



Roundtable Review

Message from our CEO



Greetings,

February is already here. It is a short month; however, it is a month when we celebrate the notion of love on Valentine’s Day. I fondly remember sharing candy hearts and passing out Valentine’s Day cards to my classmates. I looked forward to that day to feel like I had people who cared about me in my young mind. I look back and realize that is where I learned to pause to “see” my classmates, no matter what they looked like, and show them that I cared enough to put a smile on their faces. Many of us reading this newsletter care for others well beyond February by serving and supporting children and youth in their areas of need as our career choice. For some, it is a ministry. Whether we are teaching a child how to read, finding ways to prevent child abuse, helping a child who is being bullied in school, or serving vulnerable children and youth in any capacity, we carry the “valentine spirit” every day. Poet Maya Angelo shared a poignant thought “People may not remember what you said, they may not remember what you did, but they’ll always remember how you made them feel.” It is important to be self-aware of the impact we have on the children and families we encounter.

As we serve those in need, it can get difficult and exhausting at times as we learn about or witness firsthand heartbreaking stories. Be sure to pause this month to show love and appreciation for your co-workers, community partners, and especially the volunteers who continue to support children and families in our community. Unsung heroes who continue to serve from the heart do not usually do this to be seen; therefore, take this month to pause and celebrate those who labor among us. Let them know, “I see you”. This may be all that they need to continue in this labor of love for our community. We are better together when we support one another. Show the love. Happy Valentine’s Day month to you all.

Teresa Bishop
Chief Executive Officer



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Special Dates:

- Groundhog Day 2/2
- Umbrella Day 2/10
- Mardi Gras 2/13
- Valentine’s Day 2/14
- President’s Day 2/19
- School Bus Driver Appreciation Day 2/23
- Black History Month
- American Heart Month
- Library Lovers Month
- National Time Management Month

The Power Of Hope



Our Kids at Hope Project Coordinator, Kevin Singletary, spoke at Forest Grove Middle School's 8th Grade Pinning Ceremony. He delivered a speech that conveyed several valuable Kids at Hope principles to the students helping them to envision their future with hope and optimism, while encouraging them to prepare today for the success of their future goals and dreams.

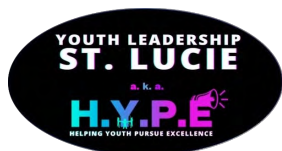
Our KAH Project Coordinator also appeared on the Guardians for New Future's Children's Advocacy Center podcast with Kristy Conway. During the interview, Mr. Singletary informed viewers about the Kids at Hope culture evident throughout St. Lucie County. He also discussed the importance of KAH ACEs/caring adults and the positive impact they can have on the life of a child.

Kids at Hope trainings are in full swing as well! Amanda DeMan, KAH School and Community Liaison, trained the Area Agency on Aging's Foster Grandparents Program, and Cayuga Centers' foster parents in the "Power of Hope". These mentors and caregivers of children in St. Lucie County came away with the inspiration and tools to implement the practice and culture of hope. One special story came from the Cayuga Center training, where a foster placement was considering not continuing with a child. After completing the KAH training, Adrienne Huggins, Director of TC Programs, Cayuga, shared, "Your presentation helped save a placement that was about to disrupt, thank you."

When working with children who are facing adversity and hardships, we may at times wonder if the work we do makes a difference. Working with children is a long-term investment that secures the future of our community. When the village of KAH Aces, or caring adults, pours love and life into children it plants the seeds that help those children bloom in the future.



 **FOREST GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL**



Youth Leadership St. Lucie

One Kids at Hope "Destination of Travel" is *Community and Service*. This "Destination of Travel" is woven into every fiber of our Youth Leadership St. Lucie's structure, and in all the ways our Youth Leaders help their community at large and closer to home in their individual circles of friends and family.

At Youth Leadership St. Lucie, we encourage our Youth Leaders to stand up for what they believe in and get involved in being a part of the solution to problems and challenges that face their community. One such challenge was faced by a family member of our elected YLSL Secretary. Our Youth Leadership St. Lucie members rallied around their YLSL Secretary's family members by attending and assisting with a Van Duzer Foundation Dine-to-Donate night at Big Apple Pizza to benefit our YLSL member's family.

Youth Leadership St. Lucie has planned several upcoming projects to continue their support of our community, including park cleanups and volunteer projects to benefit homeless children and families in St. Lucie County.



Let Us RISE Together: Introducing the St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative

With a startling escalation that sets off warning signals, the mental health of young people today is under immense pressure like never before. From the stress of achieving academic success to the pervasive influence of social media, youth today are tasked with finding their way through a maze of challenges. It is no surprise that their mental health is being impacted significantly. Now more than ever, it is time to implement solutions to this problem.

Recognizing the Demand

Between 2018 and 2022 in St. Lucie County, there has been an increase by 36.5% of young people from the ages of 10 and 17 expressing feelings of self-doubt and worthlessness, a statistic that is 16.5% higher than the state average.¹ Additionally, in 2022, 33.5% of St. Lucie County youth expressed having thoughts of taking their own lives in the past year, and 7.9% made attempts.¹ This depicts an alarming trend that spotlights the need for a committed response to address and support the mental health needs of our youth.

Shaping Our Vision for the Future

After being awarded the Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnership for Success Grant (SPF-PFS) by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Roundtable launched the St. Lucie County Strategic Prevention Partnership, a county-wide initiative, under which the newly established St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative will work alongside Drug Free St. Lucie in our community-level substance misuse prevention and mental health promotion efforts. More specifically, the Mental Health Collaborative aims to provide Teen Mental Health First Aid training through youth-serving organizations, endorse the Pediatric Integrated Care model through primary care providers, promote trauma-informed care practices, and support the delivery of Functional Family Therapy in underserved communities.

Steps Toward Lasting Change

Since its onset, the St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative has convened its initial meeting bringing together partnering agencies to discuss the initiative's scope and determining more key stakeholders to enlist to increase the reach of the collaborative's efforts and enhance its impact on St. Lucie County. The collaborative is set to reconvene for its next meeting in February 2024, and monthly meetings will be held as an exchange of information, providing updates on ongoing projects, evaluating the outcomes of the prevention efforts, and increasing the community's capacity to identify and respond to the rising mental health concerns observed throughout our county and beyond.

Alongside our community partners, we are dedicated to improving mental health outcomes for the youth, and subsequently families, in St. Lucie County. In our journey towards healing, together we RISE, amplifying the reach and impact of promoting mental well-being.

Sources: "Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) | Florida DCF." www.myflfamilies.com, www.myflfamilies.com/services/samh/florida-youth-substance-abuse-survey.

DRUG FREE ST. LUCIE

Compliance Checks – Preventing Underage Retail Access to Substances in St. Lucie County

One of law enforcement’s prevention efforts to address retail access of substances to minors in St. Lucie County is by performing compliance checks at various retailers. On January 3rd, the St. Lucie County Sheriff’s Office performed a compliance check operation on 10 retail locations. Congratulations to those retailers who passed and are doing their part to prevent underage access to substances by checking for IDs on sales of alcohol and drug paraphernalia.



Drug Free St. Lucie would like to recognize and thank them for complying with the law:

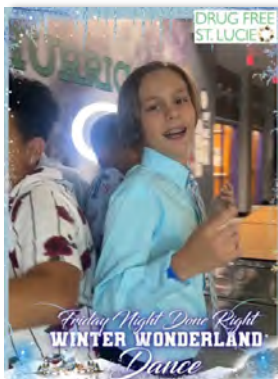
- ⇒ Food Merchant Discount - 6150 US 1, Fort Pierce
- ⇒ Rebel - 6601 US 1, Port. St. Lucie
- ⇒ Discount Vapor - 6799 US 1, Port St. Lucie
- ⇒ Vapor Rocket - 897 NE Prima Vista Blvd., Port St. Lucie



In St. Lucie County, 38% of youth reported that teens purchase electronic vaping products from gas stations and smoke shops that do not check IDs. (2022, One St. Lucie YouthCon)

A Friday Night to Remember – Southport Middle School “Winter Wonderland” Dance!

Drug Free St. Lucie is supportive of prosocial activities for youth that are fun, safe, and substance free. So, when 8th grade Algebra 1 Honors/Pre-Algebra teacher, Ms. Ocella Davis, at Southport Middle school requested support for their 8th grade “Winter Wonderland Dance”, Drug Free St. Lucie was excited to be on board! Over one hundred Canes came dressed to impress and spent the night creating fun memories with their friends dancing and enjoying the 360 photo booth! *Friday Night, Done Right* is one of Drug Free St. Lucie’s environmental strategies aimed at empowering teens through positive alternatives by giving them the ability to make choices about how they spend not only their Friday nights, but any free time.





Florida Legislation Updates

Florida Senate Bill 1676 – Provided updated guidelines for sale of hemp derived food products.

Effective Date: 7/1/2023

Last Action: 6/29/2023 - Chapter No. [2023-299](#)

This bill makes a number of changes to the regulation of hemp in this state. Specifically, the bill:

- Adds hemp extract to the definition of “food” to clarify that it requires time and temperature control for product safety and integrity.
- Defines “attractive to children” to mean a product manufactured in the shape of humans, cartoons, or animals, in a form resembling candy, or containing color additives.
- Revises the definition of “hemp” to exempt hemp extract, which may not exceed 0.3 percent total delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol on a wet-weight basis.
- Modifies how hemp extract may be sold in this state, including:
 - * Requiring the batch to be processed in a facility that meets certain requirements related to food safety and sanitization;
 - * Requiring it to be sold in a container that meets certain requirements, one of which is that the container is not attractive to children; and
 - * Limiting the sale of hemp extract to only businesses that meet certain requirements.
- Prohibits hemp extract products intended for human ingestion, including, but not limited to, snuff, gum, and other smokeless products, from being sold to a person who is under 21 years of age. The bill provides that a person who violates this prohibition commits a second degree misdemeanor, and a subsequent violation within one year is a first degree misdemeanor.
- Revises the rulemaking authority of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (department) to reflect the approval of the state hemp plan and to require adoption of rules relating to the packaging, labeling, and advertising of hemp extract products.

View Legislation here: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2023/1676> | [Defining Hemp: A Fact Sheet \(congress.gov\)](#)

Prevention, Treatment, Recovery, and Advocacy Day 2024 = Success!

On January 17th, Drug Free St. Lucie (DFSL) visited Tallahassee together with over one hundred coalition adults and fifty youth to meet with legislators to raise awareness and express concerns on several specific issues including:

- ◆ **Influx of THC Delta 8 and similar products being sold over the counter. There is little regulation and if left unchecked they will continue to pose a threat to our youth.**
- ◆ **Barriers to becoming a Certified Peer Support Specialist.**
- ◆ **Financial support through the Opioid settlement dollars for primary prevention strategies aimed at preventing the onset of substance use or abuse before it occurs.**



DFSL Project Coordinator, Jovil Wharton, with Senator Gayle Harrell, and DFSL Chair, Casey Wood.



Marijuana Summit 2024

March 28th, 8:30-3:00pm

This year's summit objective is to educate and inform on public health concerns related to the following:

- * **Drugged driving**
- * **Youth usage, exposure, accidental poisoning, and prevention education**
- * **Substance use disorders and pregnancy**
- * **Unregulated cannabis products**
- * **And to generate conversations that are solution focused while making connections and building professional relationships**

**SAVE THE DATE and Stay Tuned for
Registration Information!**

Our Funders:



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
- ◆ Richard Del Toro, Jr., Port St. Lucie Police Department
- ◆ Sean Boyle, Children's Services Council
- ◆ Joseph Cracchiola, Department of Corrections
- ◆ Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids
- ◆ Thomas Epsky, United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee
- ◆ Sonya Gabriel, Steering Committee Chair
- ◆ TBD, City of Fort Pierce
- ◆ Diane Hopley-Burney, Fort Pierce Police Department
- ◆ TBD, 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
- ◆ Troy Norman, St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office
- ◆ Heather Parker, Guardian ad Litem
- ◆ Nathan Peterson, Department of Juvenile Justice
- ◆ David Pickett, City of Port St. Lucie
- ◆ Dr. Jonathan Prince, St. Lucie Public Schools
- ◆ Jeff Lee, St. Lucie County Fire District
- ◆ Clint Sperber, FL Health Department - St. Lucie County
- ◆ Peter Tesch, Economic Development Council
- ◆ Dana Trabulsky, State Representative
- ◆ Andrew Treadwell, Indian River State College
- ◆ Lisa von Seelen, Healthy Start Coalition of St. Lucie County



KIDS AT HOPE: "Unleashing the Power of Hope" FREE Community Training

Tuesday, February 6th, 2024

2 Training Sessions:

- 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
- 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Children's Services Council Training Room,
546 NW University Blvd, Port St. Lucie, FL 34986



LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- The 3 Universal Truths:
 - Believe, Connect, & Time Travel
- Universal Truth Learning Skills
- How to be an ACE/Caring Adult for a child
- How to help a child become a "Time Traveler"
- What it means to be a "Treasure Hunter"

RESERVE YOUR SEAT TODAY:
<https://bit.ly/3TJ27uE>



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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.

2023-24 Executive Committee

CHAIR

Tony Loupe, Early Learning Coalition

VICE-CHAIR

Heather Parker, Guardian ad Litem

SECRETARY

Bob McPartlan, Department of Children and Families

TREASURER

Ann Berner, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network

PAST CHAIR

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

STEERING COMMITTEE

Sonya Gabriel, Florida Health Department - St. Lucie

AT LARGE

Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids

www.RoundtableSLC.org

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