



September 2024

Roundtable Review

Message from our CEO

Greetings,

September is National Recovery Month. The good news is studies show that most people survive drug and alcohol addiction and go on to live healthy lives. However, for most, it is not without a cost. Some experience broken relationships and families, work and school failure, or tragedy such as overdose or automobile accidents resulting in serious injury or death.



In 2022, the National Survey on Drug Use indicated that 48.7 million people aged 12 or older (or 17.3%) had a substance use disorder in the past year. Drug addiction typically begins at a young age, with higher rates of addiction seen in adolescents and young adults. The age of onset of drug use tends to determine the type of substance abused, with early-onset of substance use characterized by a higher likelihood of illicit substance use. This is why the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy invests in the Drug Free Communities (DFC) Support Program that specifically focuses on youth substance use prevention.

The Roundtable’s Drug Free St. Lucie, a DFC grantee, and hundreds of coalitions nationwide are making great strides in reducing youth substance misuse. Studies show that DFC-funded community coalitions have achieved significant reductions in youth alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use by focusing on norms, access, and regulations relating to substance use that shape our community environment. Drug-Free St. Lucie, led by Jovil Wharton, vigorously promotes norm campaigns such as SAMHSA’s “Talk. They Here You.”, supports our law enforcement partners with compliance checks, and engages partners in environmental scans for marketing and placement of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances in retail stores. The coalition also raises awareness of drug trends by hosting the Opioid and Marijuana Summits and works closely with the Roundtable’s St. Lucie RISE initiative and our youth coalition H.Y.P.E. to host our annual youth conference “YouthCon” designed to engage young people in our community’s substance misuse prevention and mental health promotion efforts. Join Drug Free St. Lucie and the national movement to prevent substance use and invest in the future of our precious youth. Remember, Benjamin Franklin’s proverb, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”.

Teresa Bishop
Chief Executive Officer



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Special Dates:

- Natl Suicide Prevention Week 9/8-14
- Read a Book Day 9/6
- Grandparents’ Day 9/8
- Star Trek Day 9/8
- World Suicide Prevention Day 9/10
- Hispanic Heritage Month 9/15-10/15
- Talk Like a Pirate Day 9/19
- Coastal Cleanup Day 9/20
- First Day of Fall 9/22
- World Heart Day 9/29

Kids at Hope Corner



Many students are facing firsts in their lives as they walk down the hallways of their schools. Some students are entering their last year of high school. Others are entering school for the very first time. August 12, 2024, the first day of school in St. Lucie County for the 2024-2025 school year, is a day many students will remember for one reason or another. The Kids at Hope Team and their community partners were determined to make this a memorable day for our county’s children for all the right reasons.

The Kids at Hope Team organized over twenty (20) Tunnels of Hope at St. Lucie County schools. Students were greeted with the sounds of cheering adults, fist bumps from school administrators, high fives from men and women dressed in various uniforms, and other adults waving signs and making joyful noise. The participants lining the Tunnels of Hope this year were from all walks of life: First responders, medical personnel, elected officials, social services workers, educational professionals, human services professionals, fraternities, sororities, non-profit organizations, and a host of others. All had one common goal: To motivate students and staff at every school to have a great school year!

One of the three Kids at Hope Universal Truths is that “Children succeed when they have a caring adult in their lives who believes that they can succeed.” The men and women who participated in these Tunnels embodied just that for our county’s youth. The Tunnels are a source of inspiration, a gesture of love, and a new moment of truth. In Kids at Hope, every encounter with a child is a “Moment of Truth”. What better way to engage in that moment than with words of encouragement?

Twenty-two public schools requested and received tunnels and one faith-based school had a Tunnel of Hope. More than 10,000 students were showered with love, by more than 400 community members and leaders. Touching and impacting the lives of our children is essential to continual growth and positive development of our community.

Motivator speaker, Zig Ziglar once said, “Our children are our only hope for the future, but we are their only hope for the present.” These words are spoken like a true Treasure Hunter. The community partners of the Roundtable know the importance of starting the school year right to invest in the children of St. Lucie County. We thank all agencies, alliances, and individuals who participated in making these Tunnels of Hope such an impactful source of encouragement for our students in St. Lucie County. You are all true Treasure Hunters who embody the belief that **“All children are capable of success, NO EXCEPTIONS!”**





Creating A Village

The postpartum period is a challenging time for even the most seasoned mothers. It is a time of life filled with precious moments, and trials which redefine who we are as women, and as mothers. During this time, it is essential to feel supported and surrounded by family, and by community, “a village”, which helps us to rear our children. Some find this support to be hard to find, which can make a difficult time of life all the more difficult.

Mothers at Hope was created with a simple mission: To help postpartum mothers feel supported, and connect them with resources they need to improve their lives and the lives of their children.

Mothers at Hope has completed its first 9-week cycle of Mothers at Hope programming with our participants. This group was comprised of a diverse group of young mothers, some first-time moms, and others with multiple children in addition to their new babies. Each with unique and common experiences of the postpartum period that were explored during these sessions. One participant shared this takeaway: “Mothers at Hope was great for connecting me with resources, and also brainstorming solutions to my problems. I felt like I was able to build a sense of community with the other moms.” After the completion of this cycle of Mothers at Hope, the team completed a SWOT analysis and has since created a strategic plan that includes a variety of ways to improve and sustain the efforts of the Mothers at Hope initiative.

On August 20th, the Mothers at Hope team, including Amanda DeMan, KAH School & Community Liaison and Melanie Staton of Families of the Treasure Coast presented Chrisie Hoeffner of GraceWay Village with a certificate of appreciation for their support of our initiative and the community. Mothers at Hope was generously backed by GraceWay Village, an agency that is an incredible resource for families in St. Lucie County. GraceWay Village provides families with free clothing, hot meals, and connections to resources that assist the families who walk through their doors. We deeply appreciate the ongoing partnership between Mothers at Hope and GraceWay Village, and look forward to positively impacting the lives of families in St. Lucie County together during our next cycle of Mothers at Hope which is scheduled to launch between mid-October to early November. Stay tuned!



Helping Youth Pursue Excellence in St. Lucie County

Helping Youth Pursue Excellence (H.Y.P.E) is on the move! Our coalition has been on the ground recruiting and working with school administration at Northport K-8, Forest Grove Middle School, and Fort Pierce Central High School to build our plan for the 2024-2025 school year.

The H.Y.P.E Team attended open house at Northport K-8 and Forest Grove Middle School, and spoke at Forest Grove Middle School’s back-to-school assemblies for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. The H.Y.P.E Coalition will also be represented at Fort Pierce Central High School’s Club Rush to recruit coalition members.

These campuses, strategically selected based on community needs for school-based prosocial engagement and rewards, will serve as hubs for H.Y.P.E Coalition meetings and H.Y.P.E Academy programming open to all students centered on substance use prevention, mental health advocacy, community/environmental improvement, and wellness and health.

We are proud to announce our partnership with New Horizons of the Treasure Coast’s Student Assistance Program, who are also based at these sites and have established relationships with the students campus. We look forward to how this partnership will enrich and strengthen the program delivery of H.Y.P.E and raise awareness of the community resources available for youth on-site at these campuses. **(See page 7 for H.Y.P.E registration information.)**



Embracing Recovery and Healing in St. Lucie County

As we step into September, we join the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in recognizing this month as National Recovery Month. This annual observance is a time to celebrate the progress of individuals who are on the journey of recovery from mental health and substance use disorders. It's also a moment to highlight the importance of support systems and resources that make these recoveries possible.

In St. Lucie County, the Peace For St. Lucie initiative is making strides in creating a trauma-informed community. This initiative is dedicated to addressing the impacts of trauma and promoting mental well-being across our diverse neighborhoods. Our mission is ***to unite residents in a shared commitment to healing and growth by promoting opportunities for individual empowerment and wellbeing through advocacy, collaborative partnerships, and education.***

Peace For St. Lucie is a collaborative effort with the Children's Services Council, Tykes & Teens, and countless other dedicated community agencies, all working together to turn our mission into a reality. Currently, Peace For St. Lucie is focusing on identifying the areas within our community that are most in need of support through our Community Survey (*see below for more information*). In less than 10 minutes, we can collect information on the prevalence of trauma in different pockets of our county. Our community outreach team will then begin working diligently to pinpoint specific neighborhoods, schools, and organizations that may be disproportionately affected by trauma. By understanding these needs, we aim to provide targeted resources, raise awareness, and foster resilience among those who need it most.

The graphic is divided into three horizontal sections. The top section is white and features a logo of two hands holding a red heart above the word "peace" in a blue script font, with "FOR ST. LUCIE" in a blue sans-serif font below it. Underneath the logo is the tagline "Peace. Resiliency. Growth." in a red sans-serif font. The middle section has a red background and contains the word "VISION" in a white, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, in a smaller white font, is the text: "To foster a community in St. Lucie County where peace and trauma-informed practices flourish, empowering individuals to heal and grow." The bottom section has a dark grey background and contains the word "MISSION" in a white, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, in a smaller white font, is the text: "To unite residents in a shared commitment to healing and growth by promoting opportunities for individual empowerment and wellbeing through advocacy, collaborative partnerships, and education." There are decorative white line-art icons of hands on the sides of the middle and bottom sections.

Make a Difference: Take the Peace For St. Lucie Survey

We need your voice to help shape a more supportive and trauma-informed community in St. Lucie County. By participating in the Peace For St. Lucie survey, you'll provide crucial insights that will guide our efforts in fostering a community where peace and healing can flourish. Your feedback will directly influence our approach to identifying needs, allocating resources, and creating programs designed to empower individuals to heal and grow. Take the Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HJQVVP8>



This September, as we reflect on the significance of National Recovery Month, let's also remember that recovery is not just about individual journeys but about collective progress. By working together and supporting one another, we can build a stronger, more compassionate, and trauma-informed community. Let us celebrate the resilience of individuals in recovery and commit ourselves to building a community that supports healing and growth. Together, we can create an environment where everyone in St. Lucie County has the opportunity to overcome challenges and thrive.

For more information on the St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative, visit the initiative page at www.roundtablesic.org/stlucie_rise and follow us on Facebook @StLucieRISE and Instagram @StLucieRISE_



Red Ribbon Champion of Prevention Awards

NOMINATIONS CLOSE ON SEPTEMBER 18th

There are many unsung Champions of Prevention in our community, and Drug Free St. Lucie would like for you to tell us who you feel is a deserving candidate for this award.

We are so excited to announce that we are accepting community sector nominations for our 2024 Red Ribbon Champion of Prevention Awards. To nominate your community sector individual, organization, or program, scan the QR Code and fill out our easy form, we promise it's simple and quick! Or click on the link [Red Ribbon Champions of Prevention Awards Nomination Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](#). (See flyer on page 6 for survey link/QR code.)

Winners will be announced at our Annual Award Meeting on October 24th.



Join Drug Free St. Lucie (DFSL) in supporting National Recovery Month. Recovery Month started in 1989 and is a national observance held every September to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the nation's strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and communities who make recovery in all its forms possible.

How can you support National Recovery Month:

- Copy, download, share, and use DFSL's virtual background, email signature sticker (seen below), and flyer. **The artwork design was created by a youth participant in our 2024 Youth Con.** **(For access to these images, see below.)*
- When posting social media messages, use the Recovery Month hashtags, #RecoveryMonth (primary hashtag), #RecoveryMonth2024, #RecoveryIsPossible (second primary, #Recovery, #Wellness, #EndtheStigma)
- Visit [National Recovery Month Events | SAMHSA](#) and [National Recovery Month | SAMHSA](#) website to learn more about how you can get involved.



***Contact Jovil Wharton
for the images:
JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org**

ST. LUCIE COUNTY RED RIBBON CHAMPION OF PREVENTION



— 2024 —



Do you know someone, an organization or program that is making an impact in St. Lucie County by reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors that prevent and reduce youth substance use?

NOMINATE
TODAY!




COMMUNITY SECTORS FOR NOMINATIONS:

- Business
- Media
- School
- Youth Serving Organization
- Youth
- Parent
- Law Enforcement
- Civic/Volunteer Group
- Healthcare Professional
- Religious/Fraternal Organization
- State/local Government
- Other: Substance Abuse Organizationn

Drug Free St. Lucie is now accepting community sector nominations for our 2024 Red Ribbon Champion of Prevention Awards! **Submission deadline is 9/18/24.** Scan the QR Code or visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2T87BJB> to submit your nominations!

Finalists will be honored at our
Drug Free St. Lucie Annual Meeting
October 24th, 2024

www.RoundtableSLC.org

 @DrugFreeStLucie



For more information on 2024 Red Ribbon events or to learn more about sponsorship opportunities contact: Jovil Wharton - jwharton@RoundtableSLC.org

DRUG FREE
ST. LUCIE 





As H.Y.P.E moves forward with recruitment on school and community-based sites, we seek to fulfill our mission: To help youth pursue excellence. Youth from all walks of life and backgrounds, with a range of talents and skills are encouraged to join. Youth who are involved with H.Y.P.E will be rewarded for their efforts. Our H.Y.P.E Level Up point system will ensure that those who put in the work to grow and show enthusiasm for H.Y.P.E's mission will be incentivized, earning such prizes as gift cards, giveaways, experiential rewards, and the potential for travel to national conferences such as CADCA's Mid-Year and National Leadership Forum. To join, youth in grades 6-12 can scan the QR code to complete the teen portion of the packet, and a Parent Consent will complete the process.

For more information, contact: Amanda DeMan, H.Y.P.E Lead Advisor at ADeman@RoundtableSLC.org

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
- ◆ Arnold Gaines, 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

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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- ◆ **Teresa Bishop, Chief Executive Officer**
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- ◆ **Dana Espinosa, Operations Manager**
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OUR INITIATIVES:

Kids at Hope & H.Y.P.E.

- ◆ **Kevin Singletary, Training Coordinator**
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- ◆ **Amanda DeMan, School & Community Liaison & H.Y.P.E Lead Advisor**
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Drug Free St. Lucie

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