



November 2024

Roundtable Review

Message from our CEO



Greetings,

With all of the buzz going on during the holiday season, I am reminded of those in need. November is National Homeless Youth Awareness Month. Homelessness not only refers to those living on the street, it is defined as unstable housing, family instability, poor housing conditions, and uncertainty about future living conditions. Locally, we encounter young people who are “couch surfing”, meaning they move around sleeping in different homes until they have to move to the next.

According to the Council of Homelessness 2024 annual report, there has been a 13% decrease in homelessness between 2015 to 2024, despite Florida’s population growth during the same period. However, the report revealed there has been a recent Point In Time measure that indicates homelessness is on the rise, largely driven by unaffordable housing. Though young people can be resilient; there remains a risk of long-term impact on their social, emotional, and physical development that may result in poorer physical and health outcomes.

A better understanding of local risk factors for youth homelessness by schools and service providers will inform our interventions. It is important to point out, that risk factors for youth homelessness differ from adults. In an article featured by The National Institute of Health, National Library of Medicine “Risk and resilience factors for youth homelessness in Western countries – a systematic review”, these risk factors include family difficulties, mental health or substance use problems, history of problem behaviors, a history of foster care, homelessness as a child, or running away.

St. Lucie County is fortunate to have two comprehensive evidence-based practices that address multiple risk factors and behaviors that could lead to youth homelessness: Functional Family Therapy administered by Cayuga Centers and funded by the Roundtable of St. Lucie County through its Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant and Multi-Systemic Therapy, administered by DATA. For more information, contact Cayuga Centers and DATA to learn more about these programs.

Youth homelessness is preventable. Investment in programs and support for vulnerable youth and families is essential to making a difference. Let’s continue to support the youth in our community and stand true to our pledge “All youth are capable of success – No Exceptions!

Teresa Bishop

Chief Executive Officer



NOVEMBER is National Homeless Youth Awareness Month



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Special Dates:

- Daylight Savings Time Ends 11/3
- Election Day 11/5
- Veterans Day 11/11
- World Kindness Day 11/13
- Pay Back Your Parents Day 11/20
- Great American Smokeout 11/21
- Turtle Adoption Day 11/27
- Thanksgiving 11/28



Kids At Hope Corner

Taking Time To Care

"The second universal truth of Kids at Hope is that we connect with all children and youth in meaningful and sustainable ways. Another term for this is to be an "ACE" of Clubs for a child, another caring adult. Many of the children in our community lack this type of relationship and it is imperative for more adults to step up and provide this type of support to our children.

The Kids at Hope Team has embarked upon a journey working with sixteen boys at Lawnwood Elementary. The team will use the evidence-based program Boys Council as part of this initiative. The focus of the curriculum is to empower boys to find a sense of belonging, build assets, and assist with dismantling harmful and rigid masculine beliefs.

Each boy selected to attend had the opportunity to help establish group expectations. Bob Proctor said, "A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you than you see in yourself and helps bring it out of you." These young men are filled with unlimited potential. The mentors will follow the guidelines of the KAH Treasure Hunters to search for all the skills, talents, and intelligence that exist in all children and youth. We believe all children are capable of success, **NO EXCEPTIONS!**"

Kids At Hope Activities

During October, the Kids at Hope Team was actively involved in our community. The team provided training for new staff members at the YMCA of the Treasure Coast, adding 15 new Treasure Hunters to our roster.

On October 18, 2024, United Against Poverty hosted a community Trunk or Treat event, and the KAH team participated with a farm-themed trunk. Children and youth had the chance to spin the *Wheel of Hope* to win treats, while adults received information about KAH, Mothers at Hope, and H.Y.P.E. Additionally, KAH participated in two activities at Allapattah Flats K-8 School. The first event was the school's Parent Night, where KAH connected with over 70 students and their parents. Students earned prizes from the treasure box by answering questions about KAH's practices and beliefs, while adults received information about the upcoming KAH Training.

The Kids at Hope Team has spent the past few weeks delivering new Kids at Hope (KAH) signs to several school administrators. Seven St. Lucie County schools were awarded these special new "Mascot at Hope" signs in recognition of their ongoing support and promotion of the KAH practices and beliefs on their campuses. Students recite the pledge daily, and the staff exemplify the standards of a Treasure Hunter. Congratulations to Bayshore Elementary, CA Moore Elementary, Northport K-8 School, Allapattah Flats K-8, and Fort Pierce Central High School. The KAH Team will be awarding more signs throughout the year to St. Lucie County schools and organizations that exemplify the Kids at Hope culture on campus.

Does your organization believe that all children are capable of success, with no exceptions? Do your staff members actively seek out the talents, skills, and intelligence in all youth? If so, you could be next!

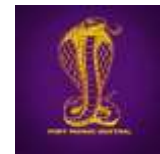
FULL HOPE AHEAD!



“All Children Are Capable Of Success, NO EXCEPTIONS!”



Southern Oaks Middle School



“Life Is A Movie”, And H.Y.P.E Youth Are Living It DRUG FREE!

Substance use prevention here, social norms campaigns there, Red Ribbon Week preparation everywhere! Our H.Y.P.E Youth have been busy with learning, creating, and applying substance use prevention skills all month building up to Red Ribbon Week October 23-31st, embodying their “main character moments” to live up to this year’s Red Ribbon Week theme: ***Life is a Movie, Film Drug-Free!***

Through our partnership with New Horizons of the Treasure Coast, our youth have been delivered the Botvin Life Skills curriculum by Prevention Specialists. They have learned skills related to goal-setting and decision-making, as well as the myths and facts surrounding the use of substances such as alcohol, marijuana, and nicotine. H.Y.P.E youth have also learned how social norms campaigns are used as a substance use prevention tool, how coalitions function, and how youth can make an impact in their communities.

H.Y.P.E has been getting creative this past month! A contest was posed to our youth to make an impactful substance use prevention t-shirt and backpack design for our coalition to wear during (and after!) Red Ribbon Week. Many entries were submitted and voted on and H.Y.P.E member Valerie M. was the winning designer (*see below*)! A contest was also posed to our youth, via our resident Prevention Specialist Maryanne Warren, to design a substance use prevention movie poster for Red Ribbon Week. Our H.Y.P.E members also came up with their own social norms campaign titled, “Me When: React to the Facts” (*see below*). This social norms campaign uses humor, and youth-created “memes” and TikTok videos to reach youth on social media and their school campuses.

Finally, our youth were able to put their newfound knowledge and skills to work in the community during their participation at our Drug Free St. Lucie’s DEA Drug Take Back Day on October 26th at Jackson Drugs in Fort Pierce. This experience demonstrated to our youth firsthand how community members can safely dispose of their prescription medication, and how critical it is to educate the community on the importance of locking up prescription medications, especially when youth are present in the home. All members of H.Y.P.E took the Red Ribbon Week pledge, and are engaging other youth, school administration, and their parents to do the same. This month alone, the number of H.Y.P.E coalition members has grown exponentially due to the recruitment efforts of H.Y.P.E members among their peers. Our coalition youth are leading by example with H.Y.P.E’s mission and message and ready to bring their peers on board to do the same.





Think about your medicine cabinet at home. Chances are, like many Americans, you have prescriptions that are expired, or that you no longer use that have been piling up over the years. All too often, prescriptions find their way into the hands of individuals they shouldn't, thrown in the trash, or flushed down the toilet to pollute the environment. The DEA's Drug Take Back Day is a perfect solution to prevent all these options from happening. This past Saturday, October 26th, members of Drug Free St. Lucie's Coalition came together to be a part of this event at Jackson Drugs in Fort Pierce. Members of multiple sectors of Drug Free St. Lucie's coalition were present to give their time and efforts to support this event. Thank you to Natasha Ramlagan, President of Jackson Drugs, Officer Jorge Goz, Fort Pierce Police Department, Casey Wood, New Horizons of the Treasure Coast and Drug Free St. Lucie Coalition Chair, SPC Latoya Samuels and SPC Christian Sassano, National Guard, Kevin Singletary, Kids at Hope Training Coordinator, Amanda DeMan, H.Y.P.E Adult Advisor, and Camey P. and Kami-ra P., H.Y.P.E coalition members. Jackson Drugs President Natasha Ramlagan, whose pharmacy served as the host site of this DEA Drug Take Back, remarked on her pharmacy's role in this event: "Partnering with Drug Free St. Lucie has truly been a blessing in our community. Together, we can support local communities in one of its greatest needs, which is to remove unwanted and expired medications in an environmentally friendly way. Our current and past efforts in teaming up together have built trust, and that's definitely a win for all of us."

At this event, numerous Detera Drug Deactivation Kits, as well as Safe Rx Locking Pill Bottles were distributed to members of the community for free. These are just one more way that Drug Free St. Lucie is combatting substance misuse and environmental contamination in St. Lucie County. Our H.Y.P.E youth were very active in explaining these products to the community members. "I have always cared about the environment and reducing pollution. I had no idea that there was a right way to dispose of medication until we talked about it at our last H.Y.P.E meeting. I'm glad I could be a part of this event to help make a difference.", Camey P., H.Y.P.E Youth.

This event would not have been possible without the partnership of Jackson Drugs and the Fort Pierce Police Department. FPPD Officer Jorge Goz graciously gave his time and shared his wisdom with our two H.Y.P.E youth. Officer Goz reflected on the significance of Saturday's Drug Take Back: "In my opinion as a police officer and a member of the community, I believe events like this are important for many reasons but here are two: It serves as education to our community, and education is key to improving our city, our state, and our country. The second is more specific to the Drug Take Back...by having these events, we remove medications that may end up in the wrong place. In the hands of people they don't belong to, in local waterways, the landfill; or, even in the hands of a child that might accidentally take it. In the long run, these events save our planet and preserve life."

Thanks to Drug Free St. Lucie's partnership with Jackson Drugs and the community members of Fort Pierce who came to dispose of their old medications, **97 pounds of prescription drugs were collected**. Keep an eye out for the next Drug Free St. Lucie DEA Drug Take Back Day in April. To learn more about DEA Drug Take Back Day, or how to safely dispose of prescription medication, go to www.DEA.gov/TakeBackDay.



97 Pounds!





Rising Together: St. Lucie RISE Strengthens Community Connections & Mental Health Support

Over the past few months, St. Lucie RISE has been actively strengthening our network, engaging with community partners, and expanding resources to better support mental health across St. Lucie County. From new collaborative initiatives to upcoming training sessions and outreach events, there's a lot happening. Here's what we've been up to recently and what's coming up next!

Ongoing Efforts: St. Lucie Cares Behavioral Health Resource Guide

We continue to collect information for **St. Lucie Cares**, our comprehensive Behavioral Health Resource Guide. This guide is designed to connect youth and families with essential mental health and substance misuse services available locally, making it easier for them to find the support they need. We encourage local agencies to share their information so we can ensure this guide is as complete and up-to-date as possible.



To include your agency's information in St. Lucie Cares, please fill out our survey using the link or QR code below: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HJQVVP8>

Upcoming Teen Mental Health First Aid Sessions

We are excited to announce that the next round of **Teen Mental Health First Aid** training sessions with youth from the Boys and Girls Club of St. Lucie County is coming soon! These sessions equip teens with the skills to support their peers, helping them recognize and respond to mental health challenges. Stay tuned for more details on the dates and locations, consider bringing this valuable training to your organization to empower more young people with these essential skills.

Spotlight: Peace 4 St. Lucie Featured Online

We are proud to share that **Peace 4 St. Lucie**, St. Lucie RISE's collaborative initiative with the Children's Services Council and Tykes & Teens, was recently featured on the City of Port St. Lucie's website and social media in support of our Community Survey. The purpose of this survey is to gather insights from residents regarding their understanding of trauma, identify areas within the community where traumatic experiences are being reported, and pinpoint where additional support and resources are most needed. The information collected will help us, along with local organizations, provide more targeted services to support those affected by trauma and enhance overall community well-being.

This recognition highlights our collective efforts to improve mental health services and support throughout the community. As part of this initiative, we are currently developing an outreach plan to ensure that all areas of St. Lucie County are accounted for, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the resources and support services that residents need. If you have not already completed the survey, please do so here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HJQVVP8>

A promotional poster for the "Peace 4 St. Lucie" survey. At the top, there is a circular logo with a heart and the text "peace FOR ST. LUCIE from Anthony Lewis". Below the logo is a photograph of a smiling family (a man, a woman, and two children) framed in a cloud-like shape. The main text reads "YOUR VOICE MATTERS!" in large, bold, red letters. Below this, there are two bullet points: "OUR GOAL: Build a safe and stronger community for everyone." and "Help shape future support and programs." A dark blue box contains the text "PLEASE COMPLETE OUR SURVEY:" followed by "St. Lucie residents, please scan the QR code to complete a 5-10 minute anonymous survey." and a QR code. At the bottom, there is a vision statement: "Vision: To foster a community in St. Lucie County where peace and trauma-informed practices flourish, empowering individuals to heal and grow." Below the vision statement are the website "www.roundtableslc.org", the hashtag "#PEACE4STLUCIE", and logos for Children's Services Council, St. Lucie RISE, and Tykes & Teens.

Monthly Meetings with Featured Presenters

Beginning in November, St. Lucie RISE's monthly meetings will feature presenters from local organizations. We are thrilled to kick off this new initiative with **Kristy Conway from Guardians for New Futures Children's Advocacy Center**, who will share insights on the important work being done to support youth in our community.

These presentations are an opportunity to learn more about the mental health resources available locally, foster collaboration, and avoid working in silos. By bringing together different organizations, we aim to maximize our collective impact in supporting mental health across St. Lucie County. Keep an eye out for future guest speakers, and join us to connect and learn!

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 12th, 2024, at 1:00 PM in the St. Lucie County Fire District Administrative Offices - 5160 NW Milner Dr, Port St. Lucie, FL 34983. *(Flyer page 8)*

Community Outreach: Trunk or Treat Event

St. Lucie RISE recently participated in our first Trunk or Treat event hosted by United Against Poverty, where we proudly represented our collaboration with the Lincoln Park Advisory Committee (LPAC). This event was a great opportunity to share information about LPAC's efforts to revamp its presence in the community and its dedication to advocating for community well-being, empowering local voices, promoting engagement, and bridging needs with services for residents.

LPAC's mission is **to assist the Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc. in identifying resources required in the Lincoln Park area for residents to be engaged and responsible for their community, while collaborating with the IGNITE Task Force**. We look forward to more opportunities to work alongside LPAC in supporting the welfare of Lincoln Park and surrounding neighborhoods.

Get Involved with St. Lucie RISE

If you're interested in joining our efforts, presenting at an upcoming meeting, or bringing Teen Mental Health trainings to your organization, please reach out to Shamra Gilles at SGilles@RoundtableSLC.org. Follow us on Facebook @StLucieRISE. Together, we can make a difference!





St. Lucie RISE

Monthly Meeting

Presentation Topic:

Foster Care - Resiliency - Social Services



Date:

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

Time:

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Location:

**St. Lucie County Fire District
Administrative Offices
5160 NW Milner Drive
Port St. Lucie, FL 34983**



Kristy Conway
Community Outreach Coordinator



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

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.

Kristy Conway has been a resident of St. Lucie County for the last 30 years. She has a Master's Degree in Family Studies. Ms. Conway has advocated for children and families by working with numerous community partners including Safe Space, Indian River State College, the Roundtable of St. Lucie County, and in her current role as Community Outreach and Prevention Coordinator with Guardians for New Futures. As a former child of the foster care system, Ms. Conway's passion is to represent and improve the lives of disadvantaged youth.



Shamra Gilles, Mental Health Collaborative Coordinator
SGilles@RoundtableSLC.org



@StLucieRISE



www.RoundtableSLC.org





Alcohol Compliance Checks



The St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office has been very busy undertaking alcohol compliance checks at local establishments to reduce the access of alcohol to underage youth.

Congratulations to those establishments who are doing their part by checking IDs when serving alcohol to patrons.

Drug Free St. Lucie would like to recognize and thank them for complying with the law.

Congratulations to the following establishments for being in compliance:

- * **Thirsty Turtle** - 2825 SW Port St. Lucie Blvd., Port St. Lucie
- * **Miller's Ale House** - 1775 NW St. Lucie West Blvd., Port St. Lucie
- * **Cheddar's** - 1375 NW St. Lucie West Blvd., Port St. Lucie
- * **Applebee's** - 4898 Okeechobee Rd., Fort Pierce

Our Funders:



Our Board Members

- ◆ Terissa Aronson, St. Lucie Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Tom Bakkedahl, 19th Judicial Circuit—State Attorney
- ◆ Rosetta Bartell, Housing Authority of Fort Pierce
- ◆ Linda Bartz, Board of County Commissioners
- ◆ Brian Bauer, CareerSource Research Coast
- ◆ Ann Berner, SE FL Behavioral Health Network
- ◆ Richard Del Toro, Jr., Port St. Lucie Police Department
- ◆ Sean Boyle, Children's Services Council
- ◆ Joseph Cracchiola, Department of Corrections
- ◆ Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids
- ◆ Thomas Epsy, United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee
- ◆ TBD, Steering Committee Chair
- ◆ Arnold Gaines, City of Fort Pierce
- ◆ Diane Hopley-Burney, Fort Pierce Police Department
- ◆ TBD, 19th Judicial Circuit-Judge
- ◆ Diamond R. Litty, 19th Judicial Circuit—Public Defender
- ◆ Tony Loupe, Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County
- ◆ Robert McPartlan, Department of Children and Families
- ◆ Troy Norman, St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Jeff Lee, St. Lucie County Fire District
- ◆ Clint Sperber, FL Health Department - St. Lucie County
- ◆ Peter Tesch, Economic Development Council
- ◆ Dana Trabulsky, State Representative
- ◆ Andrew Treadwell, Indian River State College
- ◆ Lisa von Seelen, Healthy Start Coalition of St. Lucie County

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

TBD

AT LARGE

David Pickett, City of Port St. Lucie

www.RoundtableSLC.org

Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc.

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- ◆ **Dana Espinosa, Operations Manager**

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Drug Free St. Lucie

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