



September 2022

Roundtable Review

Message from our CEO

Greetings,

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Many of us have been touched by the loss of a loved one and have been left wondering “how did we miss this?”. Suicide is a formidable foe. We all know loved ones and acquaintances who are suffering silently with a smile on their faces. According to the CDC, before the pandemic suicide was the second leading cause of death among youth ages 10-24, and has been increasing ever since 2007, with a 60% increase between 2007 and 2018. The CDC reported in recent years, that the pandemic and the national discourse regarding race relations, and gender equality have exacerbated mental health challenges amongst our youth. CDC data indicated in 2021, 37% of high school students reported they experienced poor mental health and 44% reported they persistently felt sad or hopeless during the past year. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and females reported greater levels of mental or emotional abuse by a caregiver, or contemplated suicide, than their counterparts. Further, over a third (36%) of students said they experienced racism, with the highest levels amongst Asian students (64%) and Black students and students of multi-races (both 55%). We must be vigilant in recognizing individuals who may be at risk. Some of the warning signs of suicide include sleeplessness or insomnia, eating too much or too little, showing signs of despair, mood swings, acting agitated or aggressive, avoiding people and spending more time than usual alone, behaving recklessly, talking about feeling hopeless and having no reason to live or looking for ways to harm himself or herself.



There are some things we can do to support individuals at risk for suicide. Be a caring adult. After all, that is what Kids at Hope is all about. Ask questions. Wrap the person in love, understanding, and support. Listen. Check-in. Provide resources, such as 211 or 988, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Connect the youth with professional help. We can be part of the solution to ensure our children remain “Kids at Hope”. Our youth and families need us more than ever. Be there.

Teresa Bishop
Chief Executive Officer



SUPPORT • ADVOCATE • CURE

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Special Dates in August:

- National Suicide Prevention Week 9/5-9/11
- Read a Book Day 9/6
- International Literacy Day 9/8
- World Suicide Prevention Day 9/10
- Grandparents Day 9/12
- Student Sleep Health Week 9/13 -9/19
- Child Passenger Safety Week 9/19-25
- World Heart Day 9/29



“As an adult and a Treasure Hunter, I am committed to search for all the talents, skills, and intelligence that exist in all children and youth. I believe that ALL children and youth are capable of success, No Exceptions!”

A Tale of Two Aces

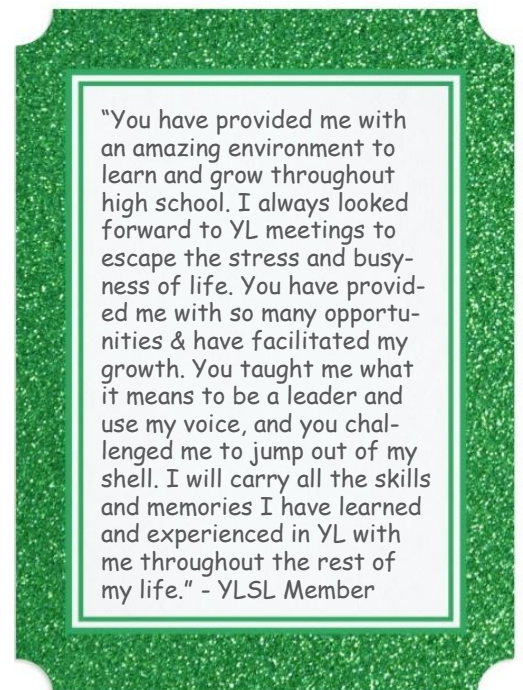
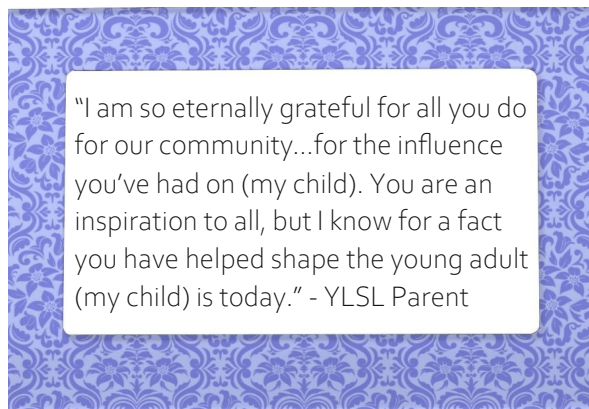
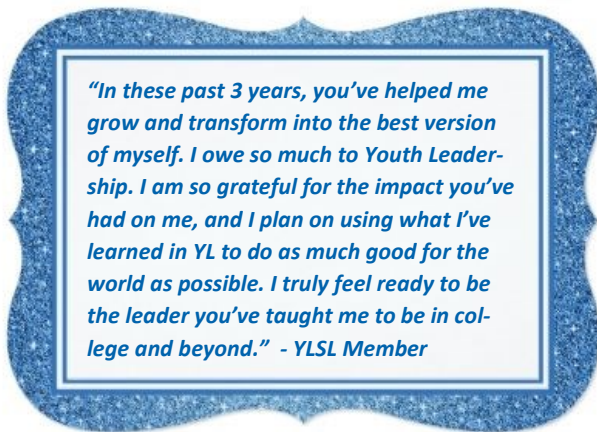


Written by: Kim Reid & Kevin Singletary

For nearly five years, we have had the privilege of serving as Youth Advisors for Youth Leadership St. Lucie as a part of the Kids at Hope initiative. We have met hundreds of high school students from all walks of life and welcomed them equally into a circle of their amazing peers with the hope that they would learn from one another, build each other up, and collectively make positive changes in their communities.

While it is certainly our objective to equip and strengthen our youth as leaders, we dare say it is not our *primary* objective. First and foremost, we aim to establish relationships, for they provide the gateway that allows us to effectively teach the leadership skills the youth desire.

Operating under the mantra “youth-led, adult-guided”, we have learned at least as much from the youth as they have from us. Perhaps the greatest lesson the youth have taught us is that we are often unaware of our impact on them. As our senior members graduated and headed to college, they did not leave us guessing about how they benefitted from participating in Youth Leadership. Allow us to humbly share the heartfelt sentiments of two of our incredible Youth Leadership members and one parent, as written in farewell cards that we were presented.



Kids at Hope refers to adults who connect with children and youth in meaningful, sustainable ways as “Aces”. We are incredibly grateful for the continued opportunity to serve as much-needed “Aces” for our county’s youth. ~ Kim Reid, Kids at Hope School & Community Liaison & Kevin Singletary, Kids at Hope Project Coordinator.

A PART OF THE CAMPUS



The Roundtable's community partners started the school year off with a bang! Many have answered the call to participate in the Tunnels of Hope at various schools throughout the district. The back to school tunnels were held the first two weeks of school. The Kids at Hope Team and the Roundtable would like to thank everyone who participated in the Tunnels of Hope reaching over 5,000 students and numerous staff.



The St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office sent representation to every Tunnel of Hope. Lieutenant Keith Pearson, who serves as the supervisor for the School Resource Division at the Sheriff's Office shared his perspective on the importance and impact of the Tunnels on both students and School Resource Deputies (SRDs). He shared that the core beliefs of Kids at Hope align with the approach his staff is taking in schools. His deputies have the opportunity each day to engage with and impact 40,000+ students in St. Lucie County. The Tunnels at the start of the school year open the door for sixty SRDs to give a smile and word of encouragement to each student, which Kids at Hope refers to as a "moment of truth".

Lt. Pearson stated that SRDs seek to positively impact the students in St. Lucie County from Kindergarten through 12th grade and dismantle the largely existing "us vs. them" paradigm. Deputies are in schools to not only protect, but to build a bridge of trust between students and law enforcement. During the Tunnels, students often approached their SRDs with a hug, fist bump, or a huge smile, which was indicative of the positive relationships that have been successfully established. Several SRDs were attentive to the needs of their students by silencing the Tunnels for those who have sensory issues, or by escorting apprehensive students through the Tunnel to provide encouragement and reassurance.

Lt. Pearson also shared that the Tunnels of Hope are creating an opportunity for change in how the community views law enforcement. Many SRDs are an "Ace", i.e., a caring adult, for students at their respective schools. According to Lt. Pearson, "SRDs are on-site to be protectors, not enforcers. They are not just *on* campus, but a *part* of the campus."

The Tunnels of Hope provide a great opportunity for "Treasure Hunters" in our community to show their support and encouragement to all of the phenomenal students of St. Lucie County. We believe all children are capable of success, NO EXCEPTIONS!



DRUG FREE ST. LUCIE

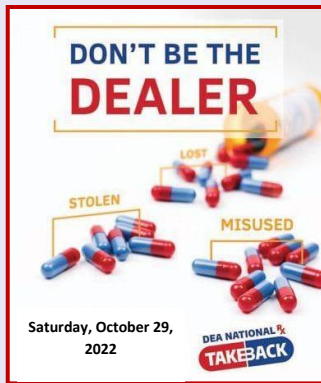
A Network of the Roundtable of St. Lucie County



National Red Ribbon Week is October 23-31, 2022.

The theme this year is ***Celebrate Life. Live Drug Free.*** and is a reminder that everyday Americans across the country make significant daily contributions to their communities by being the best they can be because they live drug free!

Visit www.RedRibbon.org for more information.



Save the Date: National Prescription Drug Take Back Day -

Saturday October 29th, 2022.

Drug Free St. Lucie Project Coordinator, Jovil Wharton with Planning Committee Representatives. From left to right: Dallas Spruill, Adrian Kinkead and Michael Johnson from the Department of Health and SSG Christopher Pierce, Florida National Guard.



Social Norm Campaign – Drug Free St. Lucie supports upcoming activities for teens and tweens at the St. Lucie County Public Libraries and provided 1,000 ***Friday Night, Done Right*** bookmarks to be placed in the teens and tweens check-out books.

friday night
DONE RIGHT
No alcohol. No dope.



Youth attitudes and behaviors are highly influenced by what they perceive their peers' attitudes and behaviors to be. Those misperceptions can lead youth to conform to risky behaviors, such as drinking or drug use, because they believe that is the norm. Correcting this misperception allows youth to act in a way that aligns with their own beliefs, which most often involves positive behaviors.

Friday Night, Done Right is a prevention strategy aimed to correct the misperception, and dispel the myths about substance use being the norm among peers. The campaign focuses on having fun without substance use. It empowers teens by giving them positive messages and the ability to make important choices about how they spend not only their Friday nights, but other time as well. It also reinforces to those teens who are already spending their Friday nights without alcohol and drugs that it is normal, and they don't need alcohol and other substances to have a good time.

The library system already has events and social activities that give teens a healthy and safe environment where they can have fun, and consequently Drug Free St. Lucie sees this as a great partnership opportunity to deliver the ***Friday Night, Done Right*** Campaign message.

THANK YOU!!



Street Outreach is by far one of the most difficult yet rewarding jobs out there. It requires dedication, heart, hard work, and the drive to never stop. Transportation is a major barrier for the youth IGNITE serves. We must be able to transport youth to critical appointments and services.

Thanks to the Andrew & Robin Hunt Philanthropic Fund, IGNITE Youth Alliance was able to purchase a Chevrolet Traverse! It seats seven, which allows us to take youth groups on incredibly fun adventures. We are excited to continue to explore the many new ways this vehicles provides us to better serve our IGNITE youth. Again, we want to thank Andrew and Robin Hunt for their incredibly generous donation. Our new vehicle is fabulous, take a look!



Our Sponsors:



Our Board Members

- ◆ Terissa Aronson, St. Lucie Chamber of Commerce
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- ◆ Nate Spera, St. Lucie County Fire District
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- ◆ Dana Trabulsky, State Representative
- ◆ Andrew Treadwell, Indian River State College
- ◆ Lisa von Seelen, Healthy Start Coalition of St. Lucie County

Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc.

Our Mission:

To sustain a team of county and business leaders who mobilize resources to improve the education, health, safety, nutrition and care of all children in St. Lucie County.

Our Vision:

We envision a community where county leaders, businesses and residents are united to provide all children of St. Lucie County the resources they need to thrive, be successful and achieve their full potential.

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AT LARGE

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- ◆ **Markesha Brockington, Outreach Worker**
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