



September 2025

Roundtable Review

Message from our CEO

Greetings,

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, a time to focus on education, awareness, and action. Through our Kids at Hope Initiative, it is our goal to promote hope for children across St. Lucie County. Sadly, some young people struggle to see a future for themselves, experience deep emotional pain, and may turn to destructive behaviors—including ending their lives. Suicide remains a leading cause of death among youth, with concerning trends: deaths among ages 10–24 have increased by more than 60% since 2007. Black adolescent girls, LGBTQ+ youth, Indigenous youth, and rural youth—especially those facing cyberbullying—are at particularly high risk.



Recognizing the Signs

Warning signs include talking about wanting to die or feeling hopeless; withdrawing from friends or daily activities; major changes in mood, sleep, or appetite; increased substance use or agitation; or giving away possessions. A sudden calm after depression can also be a warning sign.

Free QPR Training Scholarships

In recognition of Suicide Prevention Month, and continuing into October, the Roundtable's St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative is offering 30 scholarships (first-come, first-serve) for QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training—a nationally recognized program that teaches how to respond to someone in crisis. Much like CPR or Mental Health First Aid, QPR equips everyday people to step in and help.

What You'll Learn:

- How to Question, Persuade, and Refer someone who may be suicidal
- How to get help for yourself or someone in crisis
- Common causes and warning signs of suicidal behavior

QPR is a one-hour, online, self-paced training. Once registered, you'll receive a personalized access link and a certificate upon completion. Please see page 2 for training and registration details.

As a community, let's take action—equipping ourselves with the tools to bring hope and healing, and ensuring that "All kids are capable of success—No Exceptions!"

Teresa Bishop

Chief Executive Officer



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Special Dates:

- Labor Day 9/1
- National Wildlife Day 9/4
- National Be Late for Something Day 9/5
- Grandparents Day 9/7
- National Swap Ideas Day 9/10
- Patriot Day 9/11
- Positive Thinking Day 9/13
- Neonatal Nurses Day 9/15
- Rosh Hashanah Begins 9/22



Observing National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month: Supporting Our Youth in St. Lucie County

September marks National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month; a time to raise awareness, share resources, and engage in conversations that can save lives. Within our network, we are committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of local youth, and we know that understanding local data is critical to addressing these challenges.

According to the 2024 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS), a significant number of youth in St. Lucie County report symptoms of depression and suicidal thoughts:

- **Feeling life is not worth it:** 26.7% of youth reported this sentiment in the past year.
- **Feeling no good at all:** Nearly 30% indicated they sometimes feel they are no good.
- **Frequent sadness or depression:** 33.2% reported feeling depressed or sad most days in the past year.
- **Suicidal behaviors:** 12.6% seriously considered attempting suicide, 8.9% made a suicide plan, 8.0% attempted suicide one or more times, and 2.8% required medical care after a suicide attempt.

These numbers highlight the urgent need for prevention efforts, open communication, and supportive resources for our youth.

On September 9th, we were honored to welcome Monique Robbins, MS, Prevention Coordinator at Tykes and Teens, who will present "Talk Saves Lives: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention". Monique is passionate about trauma-informed care, suicide prevention, and teen alcohol prevention, and actively serves as Treasurer for the local chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). Her expertise and dedication made this session an essential opportunity for community members and partners to learn how to recognize warning signs, respond effectively, and provide support to those in need.

Additionally, we are highlighting QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training as another important resource available to the community. QPR is a nationally recognized program designed to equip everyday people with the skills to help someone in crisis. Participants learn to question someone about suicidal thoughts, persuade them to seek help, and refer them to appropriate resources. In honor of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, we are offering 30 scholarships (first-come, first-served) for individuals to complete QPR training at no cost. If you would like to receive one of these scholarships, please sign up using the registration link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StLucieRISEQPRTTraining>.

We encourage all members of our community to join the conversation, gain valuable knowledge, and help foster a culture where youth feel safe, supported, and heard. Remember, **talking about suicide saves lives**.

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.



Kids at Hope Tunnels of Hope 2025



“Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world,” said Nelson Mandela. This year, more than 40,000 aspiring changemakers have embarked on their journey in the 2025-2026 school year in St. Lucie County. The Kids at Hope Team has collaborated with administrators from public schools, charter schools, and private schools to implement the Tunnels of Hope program for their students, welcoming them to this new and exciting school year.



A total of 26 schools, including one private and one charter school, accepted the invitation to host a Tunnel of Hope this year. Twenty-one thousand students experienced the joys of a Tunnel of Hope. These tunnels are available to all schools and preschools in St. Lucie County.

Fort Pierce Central High School was the first high school to ever request a tunnel. On the first day of school, over 3,000 Cobras were welcomed by cheers from community members representing various organizations. Many students were pleasantly surprised to see so many people gathered early in the morning, sharing inspiring words, waving encouraging signs, and offering high fives.

The Kids at Hope Team would like to thank all community members who participated in the Tunnels of Hope. Your act of kindness will be remembered by many students for years to come. Being a Treasure Hunter goes beyond reciting a slogan; it means putting those words into action. Many adults sacrifice their sleep to participate in the tunnels because they firmly believe that all children are capable of success—no exceptions!





Mothers at Hope Partners with ALPI for New Season

We are excited to share that Mothers at Hope is launching its next season, in partnership with the Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc. (ALPI). Beginning in late September to early October, sessions will take place at the George W. Truitt Family Services Center in Fort Pierce.

Mothers at Hope is a peer-support initiative created to encourage, empower, and connect pregnant and postpartum mothers. Through guided conversations and shared experiences, the program provides a safe and uplifting space for mothers to find community, resources, and encouragement as they navigate the joys and challenges of motherhood.

In addition, we are thrilled to announce that the donation window for our upcoming Hope to Go Boutique at Winterlakes Park has officially closed! Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our community, we have secured an abundance of items to bless the mothers who will be attending.

While the donations are complete, we still need volunteers to help make the day a success! If you would like to lend a hand, please scan the QR code below or reach out to **Amanda DeMan** at **ADeMan@RoundtableSLC.org** to volunteer or get more information about the event.

Together, with the support of ALPI and our community partners, we look forward to creating another season of hope, connection, and growth for mothers in our community.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

TO MAKE THIS UPCOMING "HOPE TO GO" BOUTIQUE A SUCCESS.

SCAN

For More Information
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Visit Our Website
www.RoundtableSLC.org/
KidsAtHope

In August, the Drug Free St. Lucie Communities Coalition attended the Florida Behavioral Health Conference in Orlando. The conference was insightful, thought-provoking, and engaging. One of the key workshops attended was *On the Edge of Legal: The Retail Landscape of Mind-Altering Substances – How They Are Sold, Marketed, and Placed in Our Communities*. This session provided a comprehensive look at how tobacco, alcohol, vaping products, and other substances are made accessible to youth. Presenters shared findings from the 2025 Synar Coverage and Environmental Scan conducted across Florida, sponsored by the Department of Children and Families. The study evaluated how these products are sold, marketed, and placed in a variety of retail outlets, including smoke shops, liquor stores, gas/convenience stores, and big-box retailers such as Walgreens and Winn-Dixie.

Workshop topics included:

- Marketing Practices** – evaluated the 4 P's: product, placement, pricing, and promotions, including in-store, outdoor, and billboard advertising.
- Youth Accessibility** – examined data on retailer proximity to schools, signage visibility, and youth-targeted marketing.
- Substance Availability** – explored the accessibility of alcohol, tobacco, vaping products (including Delta/THC items), Kratom, and other substances in our communities.
- Policy Implications** – highlighted recommendations for improving public health and reducing youth access.
- Risk and Protective Factors** – addressed community demographics, environmental conditions, and behaviors.

The Drug Free St. Lucie Communities Coalition was grateful for the opportunity to learn from and engage with professionals across Florida. We look forward to applying these insights as we continue our mission to build a healthier, safer community.

For more information about Drug Free St. Lucie Communities Coalition, visit roundtableslc.org/drug-free-st-lucie and follow us on Facebook @[drugfreestlucie](https://www.facebook.com/drugfreestlucie).

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
- ◆ Robert Ridle, Fort Pierce Police Department
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- ◆ Diamond Litty, 19th Judicial Circuit—Public Defender
- ◆ Tony Loupe, Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County
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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
- ◆ Michael Broderick, City of Fort Pierce

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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