



December 2024

Roundtable Review

Message from our CEO

Greetings,

This is my favorite part of year to enjoy quality time with and being thankful for my friends and family. I am especially grateful to the dedicated staff of the Roundtable who work incredibly hard to make a difference in St. Lucie County. Our team is small, but mighty because of the hard work and dedication of each individual staff member. Join me in welcoming the newest member of our team, Derek Weintraub, our new Drug Free St. Lucie Coordinator. He has hit the ground running preparing to continue the advancement of our Drug Free St. Lucie coalition. We are expecting great things in the coming year. Stay tuned.



In this season of thankfulness, be sure to thank an educator and human service professional. These champions, who serve youth and families in our community, work tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of youth and families in our community. For many that serve, it can feel like a thankless job, especially this time of year. Remember, while this is a season of thankfulness and holiday music playing everywhere we go, many youth and families are in great need and require support. Some of our community members need food for their tables, a safe place to sleep and live and maybe a toy or two with hopes of making their child’s holiday bright. There are others without means, who are struggling with their mental and physical health, that may worsen during this season. The good news is, there are so many of us that are working together to “wrap our arms” around our community and support those in need. We encourage you to look for opportunities to demonstrate your thankfulness by giving back during this season. Whether it is dropping a coin in the iconic red Salvation Army bucket, donating food and quality clothes to your local charities, participating in volunteer opportunities to support local non-profits and agencies who support families, or simply saying thank you to those that are serving youth and families, you can be part of our “community hug”. We are better together. Let’s make a difference this holiday season. Enjoy!

Teresa Bishop
Chief Executive Officer



Inside this issue:

H.Y.P.E.	2
Kids at Hope.....	3-5
St. Lucie RISE	6-7
Board Members	7
About Us	8

Special Dates:

- World Aids Day 12/1
- Special Education Day 12/2
- National Cookie Day 12/4
- Human Rights Day 12/10
- Crossword Puzzle Day 12/21
- Hanukkah begins at sunset 12/25
- Christmas 12/25
- Kwanzaa 12/26
- National Thank You Note Day 12/26
- New Year’s Eve 12/31

St. Lucie County Youth Pursuing Excellence!

This past month saw the end of H.Y.P.E.’s first quarter of the school year which was focused on one of our Core Values: Substance Use Prevention, and the beginning of our second quarter, where we will be shifting our focus to another of our four Core Values: Environmental and Community Improvement.

At the end of quarter 1, we celebrated the achievements of our H.Y.P.E Coalition Chapters at both Fort Pierce Central High School and Northport K-8 Middle School. The H.Y.P.E Chapter which accumulated the most “H.Y.P.E Level Up Points” (our incentive system) was promised a party at the end of the quarter, and to be awarded the honor of the “H.Y.P.E Cup” for quarter 1 to celebrate their hard work. We are proud to announce that the Northport K-8 Chapter won this quarter’s H.Y.P.E Cup. In quarter 1, H.Y.P.E members across our chapters earned a total of 30 incentive gift cards by putting in the hard work to accumulate Level Up Points. The members with the most points across all chapters, Jevin T. and Valerie M., will be awarded a special surprise at our upcoming meeting. H.Y.P.E’s first quarter was impactful across our community. H.Y.P.E members created Red Ribbon Week social media content centered on substance use prevention reaching over 1,000 viewers. At Northport K-8 Middle School, our H.Y.P.E members shared Red Ribbon Week morning announcements centered on substance use prevention. The youth created social norms campaign posters that were displayed around the Fort Pierce Central High School campus, reaching nearly 3,000 students with Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey data showing that the majority of their peers in St. Lucie County are NOT using substances. H.Y.P.E members also participated in the Northport K-8 Middle School Fall Festival and spoke with 500 youth and parents about substance use prevention.



This month, our H.Y.P.E Navigators at Northport K-8 Middle School continued to receive Botvin Life Skills curriculum from New Horizons of the Treasure Coast Prevention Specialists, covering topics such as the Myths and Realities of Substance Use, Communication Skills, and the Impact of Advertising. With Environmental and Community Improvement being the focus of Quarter 2, we introduced members of both chapters to the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), and how this model can be used to address community issues. Our youth at Fort Pierce Central High School got “SPFfy”, creating their own SPF models to plan two community service events this month that will address educational equity and homelessness and hunger in St. Lucie County. The youth moved through the steps of the SPF to create a plan, examine these issues from a deeper perspective, and develop a strategy based on local data, cultural competence, and capacity building.



Pop Up Hope

Mothers at Hope is popping up around St. Lucie County to offer “hope to-go”! On November 9th, we hosted our first *Hope To-Go Pop-Up Boutique* event where families of St. Lucie County were invited to Winterlakes Park to grab free items for mothers, babies, and toddlers.



This past summer, Mothers at Hope partnered with Florida Blue, located in the St. Lucie West Walmart, and with Once Upon a Child in Stuart for donation boxes. Our community generously poured a surplus of donations into these donation boxes, which were shared with participants in our Mothers at Hope program. The remainder, which filled nearly half of a large storage unit, went home with 45 families in need at the *Hope To Go Pop-Up Boutique* event. Three agencies, including St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative, Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County, and Better Together joined us at this event to share their programming and resources with the families.

This event would have not been possible without volunteers from our H.Y.P.E Youth Coalition, former Mothers at Hope participants, and the Grove Church Port St. Lucie. We thank our volunteers and all the families of St. Lucie County who came out to make this event a success!



Kids At Hope Corner



National Kids at Hope Day Contest

This year, 16 schools, organizations, teachers, and even parents embraced the challenge to demonstrate their Kids at Hope *Time Traveler* and *Treasure Hunter* spirit. Participants were encouraged to wear blue and yellow to show their support and to email their photos and videos to the Kids at Hope Team for the chance to win a prize.

Many entries included videos of students sharing about their “ACES” (Adults who Care, Encourage, Support) and other caring adults in their lives. Some students spoke about their hopes and dreams, while others recited the Kids at Hope Pledge. Adults showcased their creativity by dressing as pirates and presenting treasure boxes filled with gold coins, symbolizing the potential treasures in each child they mentor. One school even spelled out "Hope" and created the Kids at Hope logo swirl with their students. You can see all the incredible and inspiring submissions on our Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/KAHSLC

The judges, consisting of the Roundtable staff, faced a challenging decision due to the close competition. In fact, the winner was determined by just one point. The results are as follows:

- * **1st Place: Lakewood Park Elementary**
- * **2nd Place: Sunlight Christian Academy**
- * **3rd Place: Fairlawn Elementary**

The Kids at Hope Team extends heartfelt gratitude to everyone who submitted entries this year. Your contributions are invaluable to our ongoing mission of spreading the message of HOPE. As KD Vinayak says, “Every child you encounter is a learning opportunity.” Our community strongly believes this, as we know that all children are capable of success—NO EXCEPTIONS!

Lakewood Park Elementary





2 x 10

Each month, the Kids at Hope Team aims to award a KAH 10 certificate to an individual who exceeds expectations as a Treasure Hunter. This person should not only believe in the three Universal Truths of Kids at Hope but also exemplify them in their daily actions. Additionally, the recipient must display all the attributes of the Treasure Hunter Pledge.



Dominique Cesar, Counselor Bayshore Elementary

This month, the award goes to Dominique Cesar, School Counselor at Bayshore Elementary. Mrs. Cesar played a crucial role in developing activities for the school's celebration of National Kids at Hope Day. She introduced a challenge for the staff called "2 x 10". In this challenge, staff were asked to spend **2 minutes each day for 10 consecutive days** talking with a student about any topic that is not related to classroom academics. At the end of the 10 days, the staff completed a KAH Report Card reflecting on what they learned about the child and identifying some of that student's talents. The goal of this exercise is to foster meaningful and sustainable relationships. Mrs. Cesar firmly believes and demonstrates every day, that all children are capable of success—NO EXCEPTIONS!





St. Lucie RISE

Strengthening Community Connections: The Collaboration Between LPAC and St. Lucie RISE

The Lincoln Park Advisory Committee (LPAC) has long been a pillar of community engagement, dedicated to fostering dialogue and creating opportunities for residents within the Lincoln Park area. With a mission centered on advocacy and community well-being, LPAC has now partnered with St. Lucie RISE to amplify its impact through the development of Resource Hubs across the community. This partnership is pivotal in establishing these Resource Hubs—spaces where community members can access comprehensive information on local agency initiatives and the array of support services available.

The vision behind these Resource Hubs is straightforward yet powerful: to create easily accessible points where residents can find information and receive guidance related to health, wellness, and social services. Whether someone is looking for mental health resources, assistance programs, or updates on community projects, these hubs are designed to be a one-stop source of information.



St. Lucie RISE's support has been instrumental in this process, helping LPAC not only identify key locations for these hubs but also coordinate with local agencies to ensure they are stocked with up-to-date materials. By pooling resources and expertise, LPAC and St. Lucie RISE are setting the stage for a community that is better informed, supported, and empowered.

This initiative is a testament to the strength of collaboration and shared vision for community well-being. As LPAC continues to work hand-in-hand with St. Lucie RISE, the rollout of these Resource Hubs marks a significant step toward fostering an environment where every community member knows where to turn for support and information. Stay tuned for further updates as we move forward with this important work.

St. Lucie RISE Launches Mental Health First Aid Training in Partnership with Alpert Jewish Family Service

St. Lucie RISE is thrilled to announce the rollout of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings for adults ages 18+ starting in January 2025, in collaboration with Alpert Jewish Family Service. These trainings will continue quarterly throughout 2025 to meet the growing need for mental health education and support within the community.

What Is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based program that equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to respond effectively to mental health crises. Similar to traditional first aid training, MHFA empowers participants to offer initial assistance until professional help is available. The course covers various aspects of mental health, including recognizing the signs of common mental health challenges, understanding how to provide immediate support, and learning how to connect individuals to the appropriate resources.



Learning Objectives and Benefits

Participants in the MHFA training will gain:

- **Practical Skills:** The ability to recognize early signs of mental health concerns, such as anxiety, depression, substance misuse, and more.
- **Effective Communication Techniques:** How to approach and support someone experiencing a mental health crisis with confidence and empathy.

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- **Knowledge of Resources:** Insight into local and national mental health services and how to guide individuals toward professional help.

Adults participating in these sessions will benefit from increased mental health literacy, reduced stigma around discussing mental health, and the confidence to act during difficult situations. This training fosters a community equipped to handle mental health challenges proactively and with compassion, enhancing both personal and collective resilience. Due to the high demand, the first session filled up within hours of release. However, future sessions are already planned, and we encourage those interested to sign up early to secure their spot.

Pre-Sign-Up Link Here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StLucieRISEMHFA>

St. Lucie RISE and Alpert Jewish Family Service are committed to fostering a supportive, informed community that prioritizes mental well-being. Join us in this transformative training and be part of a community that cares.

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



Our Funders:



Our Board Members

- ◆ Terissa Aronson, St. Lucie Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Tom Bakkedahl, 19th Judicial Circuit—State Attorney
- ◆ Brian Bauer, CareerSource Research Coast
- ◆ Ann Berner, SE FL Behavioral Health Network
- ◆ Sean Boyle, Children's Services Council
- ◆ Joseph Cracchiola, Department of Corrections
- ◆ Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids
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- ◆ Dana Trabulsky, State Representative
- ◆ Andrew Treadwell, Indian River State College
- ◆ Lisa von Seelen, Healthy Start Coalition of St. Lucie County
- ◆ Rosetta Washington, Fort Pierce Housing Authority

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.

2024-25 Executive Committee

CHAIR

Heather Parker, Guardian ad Litem

VICE-CHAIR

Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids

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TREASURER

Nathan Peterson, Department of Juvenile Justice

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AT LARGE

David Pickett, City of Port St. Lucie

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