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## Police are sharing addresses of sex offenders on social media ahead of Halloween. Does it make a difference?

**Cameron Knight**, Cincinnati Enquirer    Published 9:33 p.m. ET Oct. 28, 2019



Autumn gourds and fruit sit atop a table. (Photo: BrianAJackson, Getty Images/iStockphoto)

Ahead of Halloween trick-or-treating, two local police departments have posted on Facebook lists of addresses where sex offenders live in their jurisdictions.

The information is public record, but critics say the practice of calling out those on the sex offender registry creates unnecessary panic and makes it harder for those who have already served their time to assimilate back into society.

Mount Healthy Police Chief Vincent Demasi said his department's intention is to keep both families and those on the registry safe and out of trouble.

Mount Healthy (<https://www.facebook.com/mthealthy.pd/photos/a.609800449154163/1688558224611708/?type=3&theater>) and North College Hill ([https://www.facebook.com/NCHPD/posts/2470969629639148?\\_xts=%5B0%5D=68.ARDd80snPyw93aCsVeERIXmuSBrHapNTYrbUuqn3-JA2yXpOrptTgprdl\\_sLJlpCd\\_bDh1-vUe9sWnE\\_7NLmLzTJfhtkP3O7IOa4mg8LGnVO-nOFeQ3bCHE6zv8Oe5UUUScJT4pDLsE07C\\_uCC57Lga94Z\\_2rKyKrPcZ7tuQNNP1faVGnTMoJpdmkcc9VUDA7D9v2nY-AIBDsz9xJsZG8IIVQ1mV8w9CmUjfWKK77ULQZqE5xBvN6DKEIUPrRd1reassNcj\\_y8sU62Q3vtlB4ORM-7SJRpErPACsYKmlCbPNE3HjdVQDqG\\_RFSAZK0eXqDrLmiVG\\_Y0zaDZMz2MKopQ&\\_tn=-R](https://www.facebook.com/NCHPD/posts/2470969629639148?_xts=%5B0%5D=68.ARDd80snPyw93aCsVeERIXmuSBrHapNTYrbUuqn3-JA2yXpOrptTgprdl_sLJlpCd_bDh1-vUe9sWnE_7NLmLzTJfhtkP3O7IOa4mg8LGnVO-nOFeQ3bCHE6zv8Oe5UUUScJT4pDLsE07C_uCC57Lga94Z_2rKyKrPcZ7tuQNNP1faVGnTMoJpdmkcc9VUDA7D9v2nY-AIBDsz9xJsZG8IIVQ1mV8w9CmUjfWKK77ULQZqE5xBvN6DKEIUPrRd1reassNcj_y8sU62Q3vtlB4ORM-7SJRpErPACsYKmlCbPNE3HjdVQDqG_RFSAZK0eXqDrLmiVG_Y0zaDZMz2MKopQ&_tn=-R)), police departments published lists of addresses this month ahead of Halloween. Mount Healthy has seven residences on its list, while North College Hill has 12.

In Ohio, the names and current addresses of sex offenders can be seen by anyone on the [state's online sex offender database](https://ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/site/residents/resources/sex-offender-search) (<https://ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/site/residents/resources/sex-offender-search>).

The two posts combined had garnered 64 comments and more than 1,000 shares as of Monday.

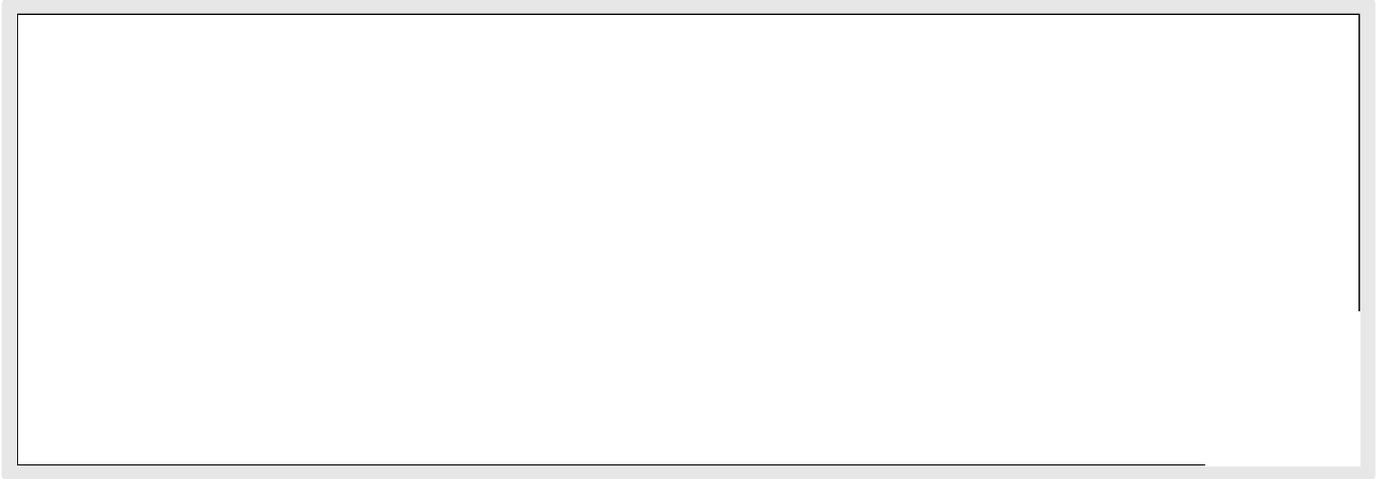
Most of the comments were supportive and thanked the police for the information.

"Please use caution around these addresses during Trick-or-Treat," it said on the North College Hill police Facebook page.

"These are the locations in Mouny Healthy you should avoid during Trick-or-Treat (or any other time)," the other post said.

Sandy Rozek is the communications director for the National Association for Rational Sex Offense Laws. She says studies indicate posting the lists are unnecessary.

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"This is contrary to what research shows is best for rehabilitation," Rozek said. "It's such a totally made-up issue. There is no increased risk of sexual harm to children on Halloween."

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Rozek said the vast majority of people on sex offender registries will never commit another offense and virtually all sex crimes against children is committed by people they know – family and other authority figures.

A Department of Justice report from 2000 stated [about 85 percent of child sex abuse was committed by family members or acquaintances](https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/saycrle.pdf) (<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/saycrle.pdf>). A 2003 study published by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics found that [within three years of their release 94.7 percent of sex offenders did not commit another sex crime](https://www.smart.gov/SOMAPI/sec1/ch5_recidivism.html) ([https://www.smart.gov/SOMAPI/sec1/ch5\\_recidivism.html](https://www.smart.gov/SOMAPI/sec1/ch5_recidivism.html)).

She added that people have been attacked and even murdered because their names and address appeared on sex offender registries.

In 2014 in South Carolina, [Jeremy and Christine Moody killed Charles Parker and his wife](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2014/05/06/white-supremacist-couple-pleads-guilty-union-county-deaths/8761751/) ([/story/news/crime/2014/05/06/white-supremacist-couple-pleads-guilty-union-county-deaths/8761751/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2014/05/06/white-supremacist-couple-pleads-guilty-union-county-deaths/8761751/)). Parker was a registered sex offender for crimes committed more than a decade earlier. In court, Jeremy Moody said God told him to kill sex offenders.

"The public already has the impression that everyone on the registry has harmed a child and... they are just sitting there waiting to do it again," Rozek said. "They were punished. They are trying to move on with their lives."

Rozek's organization is fighting to keep sheriff's departments in Georgia from posting signs in the yards of those on the registry.

Demasi said his department has no intention of doing that and does not think that is a good idea.

Some of the comments on the North College Hill and Mount Healthy Facebook posts suggested there was more to be done than just avoiding the homes.

"Let's egg those houses in support of the victims," one person wrote.

"Post some names with it," another said.

"If their lights are on and (they are) participating, report them asap!!" a third wrote.

As of Monday, only a single commenter on either post opposed the practice stating: "I think this police department should be sued for this. You pigs are inviting vigilante scum to commit crimes."

Demasi said his department has been making similar Facebook posts for at least five years and there have been no reports of vigilante incidents against the addresses they list.

Demasi said some people on the registry are not allowed near children, and posting these addresses protects them from having kids show up on their doorstep, potentially landing them in legal trouble.

He added his department receives calls every year by residents asking what homes to avoid, so the Facebook post answers a common question.

"It's designed more for community dialog than anything else," Demasi said. "We're in the business of protecting people, not in the business of ostracizing people."

Rozak said police departments should use data to focus on dangers that pose a real risk. For kids on Halloween, she says that means traffic safety – as far more children are out walking around on the streets.

The North College Hill Police Department had not responded to a request for comment at the time of publication.

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