

Roundtable Review

Message from our CEO

Greetings,

October is National Substance Abuse Awareness Month

Benjamin Franklin wisely said, *"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."* When it comes to substance use, this is especially true. Preventing youth substance use—or delaying the "age of onset"—is one of the most effective ways to reduce use later in life.

Substance use is shaped by several **risk factors**:

- **Community:** Easy access and visibility of alcohol or drugs can normalize use.
- **Families:** Lack of communication, supervision, or exposure to use at home increases risk.
- **Peers:** Friends strongly influence youth choices, and peer pressure encourages experimentation.
- **Marketing & Placement:** The way alcohol and drug-related items are priced, promoted, or displayed in stores can have an impact. This summer, Drug Free St. Lucie and New Horizons partnered to conduct environmental scans of local stores to study these influences.

There are also **protective factors** that help youth avoid substance use—strong family bonds, supportive schools, positive peers, and clear community standards. That's why Drug Free St. Lucie, the Roundtable's prevention initiative, focuses on awareness and education through campaigns promoted on Drug Free St. Lucie's social media, local radio and television. Join us on our Facebook and Instagram for great messaging, events, tools and other information to prevent substance use by youth in our community.

We promote SAMHSA's **"Talk. They Hear You."** campaign, reminding parents that youth listen when adults set expectations. We also provide the **Hidden in Plain Sight** virtual tool to help caregivers recognize warning signs, such as secrecy, declining grades, paraphernalia, or sudden changes in behavior or friends.

Join us the **week of October 27th** for **Red Ribbon Week**, the nation's oldest and largest drug prevention campaign. Started in 1985 to honor DEA Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, it continues today as millions wear red ribbons and participate in activities that promote drug-free living. This is your opportunity to join us in taking a stand—check our calendar of events on page 7.

Together, we can ensure **all youth are capable of success—no exceptions.**

Teresa Bishop

Chief Executive Officer



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Special Dates:

- Nat'l Pumpkin Spice Day 10/1
- Nat'l Pregnancy & Infant Loss Remembrance Day 10/15
- Dictionary Day 10/16
- Red Ribbon Week 10/23-10/31
- Drug Take Back Day 10/25
- Halloween 10/31



Continuing Mental Health Advocacy into October

September was a month of powerful conversations and actions around suicide prevention, and we are grateful to everyone who took part in raising awareness and building skills, but our advocacy does not stop there. Mental health is a year-round priority, and October brings new opportunities to learn, connect, and support one another.

Each year, the first full week of October is recognized as Mental Illness Awareness Week, taking place this October 5th through the 11th. This national observance is dedicated to breaking down stigma, raising awareness, and sharing resources to support individuals and families impacted by mental illness. Within that week, on October 10th, communities across the globe come together for World Mental Health Day, a reminder that mental health is a universal human right and an essential part of overall well-being. Both observances invite us to continue building understanding, compassion, and support for those experiencing mental health challenges.



To carry these messages forward, we encourage the community to explore and share resources such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Mental Health America, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness. These organizations provide educational materials, advocacy opportunities, and direct support that help individuals and communities strengthen their mental health.

In this spirit of raising awareness and connecting people with support, we are especially proud to share that the first volume of the **St. Lucie Cares Behavioral Health Resource Guide** is officially here! This guide has truly been a labor of love, created to connect our community with the services and resources they need most. Printed copies are now available and ready for distribution, and our online version is under construction so that the guide can continue to grow and stay current as new resources are identified.

St. Lucie Cares is more than just a directory; it's an evolving tool that reflects our community's strengths and commitment to improving access to care. While the first volume marks an exciting milestone, it is only the beginning. We look forward to expanding and refining the guide with even more resources in the months ahead, helping ensure that every member of our community knows where to turn for support.



For more information on the St. Lucie RISE Mental Health Collaborative and updates on the St. Lucie Cares guide distribution and future online access, visit the initiative page at www.roundtableslc.org/stlucie_rise and follow us on **Facebook @StLucieRISE**.

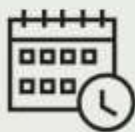


St. Lucie RISE

Monthly Meeting

Presentation Topic:

Early Childhood Education and the Impact It Has on Future Success



Date:

Tuesday, October 14, 2025

Time:

1:00pm - 2:00pm

LOCATION:

Children's Services Council Training Room

546 NW University Blvd.

Port St. Lucie, FL 34986



Kristy Conway

Community Collaboration Specialist



East Coast Migrant
Head Start
Project

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. This month's presentation highlights how early learning environments shape not only academic outcomes but also long-term mental health and resilience. 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.

Kristy Conway has been a resident of St. Lucie County for the past 30 years and holds a Master's Degree in Family Studies. Throughout her career, she has been a strong advocate for children and families, collaborating with numerous community partners including Safe Space, Indian River State College, the Roundtable of St. Lucie County, and Guardians for New Futures, where she served as Community Outreach and Prevention Coordinator. She currently works with East Coast Migrant Head Start. A former child of the foster care system herself, Ms. Conway is deeply passionate about representing and improving the lives of disadvantaged youth.



Shamra Gilles, Mental Health
Collaborative Coordinator
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@StLucieRISE



www.RoundtableSLC.org



SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Boys Council at White City Elementary



Jess Lair once said, “Children are not things to be molded, but are people to be unfolded.” This sentiment is at the heart of the Kids at Hope initiative, which encourages children to envision their futures and explore their potential. Every child deserves to have positive experiences and opportunities (ACEs) in their lives. Instead of being confined to a predetermined mold, children should be allowed to explore the world in a nurturing environment where they can fully realize their capabilities. The Kids at Hope Team is collaborating with United Way staff at White City Elementary to bring this vision to life.

On September 16th, the first session of the Boys Council began at White City Elementary. Sessions will be held every other week for a total of ten weeks. Seven boys participated in this program, which is based on an evidence-based curriculum, to embark on their journey together. These boys shared unique aspects of their personalities, discussed their future dreams, established group expectations, and developed group rituals. Through the Boys Council, they will forge a sense of belonging, build personal assets, and challenge harmful beliefs about masculinity as they navigate their journey to manhood.



Every one of these boys is capable of success—without exception. FULL HOPE AHEAD!



October is Substance Use & Misuse Prevention Month. This national campaign is aimed at raising awareness about substance use disorders, promoting prevention strategies, and supporting individuals and families affected by substance use. Substance Use Prevention month coincides with National Red Ribbon week, which is held the week of October 23rd – October 31st. This year's Theme is **“Life Is A Puzzle, Solve It Drug Free.”**

As we celebrate National Red Ribbon Week, we are focused on celebrating and honoring the importance of living a drug-free life. This month our youth and adults pledge to increase their knowledge of learning more about the devastating effects of the misuse of drugs including the misuse of prescription drugs. This pledge renews their commitment to live healthy, productive drug-free lives.

Drug Free St. Lucie is preparing for our Community Needs Assessment and we need your support. Please take a few minutes to complete **both surveys** below and share them with friends, family, coworkers, and others in your network. The insights we collect will directly inform our coalition's strategies, grant development, and community-wide prevention efforts.

Survey links:

Community Input Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/257YBVH>

Resource Assessment Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QCR6LMX>

QR codes for easy access:



Community Input Survey:



Resource Assessment Survey:

Please submit the surveys by COB Wednesday, October 29th, 2025.

Your partnership ensures that every voice is not only heard—but reflected in the decisions that shape the future. Thank you for your leadership and for empowering youth to be a part of the solution.





DRUG FREE
ST. LUCIE

DRUG TAKE BACK DAY

DISPOSE UNUSED MEDICATION RESPONSIBLY!

Bring your expired or unused prescription medications to the event for safe disposal or stop by to pick up a Deterra Drug Deactivation Kit for safe home disposal.

Saturday, October 25, 2025 | 10:00 am - 2:00 pm



LOCATION:
JACKSON DRUGS
2301 OKEECHOBEE RD.
FORT PIERCE, FL 34950

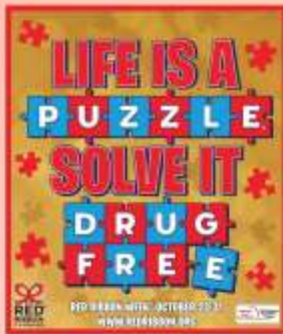
www.RoundtableSLC.org



@DrugFreeStLucie

For More Info: Jongelene Adams, DFSL Coordinator
at JAdams@Roundtableslc.org





DRUG FREE
ST. LUCIE

FOLLOW US!
@DrugFreeStLucie
www.Roundtableslc.org

Red Ribbon Week October 23-31, 2025

Oct
23

We Are RED-Y To Say "NO" To Drugs and Alcohol!

Teens - take the online pledge at www.redribbon.org/pledge.

Parents - download SAMHSA's "Talk. They Hear You." mobile app.



Oct
24

Make St. Lucie County Red Today!

Wear RED, light it up in RED, post pictures on social media while tagging @DrugFreeStLucie & #RedRibbonWeek



Oct
25

Let's TEAM UP Against Drugs!

DEA Drug Take Back Day: Jackson Drugs, 2301 Okeechobee Rd., Fort Pierce, 10am-2pm



Oct
27

Theme Decoration

Decorate your door, mailbox, fence, or school with a Red Ribbon for this year's theme: "Life is Like A Puzzle: Solve It Drug Free". Post pictures on your social media pages and tag @DrugFreeStLucie & add the hashtags: #SolveThePuzzleAndLiveDrugFree & #RedRibbonWeek



Oct
28

Take the #LiveDrugFree Social Media Challenge

Post Red Ribbon messages on your Facebook, Instagram or Twitter pages, tag @DrugFreeStLucie and add the hashtags: #SolveThePuzzleAndLiveDrugFree & #RedRibbonWeek



Oct
29

Drug Free Poetry Slam-RED RIBBON THEME

Write and perform your poems about the benefits of a Drug Free Lifestyle and post them on your Facebook, Instagram or Twitter pages and tag @DrugFreeStLucie and add the hashtags #SolveThePuzzleAndLiveDrugFree & #RedRibbonWeek



Oct
30

WEAR 2025 RED RIBBON SWAG

Pass out Red Ribbon SWAG to students, teachers, parents, community organizations and post on your social media pages and tag @DrugFreeStLucie and add the hashtags #SolveThePuzzleAndLiveDrugFree & #RedRibbonWeek



For more information:

Jongelene Adams at: JAdams@Roundtableslc.org



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MOTHERS AT HOPE



NO EXCEPTIONS!



A Kids at Hope themed peer support group for pregnant women / moms in St. Lucie County with children 0-24 months.

At Mothers at Hope, we will:

- Help you find your village of supportive women, and bond with your baby.
- Discover the power of self-care and stress management in your motherhood journey.
- Find new ways to help you prioritize your mental health and well-being.
- Connect to resources in St. Lucie County that serve families; Q&A sessions with local agencies.



Seating is Limited!

Sign up today!

SCAN ME



When:

Third Thursday of Each Month
Starting October 16th 2025,
4:00pm-5:00pm

Where:

**ALPI George W. Truett
Family Services Center**
1814 N. 13th Street
Fort Pierce, FL 34950

For more information:

Amanda DeMan,
Kids at Hope School & Community Liaison
ADeman@RoundtableSLC.org
(772) 871-5880

MOTHERS AT HOPE



NO EXCEPTIONS!



Guest Speakers Needed

We want to make sure St. Lucie County's expecting and new moms — and their families — know about the support you provide!

Come share about your services:

- ✓ **When:** The third Thursday of each month, October to May
- ✓ **Where:** ALPI's George W. Truett Family Services Center – 1814 N. 13th Street, Fort Pierce, FL 34950
- ✓ **Times:** Two 10-minute speaker slots: 4:40–4:50pm OR 4:50–5:00pm
- ✓ **Speaker Request:** Please bring printed materials for distribution and a small raffle item for the mothers in attendance



Amanda DeMan
ADeMan@RoundtableSLC.org



SCAN HERE





Mothers at Hope “Hope to Go” Boutique Brings Families and Community Together

On Saturday, the Mothers at Hope program hosted its “Hope to Go” Boutique, where 70 families came together to receive much-needed items and resources for themselves and their children. Families left with essentials and a sense of encouragement and community support.

This event would not have been possible without the incredible dedication of our volunteers from MARCC Academy, the Florida Department of Health, Easter Seals, and the Early Learning Coalition. Their time, energy, and compassion helped make the day meaningful for every family in attendance.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our vendors, who shared valuable resources with families: Early Learning Coalition, FDLRS, Safe Families, Church Outside the Walls, and Advanced Care Partners PPEC. Their partnerships are key to ensuring that families in our community know where to turn for support.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that beginning in October, Mothers at Hope will re-launch in partnership with ALPI. Sessions will be held on the third Thursday of each month from 4-5pm at the George W. Truett Family Services Center, located at 1814 N 13th St, Fort Pierce, FL, 34950. Mothers who are interested in joining may sign up using the QR code located on page 8.

The mission of Mothers at Hope is simple yet powerful: to provide peer support and connect pregnant and postpartum mothers with babies ages 0-24 months to community resources that help them thrive. We believe in walking alongside mothers in their journey—ensuring they never feel alone, and always feel supported.

Together, we are building a community of hope for all families in St. Lucie County, NO EXCEPTIONS!



H.Y.P.E Youth Coalition Kicks Off a New Year of Leadership and Service

The H.Y.P.E Youth Coalition is off to a strong start for the new school year! We recently launched our first meetings at Fort Pierce Central High School, with Northport K-8 scheduled to begin their sessions in early October. Our youth are already showing their commitment to leadership, service, and making a difference in their community.



This month, H.Y.P.E members also stepped up as volunteers at the Mothers at Hope “Hope to Go” Boutique, assisting families as they received much-needed items and resources. Their willingness to give back demonstrates the heart of what H.Y.P.E is all about: Youth using their voices and actions to create a stronger, more connected St. Lucie County.

Looking ahead, our members will soon begin their strategic planning for the 2025–2026 school year, ensuring their efforts continue to align with our 4 Core Values, and The Roundtable of St. Lucie County’s work. These values—

Substance Use Prevention, Mental Health Advocacy, Health and Wellness, and Community Improvement—provide the foundation for all H.Y.P.E initiatives as our youth leaders work toward positive, community-wide change.

H.Y.P.E is more than a youth coalition, it is a movement of young leaders coming together to inspire hope, create impact, and build a brighter future for themselves and their peers in St. Lucie County.



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
- ◆ Michael Broderick, City of Fort Pierce
- ◆ Joseph Cracchiola, Department of Corrections
- ◆ Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids
- ◆ Thomas Epsky, United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Judge 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
- ◆ Robert Ridle, Fort Pierce Police Department
- ◆ 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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ADeMan@RoundtableSLC.org

Drug Free St. Lucie

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- ♦ **Amanda Callaghan, Administrative Assistant**
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