan J. McCarthy
County Executive