



February 2023

# Roundtable Review

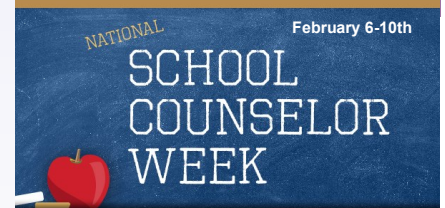
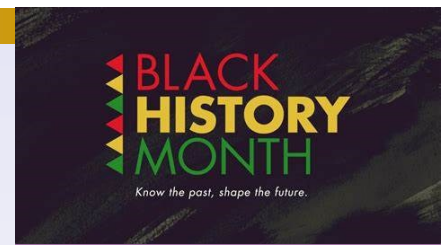
## Message from our CEO

Greetings,

Black History Month is a very special Kids at Hope month. The celebration of the contributions of African Americans began in 1926 and was known as Negro History Week. The week coincided with the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln, the signer of the emancipation proclamation, and Frederick Douglas, a social reformer who fought against slavery. Fifty years later, during our nation’s bicentennial in 1976, the celebration was expanded to a month by President Gerald R. Ford. He urged Americans to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history”. In high school, Black History Month became a game-changer for me and my peers. As a Kid a Hope trying to find my way, I have fond memories of dressing up like and celebrating great black Americans that contributed to our nation’s progress that I did not have the opportunity to learn about otherwise. Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell were inventors that were well-known names in our history books, but I was fascinated when I learned that Lewis Latimer, an African American inventor, electrical engineer, and patent attorney, worked closely with both Edison and Bell. Mr. Latimer invented the filaments for the light bulb, drew up the blueprints for Bell’s patent for the telephone, and was responsible for numerous other inventions. We learned about Alice Parker who patented and designed the central heating furnace and Valerie Thomas, a physicist for NASA who developed the illusion transmitter, the technology used to take pictures of space used by NASA today. It was empowering. I didn’t read or see much about the contributions of black Americans to our great nation. Black History month allowed me an opportunity to “time travel” as we teach in our Kids at Hope initiative, to emulate others that looked like me in the future. It gave me hope, made me proud, and became my inspiration that I was capable of success. Black History Month is an opportunity to ensure all of our youth can envision, dream and hope for their future-NO exceptions! Join me as we celebrate Black History Month--together.



**Teresa Bishop**  
Chief Executive Officer



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### Special Dates:

- National Freedom Day 2/1
- Groundhog Day 2/2
- Valentine’s Day 2/14
- President’s Day 2/20
- School Bus Driver Appreciation Day 2/22



# 100% of Teens Said: "YES, I Would Encourage Others To Attend YOUTH CON!"

Equipped with their Drug Free St. Lucie swag bag and dressed in their Youth Con t-shirts, the red carpet was rolled out for 56 St. Lucie County middle and high school teens who attended the first annual One St. Lucie Youth Con, held on December 10th, 2022, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Indian River State College, Pruitt Campus—STEM building.

The Boys & Girls Club’s Percy Peek Teen Center Cheer Team kicked off the day’s event with high energy and excitement with their cheer routine, and DJ Zoe Papi kept everyone moving and grooving throughout the day. Youth Leadership St. Lucie led the Kids at Hope Pledge & the Pledge of Allegiance, and the official welcome remarks were given by Teresa Bishop, Roundtable CEO, Andy Treadwell, IRSC Pruitt Campus President, and Jovil Whar-ton, Project Coordinator, Drug Free St. Lucie



Youth participated in breakout sessions that provided them with:

- \* Decision-making skills on how they can train themselves to make the best choices for everyday life.
- \* Steps they can take toward healing, having examined factors that impact their mental health, COVID or no COVID.
- \* Knowledge of how to navigate the risks involved with the stranger side of the internet.

In addition, as experts in knowing what is happening in their community, Youth Con attendees were encouraged to “keep it real” during the Teen Talk session, which explored risk factors surrounding youth and substance misuse. Other engaging activities included a virtual 360 photo booth to capture fun moments, as well as outdoor games including a basketball free throw and life-sized games of checkers, Connect-4 and Jenga. Excited for the opportunity to win Visa gift cards, a PS4 gaming system, and a wireless party speaker, Youth Con attendees eagerly awaited the raffle drawings that took place throughout the event.

Profound gratitude is extended to our Drug Free St. Lucie Community partners who were involved in the planning of this event, Y. Engage and the Port St. Lucie Police Department for facilitating the sessions, St. Lucie County for sponsoring the meals, Youth Leadership St. Lucie for assisting with promoting the event, Indian River State College for hosting the event, youth-serving agencies for promoting and registering their teens, our volunteers Carliyah Pratt, Susanna Toledo, Rickehsa McQueen, and Tessa Falatovich, and Roundtable staff Kevin Singletary and Dana Espinosa.

With the success of this event, Drug Free St. Lucie looks forward to even greater teen participation and community support, so mark your calendar for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual One St. Lucie Youth Con coming in December 2023!



**Thank You Again To Our Sponsors!**



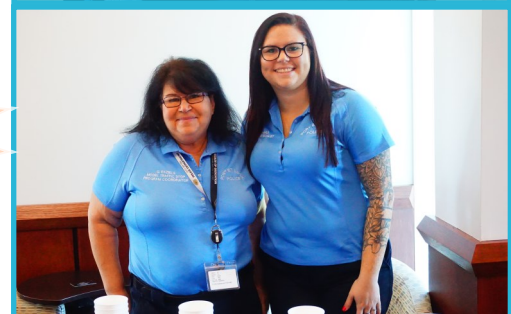
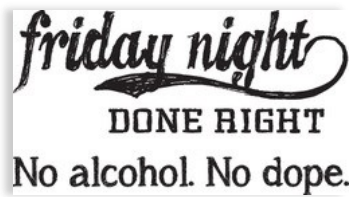


Photo Credit: TC360



## A Dance To Remember

# Capture the Spirit of the Hawk - "Friday Night, Done Right" Glow Winter Dance

Southern Oaks Middle School



Karen Lane, the D.A.T.A. Project Success Counselor at Southern Oaks Middle School, works with students to provide prevention education, individual and group counseling, and referral services. Ms. Lane contacted Drug Free St. Lucie to partner with the school for an event that would be fun and engaging for students. The event, a school dance, not only presents a great opportunity for the school to do fundraising, but also creates a feeling of school pride. These types of school events help develop students' social skills, create lasting memories with friends, and provide a safe space for teens to have fun.

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, the Southern Oaks Middle School's gymnasium glowed, as three hundred and fifty (350) energetic middle school students rushed in with excitement for their "Friday Night, Done Right" Glow Winter Dance. The students enjoyed pizza, refreshments, and a variety of snacks. They danced to the high-energy music being played by the DJ and had a fun time taking pictures together in the 360-photo booth.

The Drug Free St. Lucie Project Coordinator was also in attendance and provided students and staff with **Friday Night, Done Right**, and Drug Free St. Lucie swag. The feedback received from school officials was overwhelmingly positive. They were very appreciative of the support provided to create this experience for their students, especially due to the impact COVID has had on students. **Friday Night, Done Right** is a social norm campaign that empowers teens to recognize that it is normal to be involved in activities that are fun, and that does not involve the use of substances such as alcohol and other drugs. Contact the Project Coordinator, Jovil Wharton at [JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org](mailto:JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org) if you would like support with your school event.



# Prevention and Education on Cannabis

Whether you call it marijuana, “ganja”, “pot”, “bud”, “Mary Jane”, or “hashish”, we can all agree that cannabis policies, and the cannabis industry and landscape are changing. We can also agree, that some teens are involved in risky behaviors, such as vaping and smoking marijuana, and other illicit drugs that can lead to addiction and mental health issues. The 2022 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) data for St. Lucie County, indicates that past 30-day marijuana use for middle school students is 2.1% and for high school students 7.3%. For vaping marijuana, past 30-day use is 2.2% for middle school students and 5.1% for high school students.

Drug Free St. Lucie has invited subject matter experts from the National Marijuana Initiative to present at a **Marijuana Summit**, to dispel misconceptions about marijuana, and to raise awareness of issues surrounding the drug, so that our community members and policy-makers can make well-informed decisions.

During these presentations attendees will:

- ◇ Learn about the impact of legalization on public health and public safety.
- ◇ Examine the most current research and data.
- ◇ Understand what to expect for the next decade of legalization.
- ◇ Review clinical data/personal case histories which show the natural progression from vaping to alcohol/marijuana to opiate/opioid abuse, especially among youth and young adults.
- ◇ Obtain useful information on how our youth can recognize warning signs, minimize their risks and get help if needed.
- ◇ Analyze drug policy and how it has undergone immense changes over the past several years, and how those changes also manifest in the physical makeup of cannabis plants and products. Explore marijuana’s impact on mental health and treatment.

**The Marijuana Summit will host 75-100 people and will take place on Thursday, March 2, 2023, 8:15 am – 1:00 pm at the FENN Center, (flyer on the following page).** A grab and go lunch will be provided. Visit the EVENTS page on our website for additional details at: [www.RoundtableSLC.org](http://www.RoundtableSLC.org) or **REGISTER TODAY** at: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WB7BGDG](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WB7BGDG) or scan the QR code on the flyer.

## **MEET THE PRESENTERS:**

**Ed Shemelya** is a 30-year veteran of the Kentucky State Police and is currently the National Coordinator of the National Marijuana Initiative, an Initiative that is responsible for assisting and improving the capabilities of the thirty-three (33) high-intensity Drug Trafficking Areas nationwide in carrying out the National Drug Control Strategy objectives of disrupting domestic trafficking and production of and reducing demand for marijuana and derivative products.

**William J. Lynch Jr.** is a practicing clinical pharmacist with Jefferson Health System where he is a member of the Pain Management & Addiction Committee. He is also an Expert Affiliate Member of the International Academy on the Science and Impact of Cannabis (IASIC) and a health-care professional partner of the Keep Delaware Safe & Healthy Coalition and for the State of Delaware Substance Abuse Epidemiological Outcomes Working Group.

**Ben Cort** is considered a subject matter expert on ethical treatment practices, having written a widely adopted curriculum on the subject and frequently discusses the topic on national platforms and media. He is also utilized by professional sports leagues, clubs, and collegiate athletic programs to determine the appropriate treatment for their athletes, coaches, and their families as well as develop recovery-oriented policies. Ben’s passion for recovery, prevention, and harm reduction comes from his personal struggle with substance abuse.



# MARIJUANA SUMMIT



2

MARCH

8:15 AM - 1:00 PM

REGISTER TODAY -  
SEATING IS LIMITED!



[www.surveymonkey.com/r/WB7BGDG](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WB7BGDG)



**VENUE:**

**FENN CENTER**

2000 VIRGINIA AVE.  
FORT PIERCE, FL 34982

For More Information:  
C. Jovil Wharton, Project Coordinator,  
Drug Free St. Lucie  
Email: [JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org](mailto:JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org)

## OUR GUEST PRESENTERS:



**ED SHEMELYA**

NMI Coordinator,  
HIDTA Program



**WILLIAM J. LYNCH, JR.**

Clinical Pharmacist



**BEN CORT**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Cort Counseling

## PRESENTATION TOPICS:

- **Legalization After Ten Years - What Have We Learned?**
- **The Natural Progression of Vaping to Marijuana/Alcohol to Opiate Abuse: A Recipe for Disaster.**
- **21st Century Marijuana: How It's Changed, and Its Impact on Mental Health and Treatment.**



This advertisement meets School Board Policy 940 for distribution of the advertisement. However, this acknowledgement does not represent an endorsement or recommendation of the product/service advertised.



## Mustangs Kick-Off 2023 With A Lively Tunnel Of Hope!

West Gate K-8 School celebrated their students' return to school following the holiday break with a lively and festive Tunnel of Hope celebration. Students were welcomed back with cheers from the West Gate cheer team, band members playing the trombone and bugle, and even teachers riding skateboards while handing out high-fives. Thank you to our community partners who participated in the tunnel, St. Lucie County Sherriff's Office, St. Lucie County Fire District, Children's Services Council, St. Lucie Public School Administrators, and members from State Representative Dana Trabulsy's office. More than 1,300 students were impacted by this Tunnel of Hope, a fun celebration that helps to foster the beliefs and practices of Kids at Hope, **"All Children are Capable of Success, NO EXCEPTIONS!!"**



### Welcome Our New Kids at Hope School & Community Liaison!

The Roundtable welcomed a new member to the Kids at Hope team before the winter break. Kayla McDonald accepted the position of Kids at Hope School & Community Liaison. Kayla is a graduate of Florida Atlantic University. She is a content creator and a photographer, and she enjoys the challenges of working with youth of various ages. Kayla is excited to be a part of the Roundtable of St Lucie, Inc. to share the message of Hope.



# Good Always Prevails!

IGNITE Youth Alliance Outreach Workers never miss an opportunity to build bonds and encourage the youth they mentor to seek new possibilities. A recent example of this is Outreach Worker Lee Davis's special plans for a day with Jeremiah, a youth he mentors, to ensure that Jeremiah knew how proud Lee was of his recent successes. Jeremiah had kept his focus on getting good grades, as well as, good behavior in school and at home, despite the negative influences surrounding him. Although the environment Jeremiah is exposed to may subject him to peer pressure or unhealthy role models, Lee has witnessed Jeremiah continue to excel not only in school but in life. Jeremiah continues to show resilience, even though the odds continue to be stacked against him. Lee and Jeremiah joined another Outreach Worker and several other IG-NITE youth to enjoy several games of bowling while building social skills and making new friends. The next day Lee took Jeremiah to see the movie, *Black Panther*. Lee was able to tie the movie's plot and message into some powerful mentoring conversations, as he and Jeremiah discussed how regardless of the adversities the movie's character faced, through patience and healthy choices, good always prevailed. Lee shared with Jeremiah how he sees similarities to the *Black Panther's* story and the good Jeremiah is doing, assuring Jeremiah that it never goes unnoticed.



## National Youth Leadership Month

February is designated as National Youth Leadership Month, but here in St. Lucie County every month is youth leadership month. The members of Youth Leadership St. Lucie (YLSL) exemplify the attributes of great leaders. These incredible young people have been involved in community service projects, civic engagement, and helping the less fortunate for years. This year the members will be updating their existing mental health video to address the effects that COVID and anxiety have had on their peers' mental health. The Civic Engagement committee is interested in speaking to the local school district about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and how students can best prepare for college. Another YLSL committee will continue to address the needs of the homeless by coordinating a sock drive and food drive at their schools. In addition, this committee is preparing to organize a community beach and waterway clean-up. Youth Leadership St. Lucie members are also very excited to have the opportunity to send several members to Tallahassee at the invitation of State Representative Dana Trabulsy. YLSL is motivated to transform St. Lucie County into the best place to live, work, and play in the entire state of Florida. "Youth Led, Adult Guided."





# Hidden In Plain Sight



**Hidden In Plain Sight** is a free substance abuse prevention awareness program. It is an in-person, interactive experience of a mock teenager’s bedroom containing 50+ hidden items to raise awareness and recognition of signs that may point to risky adolescent behaviors or drug use. You are encouraged to touch everything in the room and identify our red flags, then participate in a presentation that will:

- ◆ Identify and discuss items and how they may indicate problems or risky behaviors.
- ◆ Discuss popular local youth trends backed up with local data.
- ◆ Share or provide tools to help navigate the teen years and discussion points for family conversations.
- ◆ Q & A throughout the presentation will be provided and local resource information shared.

Tours will be held every hour on **Monday, February 13th 9:30-4:30 pm** in the TOT Room at the Port St. Lucie Community Center on Airoso Blvd. **REGISTER TODAY** for your tour at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CXTQQCF> or scan the QR Code here.



For more information, visit our website [www.RoundtableSLC.org](http://www.RoundtableSLC.org) or contact: C. Jovil Wharton, Project Coordinator at: [JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org](mailto:JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org)



## Our Board Members

- ◆ Terissa Aronson, St. Lucie Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Tom Bakkedahl, 19th Judicial Circuit—State Attorney
- ◆ Rosetta Bartell, Housing Authority of Fort Pierce
- ◆ Linda Bartz, Board of County Commissioners
- ◆ Brian Bauer, CareerSource Research Coast
- ◆ Ann Berner, SE FL Behavioral Health Network
- ◆ John Bolduc, Port St. Lucie Police Department
- ◆ Sean Boyle, Children’s Services Council
- ◆ Michael Davis, Department of Corrections
- ◆ Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids
- ◆ Debbie Hawley, Steering Committee Chair
- ◆ Brian Hester, St. Lucie County Sheriff’s Office
- ◆ Diane Hobley-Burney, Fort Pierce Police Department
- ◆ Curtis Johnson, City of Fort Pierce
- ◆ Michael Linn, 19th Judicial Circuit-Judge
- ◆ Diamond R. Litty, 19th Judicial Circuit—Public Defender
- ◆ Tony Loupe, Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County
- ◆ Robert McPartlan, Department of Children and Families
- ◆ Heather Parker, Guardian ad Litem
- ◆ Jessica Parrish, United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee
- ◆ Nathan Peterson, Department of Juvenile Justice
- ◆ David Pickett, City of Port St. Lucie
- ◆ Dr. Jonathan Prince, St. Lucie Public Schools
- ◆ Nate Spera, St. Lucie County Fire District
- ◆ Clint Sperber, FL Health Department - St. Lucie County
- ◆ Peter Tesch, Economic Development Council
- ◆ Dana Trabulsy, 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.

# Executive Committee

**CHAIR**

Tony Loupe, Early Learning Coalition

**VICE-CHAIR**

Heather Parker, Guardian ad Litem

**SECRETARY**

Jessica Parrish, United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee

**TREASURER**

Ann Berner, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network

**PAST CHAIR**

Lisa von Seelen, Healthy Start Coalition of St. Lucie County

**STEERING COMMITTEE**

Debbie Hawley, St. Lucie Public Schools

**AT LARGE**

Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids

[www.RoundtableSLC.org](http://www.RoundtableSLC.org)

## Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc.

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For questions or to subscribe to our Newsletter:  
DEspinosa@RoundtableSLC.org



**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:**

**Teresa Bishop, Chief Executive Officer**

TBishop@RoundtableSLC.org

**Dana Espinosa, Operations Manager**

DEspinosa@RoundtableSLC.org



## **OUR INITIATIVES:**

### **IGNITE Youth Alliance—(772) 448-5712**

- ◆ Darcy McFolley, Intervention & Outreach Coordinator
- ◆ Marcus Mills, Outreach Supervisor
- ◆ Shantel Lariosa, Project Assistant
- ◆ LaKenya Ruffin, Senior Outreach Worker
- ◆ Markesha Brockington, Outreach Worker
- ◆ Lee Davis, Outreach Worker
- ◆ Ismael Angervil, Outreach Worker
- ◆ Lance Johnson, Outreach Worker
- ◆ Evelyn Coleman, Family Navigator
- ◆ Phillip Lindsey, Family Navigator

### **Kids at Hope & Youth Leadership St. Lucie**

- ◆ Kevin Singletary, Project Coordinator  
KSingletery@RoundtableSLC.org
- ◆ Kayla McDonald, School & Community Liaison  
KMcDonald@RoundtableSLC.org

### **Drug Free St. Lucie**

- ◆ C. Jovil Wharton, Project Coordinator  
JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org