



May 2025

Roundtable Review

Message from our CEO

Greetings,

May is Mental Health Awareness Month: A perfect time to shine a light on the importance of mental well-being for everyone, especially our children. Many mental health challenges begin in childhood or adolescence, but they often go unrecognized. These challenges can show up in many ways. Anxiety, depression, ADHD, trauma-related issues, and mood disorders are among the most common. Mental health struggles affect how children think, feel, and act, not just at home, but in school and social settings as well.



It's important for parents, teachers, and caregivers to recognize the signs, which can include:

- Persistent sadness or irritability
- Extreme mood swings
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Difficulty concentrating
- Avoiding friends or activities
- Sudden drop in grades
- Aggressive or defiant behavior

What may appear to be "bad behavior" could actually be a child struggling with undiagnosed mental health issues. The lack of understanding often times results in a youth receiving punishment rather than proper treatment. Understanding the difference is key to early intervention. Additionally, the shortage of mental health providers and youth that are uninsured or underinsured may prevent youth from receiving the necessary mental health services. Working together, we can reduce the likelihood of this happening for children we encounter.

St. Lucie RISE offers **teen Mental Health First Aid** for youth, and **Mental Health First Aid** for adults, helping people learn to recognize the signs and offer the right kind of support. These trainings are vital tools in building a stronger, more compassionate community.

Now is the perfect time to join forces with the Roundtable's St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative. Visit www.RoundtableSLC.org to sign up for the collaborative. By working together, we can strengthen our community's capacity to support our youth. With the right knowledge, understanding, and support, we can live out our community's powerful mantra: **All children and youth are capable of success—NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Teresa Bishop

Chief Executive Officer



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Special Dates:

- Star Wars Day 5/4
- Cinco de Mayo 5/5
- Lost Sock Memorial Day 5/9
- Bike to Work Day 5/16
- Memorial Day 5/26
- National Heat Awareness Day 5/30
- National Smile Day 5/31



Roundtable Team, from left: Alisia Harriel, Amanda DeMan, CEO Teresa Bishop, Shamra Giles, Amanda Callaghan, Operations Manager Dana Espinosa and Kevin Singletary.

Roundtable fetes 30 years of serving families

The Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc., proudly marks its 30th anniversary of dedicated service to the children and families of St. Lucie County. This year's theme, "Come to the 'table,'" invites the community to join in reflecting on three decades of impactful collaboration and calls for continued unity in support of youth and family well-being.

Since its founding in 1995 by five local agency executives, the Roundtable has grown into a trusted coalition of 28 chief executives representing key sectors across the county. The organization remains steadfast in its 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."

"For 30 years, we have stayed true to our purpose – to work together across systems to tackle the most complex issues facing our youth," said Teresa Bishop, chief executive officer of the Roundtable. "Our strength lies in our relationships. When we 'come to the table,' we bring the collective knowledge, heart, and commitment needed to drive real, lasting change."

The Roundtable has long been recognized across Florida and the nation as a best practice model for cross-sector collaboration. Over the years, the organization has developed and implemented a number of successful initiatives, including:

- St. Lucie Hand in Hand (1999): A comprehensive youth prevention plan based on research by Drs. David Hawkins and Richard Catalano.
- Kids at Hope (2007): A nationally acclaimed framework adopted countywide to support the success of every child, without exception.
- IGNITE Youth Alliance (2015): A nationally recognized anti-violence initiative



Above: Roundtable board members Sean Boyle, Children's Services Council of St. Lucie County, and Ann Berner, president, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network. Below: Christine Malloy, Roundtable executive director 1995-2000; Carol DeLoach, CEO, Communities Connected for Kids; and Lisa von Seelen, president, Healthy Start St. Lucie.



born from the Restoring the Village movement and rooted in the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model.

■ Substance Abuse Prevention and Mental Health Collaborative (2017-present): Recipient of the Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant and, most recently, the SAMHSA Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnership for Success grant to launch the St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative.

As the community evolves, the Roundtable remains a dynamic force for change, using data-driven strategies and inclusive dialogue to guide decision-making. The organization emphasizes that no single agency can solve systemic issues alone – collaboration is key. ■

— CONTRIBUTED



From left: Former Roundtable Board Member, Judge Burton Conner, Current Roundtable Board Members: Sean Boyle-Children's Services Council of St. Lucie County, Adrienne Huggins-Cayuga Centers, Heather Parker-Guardian ad Litem, Erin Lowry-Board of County Commissioners, Bob McPartlan-Department of Children and Families, and Jeff Lee-St. Lucie County Fire District



Roundtable Board Member Retreat 2025



From left: Judge Shanek Maynard (Roundtable Executive Director 2014-2017), Teresa Bishop, current Roundtable CEO, Christine Malloy (Roundtable Executive Director 1995-2014), and Vern Melvin (Founding Board Member)



St. Lucie RISE *Monthly Meeting*

Presentation Topic: **Conceptualizing Mental Health**



Date:

Tuesday, May 13, 2025



Time:

1:00pm - 2:00pm

LOCATION:

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

St. Lucie RISE is a county-wide initiative focused on strengthening community-based prevention and mental health support for youth in St. Lucie County. Through evidence-based approaches, we work with local partners to address the root causes of youth mental health challenges. Join us monthly on the second Tuesday to discuss current challenges, share resources, and provide updates on our mission to strengthen mental health support in our community.



**Justin Baksh LMHC, MCAP, QS,
BC-TMH, CRRA**
Chief Executive Officer



Justin's desire to help others struggling with mental health issues led him to pursue a career in counseling after completing his service in the United States Marine Corps. Today, he has over 15 years of successful experience as a counselor, both in private practice and as the founder and head of iMind Mental Health Solutions. His experience working with a wide variety of mental health conditions has developed his empathetic, down-to-earth style. His expertise has been called upon for numerous speaking engagements and he is frequently quoted in the media, including prestigious sites such as BuzzFeed, Huffington Post, Bustle, Rewire, and Healthline. Justin holds a Master's in Mental Health Counseling is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, a Masters Level Certified Addiction Professional, Certified Recovery Residence Administrator, a Qualified Supervisor as well as a Board Certified TeleMental Health Provider (BC-TMH).



Shamra Gilles, Mental Health
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@StLucieRISE



www.RoundtableSLC.org



SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

H.Y.P.E Youth Learning and Living It Up!

The H.Y.P.E Coalition has been busy this month with many opportunities for learning, mentorship, and fun!

Our H.Y.P.E Coalition's life lessons program, in partnership with New Horizons of the Treasure Coast and Kids at Hope, continued this month. Youth participated in Botvin LifeSkills sessions focused on social skills and anger management, along with Kids at Hope Time Travel activities. These engaging lessons help prepare our youth not only for their futures, but also for navigating everyday life.

H.Y.P.E youth expressed an interest in receiving real-world lessons for college and career readiness, and a desire to speak with individuals who work in their fields of interest. Myers-Briggs personality tests were given, and youth were encouraged to reflect on their strengths and areas for growth as it relates to their college and career prospects. Through a series of Education and Career Time travel activities, our youth were prepared for the opportunity to speak with individuals in the fields of law enforcement, law, and medicine. A representative from Indian River State College was also present to answer questions about college readiness and scholarships.



In preparation for Mental Health Awareness Month in May, H.Y.P.E youth were introduced to mental health concepts and coping skills by St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative's Project Coordinator, Shamra Gilles. Our youth have shared the impact of modern challenges they face on their mental health, including bullying and a lack of resources for youth mental health, both on school campuses and in the community. Our youth are in the process of planning and executing a social norms campaign, titled "Project TLC", an anti-bullying, pro-mental health campaign which will be posted at their schools throughout St. Lucie County.

H.Y.P.E was also represented at Fort Pierce Central High School's Psychology Club Mental Health Day event, where H.Y.P.E members helped to lead a fun and competitive activity and share about the H.Y.P.E Youth Coalition with their peers.



Kids At Hope Bilingual Training

One of Kids at Hope's key goals is to support children and families at their point of need. A vital question arises: Why do some children and youth succeed while others struggle? Equally important is considering the steps we can take to address this issue. Language barriers can often lead to communication challenges.



Recently, the Kids at Hope team collaborated with the ESOL Department of St. Lucie Public Schools to tackle this pressing concern. Together, they organized a Kids at Hope training session in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole for English Language Learning parents and Rivers Edge Elementary School students. The session was attended by sixteen students and fourteen parents. All written materials were translated into the parents' primary languages.

Loudy Motimer-Pierre and Sylvia Jambu serve as the school district's Bilingual Parent Educators. They not only translated the written materials but also acted as interpreters during the Kids at Hope presentation. Parents received materials to take home in both Spanish and Haitian Creole. Additionally, Book Man from Children's Services Council made a guest appearance to encourage students to read more and provided free books.

The message of hope transcends language: ALL CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE OF SUCCESS, NO EXCEPTIONS!



DRUG FREE
ST. LUCIE

National DEA Drug Take Back Day

DEA Drug Take Back Day at Jackson Drugs in Fort Pierce on April 26th was a great success! Drug Free St. Lucie, in partnership with Jackson Drugs, the Fort Pierce Police Department, Treasure Coast Opioid Taskforce and our H.Y.P.E youth coalition, helped our community safely dispose of unused and expired medications — keeping them out of the wrong hands and protecting our environment.

A total of 128 pounds of medications were safely collected. Additionally, 42 De-terra medication disposal bags and 27 prescription lock bottles were distributed to help community members continue safe medication practices at home.

We were proud to have H.Y.P.E youth leaders Samira S., Pedro H., and Ashka R. on-site to help educate the public about the importance of safe medication disposal. Their energy and knowledge made a big impact throughout the day.

Thank you to everyone who came out and supported this vital initiative. We'll see you again in October for the next DEA Drug Take Back Day — stay tuned for details!





Mental Health Awareness Month: Let's Paint the County Green!

Each May, we recognize Mental Health Awareness Month (MHAM); a time to uplift our community, break the stigma surrounding mental health, and remind one another that healing, hope, and help are always within reach. This year, St. Lucie RISE invites you to join us in raising awareness, promoting wellness, and “painting the county green” throughout the entire month of May!

Why Green?

Green is the color for mental health awareness, symbolizing renewal, hope, and support for those facing mental health challenges. Throughout May, we're encouraging residents, businesses, schools, and organizations across St. Lucie County to wear green in solidarity. If you don't have much green clothing, no problem! Just plan to wear green on Tuesday, May 13th at the St. Lucie RISE Monthly Meeting to join others in making a unified statement of support for mental health. If your organization or team would like green awareness ribbons, you can contact the St. Lucie RISE Project Coordinator (*see email below*) to request a bundle and help spread awareness in your part of the county. Throughout the month, we encourage you to share photos of your green-themed outfits or events and tag @StLucieRISE on Facebook so we can highlight your support and celebrate your participation in Mental Health Awareness Month.

Mindful May Calendar: Events & Activities All Month Long

Our *Mindful May Calendar* is full of events, prompts, and activities designed to support your mental well-being and remind you that taking care of your mind is just as important as caring for your body. Whether you're a community leader, student, parent, educator, or professional, this calendar was created with you in mind, because mental health is for everyone.

Featured Events Include:

- Community yoga & mindfulness days
- Daily affirmations & mental health challenges
- Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network's 3rd Annual MHAM Celebration
- Self-care spaces, resource fairs, and training opportunities
- Tips for practicing mindfulness and building resilience throughout your day

We invite individuals and organizations to use this calendar not only as a guide, but as a conversation starter and a way to engage your teams, clients, students, or neighbors in meaningful moments of support and healing. You can download the full Mindful May Calendar from our St. Lucie RISE Facebook page and follow along with us all month long. Let's show our community that mental health matters, every day.

Featured Speaker: Justin Baksh

We are honored to welcome Justin Baksh, CEO of iMind Mental Health Solutions, as our MHAM Featured Speaker. Justin brings a practical and inspiring approach to talking about mental health, breaking down complex ideas into messages that resonate. At our monthly meeting held on Tuesday, May 13th, come hear Justin's impactful presentation and walk away with new insights on how to understand, approach, and advocate for mental health in your daily life.

Proclaimed & Proud: St. Lucie RISE Awarded MHAM Proclamation for May 2025

We are thrilled to share that St. Lucie RISE has been officially awarded a Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation by the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners for May 2025! This proclamation recognizes the collaborative work of youth, families, and community organizations in elevating mental wellness across our county. It's not just a title... it's a testament to the change we're building together. Thank you for being part of this movement.

Stay Connected

This May, and every day, your mental health matters. Whether you're showing support with a green ribbon, attending a community event, or simply checking in with yourself, every action makes a difference. Follow us on Facebook [@StLucieRISE](#) for daily updates, resources, photos, and ways to get involved. For questions, event info, or to request ribbons, contact the St. Lucie RISE Project Coordinator, Shamra Gilles, at SGilles@RoundtableSLC.org. For more information on the Collaborative, visit the initiative page at www.roundtableslc.org/stlucie_rise.

Together, let's create a St. Lucie County where mental wellness is visible, valued, and celebrated.



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
- ◆ John Bolduc, St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office
- ◆ Joseph Cracchiola, Department of Corrections
- ◆ Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids
- ◆ Thomas Epsky, United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee
- ◆ James Taylor, City of Fort Pierce
- ◆ Diane Hobley-Burney, Fort Pierce Police Department
- ◆ Adrienne Huggins, Steering Committee Chair
- ◆ Jeff Lee, St. Lucie County Fire District
- ◆ Diamond Litty, 19th Judicial Circuit—Public Defender
- ◆ Tony Loupe, Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County
- ◆ Erin Lowry, Board of County Commissioners
- ◆ Robert McPartlan, Department of Children and Families
- ◆ Leo Niemczyk, Port St. Lucie Police Department
- ◆ Anastasia Norman, 19th Judicial Circuit-Judge
- ◆ 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
- ◆ 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
- ◆ 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

SECRETARY

Ann Berner, Southeast FL Behavioral Health Network

TREASURER

Nathan Peterson, Department of Juvenile Justice

PAST CHAIR

Tony Loupe, Early Learning Coalition

STEERING COMMITTEE

Adrienne Huggins

AT LARGE

David Pickett, City of Port St. Lucie

www.RoundtableSLC.org

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For questions or to subscribe to our Newsletter:
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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

- ♦ **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**
ADeMan@RoundtableSLC.org

Drug Free St. Lucie

- ♦ TBD

St. Lucie RISE—Mental Health Collaborative

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