



June 2025

Roundtable Review

Message from our CEO

Greetings,

Gun violence is a public health crisis that leaves a lasting impact on communities—and children are often its most vulnerable victims. June is recognized as Gun Violence Awareness Month, a time to reflect, raise our voices, and take action to protect the lives of those most at risk.



This issue has hit heartbreakingly close to home. A dear friend of mine recently lost her granddaughter to senseless gun violence. Her family is now among the thousands devastated each year by a tragedy that is preventable. Children who are exposed to gun violence—whether as victims, witnesses, or grieving loved ones—often carry emotional scars that affect their development, mental health, and future.

The trauma can lead to anxiety, depression, academic struggles, and even post-traumatic stress disorder. Left unaddressed, it can also contribute to cycles of violence that ripple through families and neighborhoods. We must protect our children from this growing crisis.

Preventing gun violence starts with us—our homes, our neighborhoods, and our collective voices. Here's how we can help:

- **Secure Firearms:** Safely storing firearms—unloaded, locked, and separate from ammunition—can drastically reduce accidental injuries and deaths among children.
- **Community Support:** Youth programs that offer mentorship, positive activities, and conflict resolution skills give kids healthy alternatives and help build resilience.
- **Mental Health Resources:** Access to counseling and trauma-informed care is crucial for children affected by violence.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Supporting common-sense gun safety laws—like background checks and red flag laws—can prevent guns from falling into the wrong hands.
- **Collaborative Prevention:** Partnerships among schools, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and local coalitions are key to identifying and addressing the root causes of violence.

Gun violence is not inevitable. This June, let us honor the lives lost and recommit ourselves to creating a safer future for all children. Every voice matters, and every action counts.

Teresa Bishop

Chief Executive Officer



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Special Dates:

- National Pen Pal Day 6/1
- National Leave the Office Early Day 6/2
- National Drive-In Movie Day 6/6
- National Best Friend Day 6/8
- Flag Day 6/14
- Father's Day 6/15
- First Day of Summer 6/20
- PTSD Awareness Day 6/27



Peace For St. Lucie to Host Countywide Trauma-Informed Care Summit

St. Lucie RISE is pleased to promote the upcoming Trauma-Informed Care Summit, presented by our collaborative initiative Peace For St. Lucie, which will be held on Thursday, July 17, 2025, at Indian River State College. This free, countywide event offers a timely and important opportunity for professionals, educators, service providers, advocates, and community members to expand their understanding of trauma-informed approaches and how they can be applied across diverse sectors to promote healing and resilience. Advance registration is required to attend.



Designed to build awareness, foster collaboration, and strengthen systems of care, the summit will feature leading voices in the fields of trauma, mental health, and community resilience. It will highlight trauma as a shared public health concern that affects individuals, families, and entire communities, while also emphasizing the hope and possibility for healing through trauma-responsive practices. Attendees will leave with practical strategies, meaningful connections, and a renewed commitment to cultivating environments that are safe, inclusive, and supportive.

The agenda includes a keynote presentation by Dr. Julie Radlauer, a nationally recognized leader in behavioral health and community change. Her keynote will set the tone for the day, providing a foundation for deeper exploration during the summit's two rounds of targeted breakout sessions. These sessions will offer content relevant to mental health providers, educators, youth-serving professionals, nonprofit staff, faith leaders, and others seeking to embed trauma-informed practices in their organizations and communities.

Breakout topics include trauma-informed education strategies, supporting survivors of domestic and dating violence, youth mental health and family systems, workplace wellness and leadership, and approaches to addressing generational and community-level trauma. The summit is designed to advance trauma-informed practices across sectors, including education, healthcare, justice, business, and human services, and equip attendees with actionable tools they can implement in their day-to-day work.

The day will conclude with a dynamic panel discussion titled "Building a Trauma-Informed Community," featuring lived-experience voices and frontline professionals. Panelists will share real-world insights on implementing trauma-informed care in crisis response, advocacy, education, healthcare, and more. This interactive session will challenge attendees to consider system-level change and inspire them to carry forward the lessons and strategies shared throughout the day.

Throughout the summit, attendees will also have the opportunity to visit a variety of community resource exhibitors, offering materials, services, and supports that promote trauma recovery, mental wellness, and holistic health. Lunch and light refreshments will be provided.

As a growing network dedicated to prevention, healing, and community well-being, St. Lucie RISE encourages community stakeholders to attend this important summit and become part of the movement toward building a more resilient, informed, and compassionate St. Lucie County.

Kids At Hope Boys Council Celebration



Fourteen boys at Lawnwood Elementary were honored for participating in the Boys Council group, an extension of the Kids at Hope program, this school year. The boys selected for this program faced unique challenges. Some boys arrived with anger issues, while others struggled with attendance, academics, or behavioral concerns. Many of these boys showed improvement in all the mentioned areas, thanks to the Boys Council curriculum and the Kids at Hope principles.

D'Join Jackson, St. Lucie Public Schools Family and Community Engagement Administrator, was the keynote speaker. She challenged the boys to change and make a difference in their community. Each student received a mirror and was asked to write three positive attributes about themselves on the mirror's front. They are encouraged to recite these affirmations daily.

Lawnwood Elementary Guidance Counselor, Liliash Batchlor, and Sandy Mack with the Children's Services Council collaborated with the Kids at Hope Training Coordinator to provide bi-weekly training sessions for the boys. These ACES poured life experiences, wisdom, and knowledge into the members of the group. These sessions allowed the boys to explore their hopes, dreams, fears, and behaviors. Several boys excelled in the classroom, earning spots on both



the honor roll and the principal's honor roll, exemplifying the Kids at Hope motto: "All Children are Capable of Success, NO EXCEPTIONS!"



Farewell and Best Wishes to Dana Espinosa



After 10 years, Dana Espinosa will be leaving the Roundtable of St. Lucie County. While this news is bittersweet, we take this moment to celebrate Dana's incredible impact, unwavering dedication, and years of service that have left a lasting mark on our organization and community.

Dana began her journey with the Roundtable through the writing of our newsletter—an early glimpse into her thoughtful communication and commitment to our mission. Over the years, she has worked in many different roles, the most recent being Operations Manager. In every position, Dana brought excellence, passion, and a deep sense of purpose.



Dana has been an integral part of the Roundtable, championing the mission to improve outcomes for youth and families across St. Lucie County. Her leadership, compassion, and commitment have been evident in every initiative she touched. Whether coordinating community collaborations or supporting her colleagues with grace and integrity, Dana's influence has extended far beyond her job description.



Her presence, insights, and leadership have shaped the culture of the Roundtable and inspired those around her. Dana's institutional knowledge, collaborative spirit, and authentic care for others have made her a trusted leader and friend to many.

On behalf of the entire Roundtable of St. Lucie County, we extend our warmest wishes to Dana as she embarks on her next chapter. We are confident that wherever her journey leads, she will continue to shine and make a difference.



H.Y.P.E to Higher Ground: Honoring Graduates, Saying Farewell and Spreading Prevention Knowledge

For the H.Y.P.E. Youth Coalition, this past month saw a whirlwind of prevention, mental health awareness month activities, and endings with new beginnings for both esteemed coalition youth leaders and valued partners.

On May 22nd, H.Y.P.E Coalition Lead Advisor, Amanda DeMan, was proud to speak at the Florida Department of Health's Opioid Awareness Summit on the topic of engaging youth in substance use prevention in their communities. She spoke on the evidence-based methods used with H.Y.P.E youth, and the importance of empowering youth to lead the way regarding substance use prevention programming. Our coalition's youth-led, adult-guided framework originates from CADCA's National Youth Leadership Initiative, which has been recognized by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). We hope the knowledge shared at this impactful conference will go on to positively influence the work of fellow substance use professionals working with youth in St. Lucie County and beyond.

Thanks to our on-site teacher and sponsor, Ms. Witherow, and Prevention Specialists, Ms. Krista and Ms. Maryanne, prevention and life skills lessons continued for our Northport K-8 youth. As we wrapped up the final meeting of the school year, we bid a heartfelt farewell to Ms. Witherow and Ms. Maryanne, who will both be moving on to new opportunities. They have been precious assets to our coalition's work and have certainly left their mark on the hearts of our coalition's youth.



H.Y.P.E Lead Advisor, Amanda DeMan



H.Y.P.E President, Zara Chowdhury

Another heartfelt sendoff is in order as we celebrate the graduation of our core group of dedicated youth leaders from St. Lucie County Schools. This includes our esteemed President and Vice President, Zara Chowdhury and Amani Mohd, along with our committed members Sophie Perez and Darly Larose. We extend our deepest gratitude to these remarkable seniors for their leadership, passion, and lasting contributions.



H.Y.P.E Vice President, Amani Mohd



An open letter to H.Y.P.E Graduating Seniors:

H.Y.P.E Graduating Seniors,

Your leadership, passion, and unwavering commitment have left a lasting impact on your peers and the community. Through your vision and dedication, you've helped build a stronger, more empowered coalition, and we are so proud of all you have accomplished.

As you embark on your next chapter, know that your legacy of service and advocacy will continue to inspire those who follow in your footsteps.

With gratitude,
Amanda DeMan



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
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- ◆ Robert McPartlan, Department of Children and Families
- ◆ Leo Niemczyk, Port St. Lucie Police Department
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Judge Anastasia Norman, 19th Judicial Circuit-Judge

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

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Drug Free St. Lucie

- ♦ TBD

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