



Building a Community that Supports the Success of Children



THE ROUNDTABLE REVIEW

January 2017 Issue

A Message From The Director:

Happy New Year!

In this month's newsletter, I am excited to share a recent article in the St. Lucie Voice about the strides the Roundtable is making against gang crime through the Restoring the Village Youth Initiative. Although two years have passed, it seems like just yesterday that we were learning about and launching this project, and it is great to see how far we've come in such a short time.

I am also pleased to congratulate two St. Lucie County students – Sebastian Suarez and Maddie Chabab –who were recently elected to the statewide board of Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT). Mr. Suarez is an 11th grader who has been with St. Lucie's SWAT chapter for 4 years. He serves as the chair of the local chapter and has been elected as the statewide Chair for the 16 member youth advocacy board. Ms. Chabab, also an 11th grader, has been with the local chapter for 2 ½ years and was recently elected as a statewide board member. We are proud of these young people for their service, and will recognize them at the January 2017 Roundtable meeting. Please congratulate them and their principal, Mr. Henry Sanabria, of Lincoln Park Academy.

Lastly, we are asking all Roundtable members to Save the Date for our Youth Development Conference celebrating ten years of Kids at Hope in St. Lucie County! The conference is scheduled for March 28th-30th, 2017. We will be hearing from national experts about reducing racial disparities in juvenile justice, and understanding and addressing the impact of adverse experiences and trauma on children. Please commit to sending all of your available staff to at least one day of the conference --- you won't be disappointed!

Best regards,

Shaniek Maynard



Youth Leadership Council of St. Lucie County



INTRODUCING...
Youth Leadership St. Lucie 2016-17!



**MANY THANKS to the
Viola G. Smith Foundation!**

The Roundtable of St. Lucie County is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization comprised of agencies working together with partners and stakeholders throughout the community to address the issues our children face at the root level. Its members are leaders of all aspects of society who come together to build a community of opportunity where every child succeeds.

The Roundtable operates through networks, each of which focuses on key aspects that affect the lives of our children.

Budget advisory panel?
 Council revisits committee idea

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Diagnosis: Thrombosis
 Improved treatment options

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 Drummer channels 'Allman' joy

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YOUR INDEPENDENT LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2016

Roundtable makes strides vs. gang crime

BY ADAM LATEN WILLSON | Correspondent

For 15 months, the Roundtable of St. Lucie West has been implementing an anti-gang intervention program called Restoring the Village Youth Initiative (RTVYI), with the intention of addressing violent crime rates in the county.

Every year, the National Gang Center, a division of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), awards a handful of grants to communities across the country with a major gang issue. In 2014, the Fort Pierce Police Department, one of five national recipients to receive funding, was awarded \$200,000. Recently, the grant was renewed through 2019.

In addition, RTVYI has received backing from Allegany Franciscan Ministries, the Hunt Foundation, and the St. Lucie County Commission, which got the whole vision off the ground in 2014 with a \$40,000 seed grant.

Shaniek Maynard, executive director of the Roundtable, says that the goal of the initiative is to reduce violent crime in the community by 30 percent over the next four years.

Not only is there an extensive outreach component that pro-

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RESTORING THE VILLAGE YOUTH INITIATIVE

Christmas Lunch at the Detention Center

On December 25, 2016, RTVYI Outreach Workers surprised youth housed at the St. Lucie County Juvenile Detention Center over Christmas with a McDonald's luncheon. Outreach Supervisor Darcy McFolley, along with Outreach Workers Jeron Atwater and Veslue Edwards arrived with lunch, Christmas cards, and gifts for 28 incarcerated youth as well as 15 staff. The Outreach Workers used the opportunity to connect with the teens (several of whom have been referred to RTVYI). OW Supervisor McFolley shared his own experiences of being incarcerated during the holidays, encouraging the youth to make better choices and to take responsibility for their own actions. The youth and staff were very thankful for the Outreach Workers visit, food, Christmas gifts, and prayers.



Outreach Workers and Detention Center Staff on Christmas Day.

ROUNDTABLE

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vides mentorship services, the initiative has also gathered an intervention team in coordination with local schools, healthcare and judicial agencies to provide humanitarian resources to the clients.

Monica Jakobsen, outreach coordinator for the initiative, says every case is individualized to each client's need. "What we try to do is get to know them, figure out the kind of challenges they have in life, and then we try to connect them with services, and opportunities. One of the most important services we provide is the outreach program itself, and the mentoring that the workers do."

Sometimes the kids (there are currently 50 in the program, ranging in age from 14 to 25) need help with basic activities such as applying for IDs or birth certificates. Some of them need help obtaining their GED. Others require assistance with parole or court proceedings. Still others need recourse to healthcare or mental-health services.

Eight of the clients also attend a biweekly anger management course, and many of them go on team-building field trips together. Recently a group of them went down to Tigertail Recreation Center at Broward College, a waterpark and climbing facility where they bonded over outdoor exercises.

In October, three of the program's par-

ticipants were admitted into Career Source Research Coast's new pre-apprenticeship program. The vocational workshop, partnered with the Green Collar Task Force, helps set up the young kids with the resources they need to pursue apprenticeship opportunities.

While many of these services are important, the mentorship component of RYVI seems to be the linchpin that holds the program together. "All of our outreach workers have gone through major transformations from being in the streets," Jakobsen explains. "That's critical. They need to know the streets, but they also need to show the youth that it's possible to turn it around. So they are living proof of what used to be and what can be."

Darcy McFolley, outreach supervisor, adds, "A good outreach worker would need street credibility. People would have to know them, so they could go into different areas, relate, and get the information they need to help these young people."

RYVI began in 2014 because of a discerned need for gang intervention in Fort Pierce. It came about as part of an effort led by Representative Larry Lee Jr. in partnership with the Fort Pierce Police Department and the U.S. Attorney's Office, where Maynard was a prosecutor at the time. Other involved agencies included Department of Children and Families, the Florida Department of Health and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

"We have so much prevention work in St. Lucie County with Children Services

Council and many of our agencies, and we have law enforcement officers on the suppression end," says Maynard, "but what stood out to us is we had no program or initiative that was working directly with youth that were in gangs."

At an early stage, Lee hosted a town hall meeting addressing gang violence in the area. Approximately 1,000 residents and stake holders attended, and the consensus was clear: Gang violence was a major concern.

At the time, there were about 1,000 violent crime incidents per 100,000 residents in Fort Pierce, according to a gang assessment report conducted by the Roundtable. Incidents state-wide were about half of that, and less than half on a national level. While violent crime has steadily decreased in Fort Pierce – particularly aggravated assaults, which have seen a 30 percent reduction in the last few years – there is still a disproportionately high violent crime index for the Sunrise City with many of the incidents occurring in the Lincoln Park neighborhood.

Even though much of the county's gang violence is centered in Fort Pierce, the statistics are still troubling for the county at large. "We can't think in terms of Fort St. Lucie vs. Fort Pierce," says Maynard. "Fort St. Lucie may be the safest city, but Fort Pierce is our immediate neighbor. So when we look at our county rates, even if Fort St. Lucie's violence is very low, if it's out of control in Fort Pierce, that affects us all."

Port St. Lucie Police Chief John Bolduc, who's been involved with the Roundtable for four years, says, "We're trying to create resources that the youth can tap into. We're reaching out to businesses and trying to get them skills so they can get a good job. We're not just trying to wrest our way out of the situation. We're clearing barriers and providing guidance for a better life."

One point that Jakobsen makes is that gang involvement is only one piece of the systemic puzzle that is suppressing opportunities for local youth. The Roundtable, a coalition of 30 community leaders in law enforcement, social work and justice, has also developed programs for substance-abuse outreach, poverty assistance, and educational betterment. Twenty years ago, it was formed as part of a federal program to reduce youth violence, and was one of five such coalitions in Florida. Now, it remains one of the few organizations of its kind still operating nationwide.

Former County Commissioner Chris Dzadosky, who has been a part of the Roundtable for eight years, has high hopes for the Roundtable's outreach efforts. "We started the Kids at Hope initiative about eight years ago with one square mile. Then that grew to the next square mile, and the next square mile. Now, we are the first and only county-wide Kids at Hope initiative in the nation. Not only do we believe that all kids are capable of success, no exceptions, but we are also changing the culture, and it's working." ■



Viola G. Smith Foundation and Kids at Hope Annual Toy Giveaway



On December 17th, 2016, the Viola G. Smith Foundation hosted their annual Kids at Hope Toy Giveaway at the Percy Peek Gym in Fort Pierce. For the past three years the Foundation has provided gifts for children of all ages in the community. During the event, every child received a toy and a raffle ticket for the opportunity to win a bicycle or gift card. Parents also participated in fun activities such as a parent/child trivia game and musical chairs to win gift cards to Wal-Mart, the movie theater, and various restaurants. Over 400 parents and children attended this year's event. A special thank you to Sheila Santiago of the Viola G. Smith Foundation for her generosity to the community, the City of Fort Pierce for the use of the Percy Peek Gymnasium, and all the volunteers who helped to make this event successful.





On December 6 and December 20, Youth Leadership St. Lucie met in Fort Pierce at the River Walk Center. During the meetings, the teens engage in team building exercises, learn about leadership principles, identify advocacy issues and work in sub-committees on projects to address community problems.

On January 3, Youth Leadership teens attended the Fort Pierce City Commission meeting. They introduced themselves and Youth Leadership St. Lucie during Public Comment. They are planning to do the same before the Port St. Lucie City Commission and St. Lucie County School Board as well.

The teens are excited about the upcoming National Youth Leadership Retreat in February. We have extra space, so if you know of teens who would like to participate please contact Megan Pack for more information: MeganTreasureHunter@gmail.com or (772) 332-0902.





Congratulations to the newest “Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin’ By World” Graduates!

On December 13, 2016, Grace Way Village graduated a new class of Getting Ahead Investigators. The class began with 12 students and graduated 11, an impressive attrition rate. The pairing of Facilitators Kevin Singletary and Sonia Dupree gets much of the credit. Getting Ahead is a 48 hour course that encourages participants to build resources and create a plan that will help them to begin to make changes that will lead to a stable and secure future. Participants, called investigators, are paid a small stipend for their investigative work that leads to a greater community insight on the issue of poverty. By the end of the course, each investigator has an achievable goal and concrete steps to make that goal a reality.

The investigators’ incentives included \$15 gift cards funded by United Way and grocery vouchers provided by Stefanie Myers of United Against Poverty. Grace Way Village collected clothing sizes for all investigators, providing them with a lovely clothes rack to "shop" from for their graduation.

Kevin and Sonia coordinate a fabulous and meaningful graduation with their creativity, respecting the individual needs and gifts of the investigators. This graduation did not disappoint! Thank you to all partners involved in the Bridges Initiative.



YOU DID IT!
Congratulations



Two St. Lucie Teens Elected to Statewide Anti-Tobacco Board

It is an honor to announce that St. Lucie County SWAT members, Sebastian Suarez and Maddie Chabab, students at Lincoln Park Academy, have been elected as Youth Advocates to serve on the Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) Statewide Youth Advocacy Board. Sebastian was elected by his peers to serve as state Chair. The Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida (BTFF) hosted four regional SWAT meetings on Saturday, November 12, 2016. Students from each of the 67 counties were invited to attend. The meeting was very successful as the youth were able to provide critical input into the youth prevention component of the BTFF, receive training in key tobacco issues and advocacy skills and elect a 16 member SWAT Youth Advocacy Board to represent their statewide organization within the Department of Health.

As members of the Youth Advocacy Board, Maddie and Sebastian will be assisting in the development of statewide anti-tobacco initiatives and creating tools to enhance the knowledge and capacity of their fellow SWAT members across the State. In order to fulfill these responsibilities, Board members are expected to spend two to three hours weekly, planning and completing tasks to support the SWAT organization. In addition, they will participate in face-to-face meetings through June 30, 2017. Youth Advocacy Board members are often expected to speak publicly on behalf of the SWAT organization to both local and out of county audiences. Their efforts will shape future tobacco-free norms, making tobacco less desirable, less acceptable and less accessible. We expect their actions will also shine positively on our schools and community.

The Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida is committed to developing leadership skills in youth through training in tobacco issues, media literacy, policy development process, public speaking, and evaluation skills. It is our goal that Maddie and Sebastian will participate in these trainings both locally and on a statewide level. These activities will provide the students much needed community involvement hours for school. The experiences will also give them knowledge, skills and motivation that can impact their entire life. – *Article Submitted by Serena DeFrank, St. Lucie County SWAT Coordinator*





Youth Leadership Retreat



Are you a teen leader?

Do you have what it takes to create community change?

*Do you know a youth group that would benefit from
attending a leadership seminar taught by national
experts?*

If so, please JOIN US for a three-day Youth Leadership Retreat!

*Hosted by the Roundtable of St. Lucie County, with trainers from
Washington D.C.'s National Youth Leadership Institute.*

WHO: Students in 9th–12th Grade

WHEN: Feb. 18-20th (Presidents' Day weekend)
(Lunch provided daily)

WHERE: TBD

*Youth participating in the retreat will also receive
community service hours.*

REGISTER BY:

January 20, 2017

Call (772) 332-0902 or 871-5880; or email
MeganTreasureHunter@gmail.com



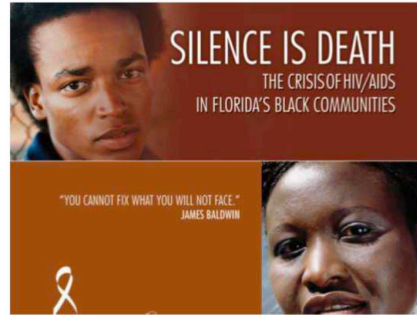
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www.RoundtableSLC.com

Save The Date

Community Engagement Meeting

Date: Tuesday, February 7, 2017
Time: 5:30pm—8:30pm



10 Year Anniversary



Location: Indian River State College
Kight Center Building V, Ft. Pierce, FL

RSVP by January 27, 2017
Call: 772-462-3925
E-mail: dawn.jones@flhealth.gov



Kids at Hope Mini Masters

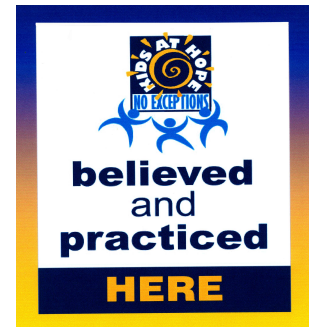


Please **SAVE THE DATE** to join the Roundtable of St. Lucie County and Kids at Hope Founder, Rick Miller, for a three day conference **March 28-30, 2017** to celebrate 10 years of Kids at Hope in St. Lucie County!

The conference will feature collaborative discussions on hot topics in youth development including:

- Addressing Racial and Ethnic Disparities and Implicit Bias in the Juvenile Justice System;
- Using the Power of Connection to Reverse the Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma;
- Building Youth Assets and Resiliency through Caring Adults and Opportunities to Engage; and
- Using a Public Health Approach to Identify and Address Root Causes of Youth Violence, Delinquency, Substance Abuse, and Infant Mortality in St. Lucie County.

Guest speakers will be announced soon! Please make plans to attend.



Executive Committee

Chair: Chief John Bolduc, Port St. Lucie Police Department

Vice Chair: Mayor Linda Hudson, City of Fort Pierce

Secretary: Wydee'a Wilson, Department of Juvenile Justice

Treasurer: Clint Sperber, St. Lucie County Department of Health

Past Chair: Sean Boyle, Children's Services Council

At-Large Member: Tony Loupe, Early Learning Coalition

Steering Committee Chair: Tonya Andreacchio, Children's Services Council

Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc.

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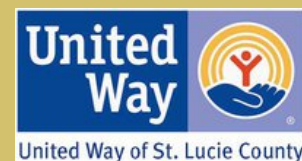


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"Roundtable of St. Lucie County"

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*Please email newsletter submissions to
Dana Stonelake:
DStonelake@RoundtableSLC.org*

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Our Members

- ❖ 19th Circuit Public Defender's Office, *Diamond R. Litty*
- ❖ 19th Judicial Circuit - State Attorney, *Bruce Colton*
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- ❖ Board of County Commissioners, *Linda Bartz*
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- ❖ Devereux CBC, *Carol Deloach*
- ❖ Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County, *Tony Loupe*
- ❖ Economic Development Council, *Peter Tesch*
- ❖ Florida Department of Corrections – Circuit 19, *John Thompson*
- ❖ Fort Pierce Police Department, *Diane Hobley-Burney*
- ❖ Guardian ad Litem, *Vern Melvin*
- ❖ Housing Authority of Fort Pierce, *Andrea Kochanowski*
- ❖ Indian River State College, *Andrew Treadwell*
- ❖ Kids Connected by Design, *Lisa von Seelen*
- ❖ Lincoln Park Council of Ministers, *Hazel Hoylman*
- ❖ Port St. Lucie Police Department, *John Bolduc*
- ❖ Roy A. Hunt Foundation, *Andrew Hunt*
- ❖ St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce, *Terissa Aronson*
- ❖ St. Lucie County Department of Health, *Clint Sperber*
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- ❖ Southeast FL Behavioral Health Network, *Ann Berner*
- ❖ State Representative, *Larry Lee, Jr.*
- ❖ Steering Committee, *Tonya Andreacchio*
- ❖ United Way of St. Lucie County, *Karen Knapp*

Our Networks & Sub-Committees

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"Bridges to Prosperity"

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