



March 2024

# Roundtable Review

## Message from our CEO

Greetings,

March is National Social Work Month. Many of you reading this article are engaged in social work in some form. I applaud you. It requires us to work tirelessly to address the unmet needs of individuals, families, groups, communities, and society with the hope of improving the well-being of others individually and collectively. It can be thankless, yet rewarding work; however, we continue in this labor of love for others. The common chord I find with many colleagues and friends who engage in this work is that we have experienced trauma or disenfranchisement firsthand and are inspired to take a stand for others. Exciting news! St. Lucie County is on its way to building a trauma-informed care community. The Roundtable through our new Mental Health Collaborative “St. Lucie RISE”, has joined forces with Tykes and Teens and Children’s Services Council in a partnership to launch *Peace 4 St. Lucie*, a trauma informed community-wide initiative. The Trauma Informed Community Building (TICB) model, developed by the BRIDGE Housing Corporation is a holistic approach to community engagement that recognizes the impacts of community trauma on residents’ lives. According to the BRIDGE Housing Corporation, “The outcomes of TICB go beyond traditional community building; they support the long-term health and well-being of a community by influencing the institutions that can support community improvements and meet community needs into the future.” In the 40+ years of my career in social work, this approach resonates with me. As a child who was impacted by community trauma, a youth engaged in activism, and a professional with a career that has spanned across workforce development, welfare and criminal justice reform, prevention of child exploitation and sexual violence, mental health, and substance misuse prevention, it was clear that at the root of the despair of the people I encountered was and is trauma. As our community embraces and institutionalizes Trauma Informed Care throughout our institutions, it will be a game-changer for all of us and the communities we serve. Join us in this movement to support our community. For more information, contact Cassey Chang at [casseyc@tykesandteens.org](mailto:casseyc@tykesandteens.org). Remember, we are better together!



**Teresa Bishop**  
Chief Executive Officer



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### Special Dates:

- Self-Injury Awareness Day 3/1
- Employee Appreciation Day 3/1
- National Read Across America Day 3/2
- World Teen Mental Wellness Day 3/2
- International Women’s Day 3/8
- Daylight Savings Starts 3/12
- St. Patrick’s Day 3/17
- Drug and Alcohol Facts Week 3/18-24

# Kids at Hope Corner



Kids at Hope (KAH) is on the move all over St. Lucie County sharing the power and practice of hope and developing ways to enrich and expand the scope of Kids at Hope in our community. The KAH team continues to facilitate “Time Travel” and “Aces” sessions with the Treasure Coast High School Boys and Girls Club after-school program, as well as the mentors and mentees at Southport Middle School. These sessions help youth to identify their support system of caring adults (Aces) and make a plan for the future with an outlook of confidence and optimism. Successes continue to pour out of each of these sessions with youth envisioning a future filled with hope that includes strategies for connecting with their support system of caring adults to help them reach their goals and dreams, *No Exceptions!*

This month also saw the official launch of the development of *Mothers at Hope!* The goal of *Mothers at Hope* is to provide free, high-quality, and culturally appropriate Kids at Hope-themed peer support to new mothers through facilitated support groups. In addition, *Mothers at Hope* will increase awareness of free and cost-effective community resources available for new mothers with babies 0-24 months. An important Kids at Hope principle is “You cannot have a kid at hope without a parent at hope” and *Mothers at Hope* intends to fully support that belief by supporting, uplifting, and empowering mothers in St. Lucie County.



## Youth Leadership St. Lucie

Kids at Hope School & Community Liaison attended the CADCA National Leadership Forum to learn skills and observe the incredible power of effective youth coalitions. Youth voices are vitally important to driving change, and the youth coalition mobilization skills learned will be a direct catalyst for transforming Youth Leadership St. Lucie (YLSL) into a powerful force for positive youth-led impact in St. Lucie County. Youth Leadership St. Lucie is undergoing an exhilarating change from youth group to youth coalition. YLSL is transitioning to being strategic in its actions to make tangible changes in St. Lucie County. An additional step toward this transition is the launch of an innovative and exciting partnership with Y. Engage to launch a series of social norm campaigns centered around important topics such as, teen mental health, teen substance use prevention, and teen pregnancy prevention. In this partnership, our YLSL members will receive mentoring and guidance on the important local issues that they have identified and targeted for change, including understanding the legislation behind these issues, and how best to advocate and create a plan of action to address the issues. This partnership intends to mobilize Youth Leadership St. Lucie’s efforts to raise awareness and subsequently encourage real change around the issues impacting their community. Our youth intend to be a part of the solutions to the challenges facing St. Lucie County youth today.

Youth Leadership St. Lucie members also volunteered this month at the “Treasure Coast Night to Shine”, a prom night experience for people with special needs ages 14 and up. YLSL members acted as “buddies” to some incredible individuals, escorting them around the beautifully decorated Fenn Center. The “buddies” accompanied their assigned “Kings and Queens” to limo rides, photo stations, karaoke, food stations, and danced the night away. YLSL members truly acted as exemplary liaisons to the Kids at Hope principle that *ALL youth are capable of success, NO EXCEPTIONS!*

In February, Amanda DeMan,



Teresa Bishop, CEO, Jovil Wharton, Project Coordinator, Drug Free St. Lucie, and Amanda DeMan, KAH School & Community Liaison at the CADCA National Leadership Forum



Amanda DeMan, KAH School & Community Liaison and YLSL members attending “Treasure Coast Night To Shine”

# Cultivating Inclusive Mental Wellness For Women



In celebration of International Women’s Day (IWD) on March 8th, the St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative would be remiss in not discussing the importance of caring for one’s mental well-being. Equally, it is significant to acknowledge the hardship many women experience in this space. In many cases, women are the nurturing pillars of strength to others; thus, it is especially imperative to highlight mental health support when needed.

## Addressing the Silent Struggle

In their lifetime, nearly twice as many women than men will be diagnosed with depression.<sup>1</sup> Although that is not a mental health diagnosis exclusive to women, certain types of depression are. Hormonal changes, while not singularly responsible for depressive episodes in women, are associated with an increased risk of depression.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the prevalence and need for resources for women is vast, so an affiliated solution must be implemented.

This year’s theme for IWD is “Inspire Inclusion”, so in our trek to promote mental health, it is imperative to embrace inclusivity while considering diverse experiences. One of the ways that our network commits to inspiring and uplifting women is with the inclusion of a sub-network workgroup concentrating on maternal mental health. In partnership with Kids at Hope’s School & Community Liaison, Amanda DeMan, the *Mothers at Hope* initiative was launched in February with an initial gathering of key stakeholders in the community. The goal of *Mothers at Hope* is to **provide free, high-quality, and culturally appropriate Kids at Hope-themed peer support to new mothers through facilitated support groups**. Additionally, it is especially significant to provide information on the resources available to mothers in St. Lucie County.

## Destigmatizing Mental Health Through Conversation

Peer support groups allow participants to feel comfortable talking about topics that may be deemed taboo elsewhere. With *Mothers at Hope*, a safe space will be created to foster productive and healing conversations. In turn, mothers will be destigmatizing mental health and becoming beacons of well-being that their children can emulate.

*Prioritize your mental well-being with a quick check-in. Need support? Here are some resources to aid in navigating your journey.*

- \* National Maternal Mental Health Hotline:
  - \* (833) TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)
- \* Florida Maternal Mental Health Collaborative Postpartum Support Int'l Warmline:
  - \* (800) 944-4773
- \* Florida Family Health Line:
  - \* (800) 451-2229



Stay tuned for the official launch of *Mothers at Hope* in the community!

For more information on the St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative, visit the initiative page at [www.roundtablescl.org/stlucie\\_rise](http://www.roundtablescl.org/stlucie_rise) and follow us on Facebook @StLucieRise.

Reference: “Women’s Increased Risk of Depression.” *Mayo Clinic*, Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 29 Jan. 2019.

## SAMHSA’s “Talk. They Hear You.” Campaign

Spring Break is great for recharging and relaxing, but it can also center around parties with alcohol and other drugs. So, whether Spring Break is around the corner or in a few weeks for your youth, it’s never too early to prepare for having those tough conversations about preventing underage drinking and other drug use. As you talk about the dangers and risks of youth substance use, your kids may have some hard questions. Don’t worry, you’ll answer them with ease because you’ll have downloaded the “Answering Your Child’s Tough Questions” fact sheet from SAMHSA’s #TalkTheyHearYou campaign. [“Talk. They Hear You.”® Underage Drinking Campaign | SAMHSA](#)



## National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week - March 18-24th



NDAFW is an annual, week-long health observance that inspires dialogue about the science of drug use and addiction among youth. NDAFW offers educators, prevention specialists, counselors, and other youth intermediaries flexible programming to identify topics of greatest interest to their community, science-based information and resources that help improve knowledge and awareness, while also promoting skills that support informed decision-making, healthy coping, and other skills that are critical to the prevention of substance use among youth. [National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week® \(NDAFW\) | National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\) \(nih.gov\)](#). Drug Free St. Lucie is inviting you to participate in National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week® (NDAFW) and help share facts about drugs, alcohol, and addiction St. Lucie County to help prevent youth substance use.

## Building Stakeholder Capacity In Addressing Substance Misuse Prevention in St. Lucie County

With the continued support of the Opioid Response Network (ORN), Drug Free St. Lucie successfully hosted another virtual training on Monday February 19th, 9:30am – 11:00am, “Toxic Stress, Teens Brains, and Building Resilience”, with trainer Gary White, National Consultant, ORN.

With forty-five (45) in attendance, participants gained knowledge in the following areas:

- ◆ Recognizing factors that influence toxic teen stress
- ◆ Identifying helpful ways when responding to teen stress
- ◆ Drafting a customized plan that builds wellness resiliency



Some of the agencies represented included: New Horizons of the Treasure Coast, Guardian ad Litem, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Department of Health-St. Lucie County, Tykes and Teens, Families of the Treasure Coast, Helping People Succeed, Communities Connected for Kids, and Remember for Change.

**Stay tuned for our next training on May 31st on the “Impact of E-cigarettes and Vaping”.**

## Two Emerging Drugs Alerts!

### **Tianeptine - AKA: “Gas Station Heroin”**

Tianeptine is available in various forms, from flavored elixir shots to capsules, powders, and even as counterfeit pills designed to resemble hydrocodone and oxycodone. Products containing tianeptine are readily available in gas stations, convenience stores, and online, often under the names of ZaZa, Tiana, Neptune’s Fix, and Pegasus. Despite lacking approval for any medical use in the U.S., tianeptine is falsely marketed for a variety of conditions, including as a dietary supplement, as a smart drug to enhance cognition, or to manage opioid cravings.

The drug acts as an antidepressant and in high doses produces euphoria. Toxicity can lead to sedation, respiratory depression, coma, overdose, and death. The number of severe illnesses and poison control cases stemming from exposure to tianeptine has increased dramatically. In the U.S., only 11 poison control cases involving tianeptine occurred between 2000 and 2013. However, in 2020, this number skyrocketed to 151 cases. More recently, a spike in severe illnesses from tianeptine products occurred in New Jersey. All of these patients presented with altered mental status and the majority were admitted to an intensive care unit (ICU).

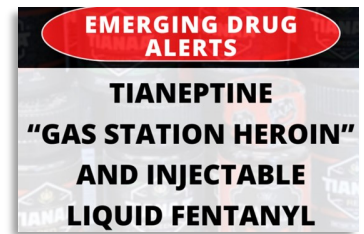
Analysis of products labeled as ZaZa and Neptune Fix revealed the presence of additional substances including kava, synthetic cannabinoids, THC, and CBD. An investigation of 90 blood samples from deceased individuals between 2018 and 2023 uncovered a common combination of tianeptine with ethanol, kava, gabapentin, and fentanyl.

Tianeptine is not currently scheduled under the Controlled Substances Act, federally; however, several states have acted including Florida. Recently, Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody filed an emergency rule categorizing tianeptine as a Schedule 1 substance.

### **Injectable Liquid Fentanyl**

Reports involving the theft or diversion of injectable fentanyl solutions from healthcare facilities in the U.S. signal a potential exacerbation of the existing fentanyl crisis. Additionally, law enforcement agencies have seized bulk quantities of illicitly manufactured fentanyl (IMF) in liquid form from Arizona and Kentucky. These liquid solutions pose similar dangers as counterfeit pills and powders as they may contain lethal doses and dealers may mix adulterants such as xylazine, cocaine, and other fentanyl analogs into the solution.

Diversion of injectable liquid fentanyl from pharmaceutical sources has also been detected in countries where IMF has not yet emerged, including Nigeria, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Argentina, Brazil, and Costa Rica. This situation is extremely concerning as such diversion could introduce fentanyl into drug markets that are not accustomed to illicit opioid use.

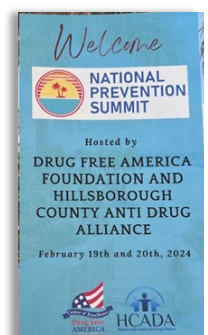


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## 11th Annual—National Prevention Summit

Drug Free St. Lucie’s Project Coordinator, Jovil Wharton, attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual National Prevention Summit in St. Petersburg, Florida, February 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The Summit was cohosted by Drug Free America Foundation Inc. (DFAF) and Hillsborough County’s Anti-Drug Alliance (HCADA).

With a focus on implementing successful prevention strategies, the goal of the summit was to heighten awareness about the devastating impact of drugs, reduce access, reshape social norms, and foster crucial discussions on prevailing policies. New to the summit this year were several sessions focused on reducing marijuana use during pregnancy and postpartum. In addition, as was held in previous years, there was a half-day session dedicated to Florida coalitions and partners working in community-level prevention.



# DRUG FREE ST. LUCIE

REGISTER TODAY!



## MARIJUANA SUMMIT 2024

Presentation topics include: Legalization and Mis-information, Drugged Driving, Substance Use Disorders and Pregnancy, Unregulated Cannabis Products, Youth Exposure, Accidental Poisoning, and Prevention Education

**MARCH 28, 2024**  
**8:30am - 4:00pm**

**FENN CENTER**  
**2000 Virginia Ave.**  
**Fort Pierce, FL**

### OUR AMAZING PRESENTERS



**Stephanie Murphy**  
PROGRAM MANAGER,  
MADD SOUTH FLORIDA



**Juliette Lomax-Homier, M.D.**  
REGIONAL CAMPUS DEAN,  
FL STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE



**Sgt. Ryan Register**  
SCHOOL RESOURCE  
OFFICER, ST. LUCIE  
COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



**Ed Shemelya**  
NATIONAL COORDINATOR,  
NATIONAL MARIJUANA  
INITIATIVE



**Kristal Pollack, LCSW**  
FASD CLINIC LEAD,  
THE FLORIDA CENTER



**Jemima Desir Douge, M.D.**  
HEALTHCARE EDUCATION  
SPECIALIST FL POISON  
INFORMATION CENTER



**Heather L. Horning**  
PROGRAM MANAGER, NATL. DRUG  
FREE WORKPLACE ALLIANCE  
DRUG FREE AMERICA  
FOUNDATION INC.



**Dep. Cortland Jones**  
ST. LUCIE COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE



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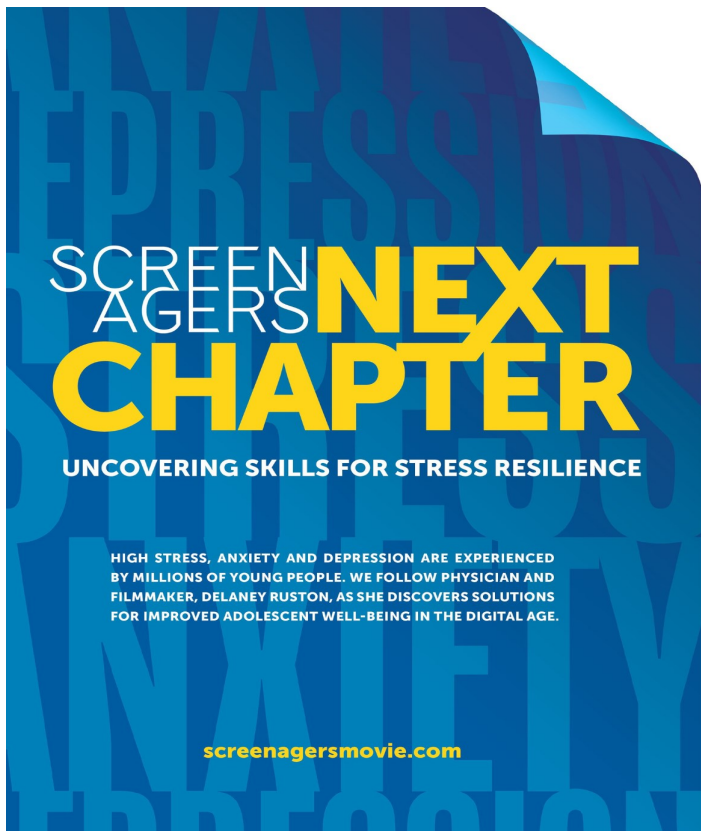


[www.RoundtableSLC.org](http://www.RoundtableSLC.org)



@DrugFreeStLucie

For More Info: [JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org](mailto:JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org) | 772.871.5880



DRUG FREE  
ST. LUCIE

**FREE Family  
Movie Night!**



"Screenagers: NEXT CHAPTER - Uncovering Skills for Stress Resilience" is a film that examines the science behind teens' emotional challenges, the interplay of social media, and most importantly, how we, as parents and educators, can empower teens to build crucial skills to navigate stress, anxiety, and depression, and build emotional agility, communication savvy, and stress resilience in our digital age.

For more information: Jovil Wharton, Project Coordinator, Drug Free St. Lucie  
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[www.RoundtableSLC.org](http://www.RoundtableSLC.org)



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- ◆ 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.

# 2023-24 Executive Committee

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

## Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc.

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◆ **C. Jovil Wharton, Project Coordinator**

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### **St. Lucie RISE—Mental Health Collaborative**

◆ **Shamra Gilles, Mental Health Collaborative Coordinator**

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