



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

"Meeting of the Minds" Teen Mental Health & Wellness Summit

Life Education Center programming received additional funding from the Bureau of Prevention Services to incorporate education regarding prescription medications, including opioids, to students in 8th, as well as 9th or 10th grade.

Training, materials, and resources were provided for health educators and social workers in our efforts to prevent prescription drug misuse and to promote mental wellness by emphasizing healthy behaviors and techniques for dealing with stress and coping with life's pressures.

A "Meeting of the Minds" Teen Mental Health & Wellness Summit, in collaboration with Project SUN, was held on May 2nd at Kankakee First Church of the Nazarene. This event brought together over 230 high school students, 20 educators and social workers, and 29 volunteers, learning from 15 presenters.

Topics included teen pressures, gender, sexual identity, dealing with anxiety and depression, teen misuse of prescription drugs, social media bullying, signs of suicide, yoga, and stress reduction tips.

The teens learned valuable information and were encouraged to share what they learned with others.

Life Education Center director, Brenda Wetzel, encouraged teens to participate in the #WholsMyGoTo Challenge by posting a picture with their go-to person and to nominate others to do the same. She stated "Everyone needs a go-to-person, someone to talk to."



Meeting of the Minds Summit
May 2, 2019



1 James Taylor, Mental Health Specialist at Riverside Medical Center's adolescent specialty unit, spoke on tips for dealing with anxiety, depression and teen pressures. James has enjoyed working in this field for the last 20 years.

2 "Drug Use is Life Abuse" Billboard! Students, Jocelyn Zettergren and Mikayla Ryan, from St. George School, designed their billboard titled "Drug Use is Life Abuse." Their entry was displayed during May to promote safe medication practices as a part of the Life Education Center Wise Highs billboard contest.

3 Dr. Camille Crawford, PharmD, is a patient-centered registered pharmacist. Dr. Crawford gave a presentation entitled, "Medication Safety for Teens." Resources for this presentation were provided by My Generation Rx.

4 Tammy Earsley, a yoga instructor and TruSelf social-emotional intelligence leader, presented "Yoga & Other Stress Reduction Techniques" at the "Meeting of the Minds" Teen Mental Health & Wellness Summit.

5 Teen Summit Planning Committee members included Deb Baron, Estefany Chavez Aquilar, Rosalinda Chavez, Eliana Jefferson, Julie Martins, Yareni Martinez, Toryn Provost, Augustina Rios, Elliseo Sandoval, Lydia Sellers, and Brenda Wetzel.



Drug-Free Communities Update

Recognitions and Scholarships

- Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) highlighted Pfl for Coalitions in Action feature article
- Recognized on Illinois Public Health Association's (IPHA) website and in Trauma-Free Illinois Initiative presentation at IPHA Conference in Springfield
- Received scholarship to attend the American Academy of Pediatrics Illinois Chapter 9th Annual Conference and featured in ACEs Connection article
- Received scholarship to attend the Midwest Regional ACEs Summit in Milwaukee and featured in ACEs Connection article

Presentations

- Presenter for Illinois ACEs Response Collaborative Webinar
- Presenter for ACEs Connection webinar
- Presenter for Child Health Conference
- Presenter for Early Childhood Cross Collaboration Conference

Coalition Development

- DFC Project Coordinator attended CADCA National Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C. and advocated for substance misuse prevention on Capitol Hill
- DFC Project Coordinator received a scholarship to attend Mid-Year Training Institute in Dallas, Texas
- Global Leadership Summit: Two days of world-class leadership development for Pfl members at Momence High School made possible by Van Drunen Farms and Future Ceuticals
- Site Visit: Leadership coach attended board meeting and gave coalition extremely positive feedback after official site visit
- 2019 Coalition Reports: Submitted DFC Semi-Annual Progress Reports, Sustainability and Coalition Classification Tool in August 2018 and February 2019



Marijuana Summit Unites Voices From Across the Nation

Thanks to the partnership of 16 local organizations and community groups, a free public summit addressing, "Marijuana, Youth, & Our Community" filled the auditorium of Kankakee Community College on April 16, 2019.

Nationally renowned experts shared lessons learned from Washington, D.C., California, and Colorado. The national experts represented U.S. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, Smart Approaches to Marijuana, the State of Illinois NAACP, ER doctors, and sheriffs.

Teens from the Pledge for Life Partnership Youth Advisory Council, Kankakee County Branch NAACP Youth Council and Kankakee County Hispanic Partnership, Kankakee County State's Attorney's Youth Advisory Board, KCC and Olivet Nazarene University spoke passionately about the impact of marijuana on their peers. Elected officials and community members also heard from State's Attorney Jim Rowe, Coroner Robert Gessner, KAMEG Director Chris Koerner, who spoke out strongly on the potential negative impact of marijuana on the community.



Youth-Led Marijuana Summit



On Friday, November 30 nearly 100 high school students came together from across the state to discuss the negative impact of the commercialization of marijuana. The Pledge for Life Partnership brought together a strong force of student leaders from the Youth Advisory Council, Kankakee County Branch NAACP Youth Council and Kankakee County Hispanic Partnership, Kankakee County State's Attorney's Youth Advisory Board, KCC and Olivet Nazarene University.

The Rotary Club of Kankakee donated to the Pledge for Life Partnership and made transportation possible for these passionate young leaders. While the students had the opportunity to learn from state's attorneys, state representatives, and other community leaders, the event was youth-led - fueled by a passion to help protect the students in their schools.



KAN-I HELP Network Relaunch Approaching

During the past year Kan-I Help had **12,000+** site visits.

1,328 Services Listed

698 Agencies Listed

During the past year, the Kan-I Help Network resource and referral website hosted over 12,000 online visitors. These individuals browsed the 698 agencies listed on the database, as well as the 1,328 listed service offerings provided by these organizations.

Building on the plans agreed to last year to develop an alternative platform for hosting and maintaining the Kan-I Help website, the Pledge for Life Partnership partnered with Project SUN, a new initiative of the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley to strengthen and unify the network of Kankakee County children's behavior health services and supports. Project SUN provided \$24,000 to bring on web-development company, Linkpoint Media, to revitalize the Kan-I Help website and database. The new site has undergone a major redesign resulting from extensive edits and feedback provided by the Database Updates Work Group.

Additionally, Pfl staff have spent the past year updating the data and coding to ensure the information provided is accurate. This has included a complete overhaul of the taxonomy coding the site uses in an attempt to remain in-step with the coding used by United Way's 2-1-1 phone-based referral service.

Volunteers were recruited to test the site's new resource search functions and user-friendly design. Follow-up focus groups were held to ensure final tweaks could be addressed before making the updated website available to the public. New features include a listing for volunteer involvement options, a calendar of local events, a resource search geo-location map, and more. The new and improved Kan-I Help site, kanihelp.org, is set to premiere at Pfl's Annual Meeting in October.

Community Foundation Grant Received

The Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley awarded the Pledge for Life Partnership with a \$4,000 Community works Grant for the Life Education Center project titled "Pack Your Backpack with Resiliency."

Funding will be used to expand Life Education Center mobile classroom's programming as it brings prevention, health and wellness, and social and emotional education to schools in Kankakee and Iroquois counties. The project, titled "Pack Your Backpack with Resiliency", will be implemented through the Life Education Center with kindergarten through 3rd-grade students. This will impact over 5,000 students and their parents and guardians, as well as 250 educators. Resources will be distributed to parents, teachers, and other adults, seeking to ultimately help youth in building resilience.



The Pledge for Life Partnership (Pfl) partnered with the Juvenile Justice Council (JJC) of Iroquois county to receive two community grants to help fund this school year's youth prevention education programs in Iroquois county.

Because preferential treatment is given to groups with not-for-profit status, Pfl was able to increase the likelihood that the JJC would be chosen as a grant recipient for both funding sources. The Iroquois Federal Grant monies allowed the JJC to purchase 7th and 8th grade workbooks for the Too Good for Drugs programs in Iroquois county. Another local grant purchased updated teacher kits for one grade level of the Too Good for Drugs program.



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Visit our website "News" page:
<http://pledgeforlife.org/news/>



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Looking for facts on substances like e-cigarettes, marijuana, and more?

www.pledgeforlife.org/fact-sheets/

Dr. John Palan Honored with 2018-2019 Harold Award



Dr. John Palan is this year's recipient of the Harold Award for both his commitment to the Life Education Center programs and to excellence in public education. Since beginning his career as a teacher at St. Anne Grade School in 1993, Dr. Palan has remained an advocate for children and an ardent supporter of the Pledge for Life Partnership. He currently serves as superintendent of Grant Park School District No. 6 and is a member of the Pledge for Life Partnership Board of Directors. Life Education Center prevention initiatives continue in the Grant Park School District and now extends into an Underage Drinking Communication Campaign for parents.

Dr. Palan has actively engaged parents and community partners to help implement the campaign. John reiterates that parents have a big impact on whether or not their kids drink. Your kids really do hear you. Under Dr. Palan's leadership, Grant Park High School has been recognized three times in the past four years by U.S. News & World Report as one of the top high schools in the nation. The District also received the Daily Journal's 2019 Progress Award for Excellence in Education. Since he became superintendent in 2011, the district has had balanced budgets while introducing state of the art technology, offering a high-quality curriculum, and creating a culture based on supportive relationships. In choosing education for his career, John says "I love being around a school setting, helping every kiddo."

"Every student matters and it's my goal to have a positive impact on each one. Kids need us now more than ever. They encounter so many more pressures than in the past." As for the Pfl Partnership, he said, "After 25 years, I still believe in the Pfl mission. Pfl stands for something. It's had a positive impact on kids."

- The Life Education Center programs are provided through the I-KAN Regional Office of Education in collaboration with the Pledge for Life Partnership throughout Kankakee and Iroquois counties.
- 8,815 Kindergarten through sixth grade students participated in the Wise Highs program.
- Providing prevention education focusing on healthy lifestyle choices, supporting social and emotional development, and helping youth become more resilient.
- 1,351 junior high and high school students were involved in youth prevention education.
- Approximately 100 6th & 7th graders were trained as peer leaders to assist with the junior high prevention messages.
- Prevention in prescription drug misuse was implemented to 505 students in 8th, 9th and 10th grades promoting safe use disposal of prescription medicine.
- 26 high school students reinforce prevention efforts by participating on the Pledge for Life Partnership Youth Advisory Council.
- Coordinate and collaborate with over 22 community events to provide information, education and resources for families and the community.



Life Education Center's Best Practice Contest Winners

2018-2019
School Year

Kindergarten:

- Joy Norder (Iroquois County CUSD No. 9, Nettie Davis Elementary) Title: "Happy Harry and Sad Sally"

First Grade:

- Kristine Pelletier (St. Anne School District No. 256, St. Anne Grade School) Title: "I Can Eat a Rainbow, Feel the Kindness"

- Jennifer Taylor (Iroquois County CUSD No. 9, Nettie Davis Elementary) Title: "Body Organs Interactive Book"

Second Grade:

- Becky Creek (Bourbonnais Elementary School District No. 53, Noel LeVasseur Elementary School) Title: "Heart Healthy"

Fourth Grade:

- Missy Guimond and Claire Henneike (Iroquois County CUSD No. 9, Wanda Kendall Elementary and Watseka Community High School) Title: "Children of Change"

- Jody Munsterman (Crescent-Iroquois CUSD No. 249, Crescent City Grade School) Title: "Time Capsule"

- Krystal Clifton (Kankakee School District No. 111, King Middle School) Title: "Week of Kindness"

Fifth Grade:

- Eugene Wachholz (St. Paul's Lutheran School) Title: "15 Ways to Say NO! to Alcohol and Drugs"

Sixth Grade:

- Lisa Riegel (Bourbonnais Elementary School District No. 53, Liberty Intermediate School) Title: "Diseases"

- Eugene Wachholz (St. Paul's Lutheran School) Title: "Over-the-Counter vs Prescription Drugs"

Teachers within Kankakee and Iroquois counties were invited to submit classroom lessons that reinforce those taught by the Life Education Center educators. Awards were provided by Pfl to teachers at each grade level for creative, practical lessons others could replicate.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Each April, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence promotes the celebration of Alcohol Awareness Month. The 2019 theme, "Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow" addressed the public health issues of alcohol abuse and underage drinking. During the month, the Life Education Center participated in "Communities Talk: Town Hall Meetings to Prevent Underage Drinking."



Grant Park High School students collaborated with law enforcement, local government, the faith-based community, the Grant Park School District, and Life Education Center educators, encouraging parents to talk with their teens about underage drinking. This event was hosted by Casey's in Grant Park on April 24th, 2019.

The funding was made available through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a member of the Interagency Coordinating Committee of the Prevention of Underage Drinking.



Underage Drinking Prevention: Setting Limits and Monitoring your Teen

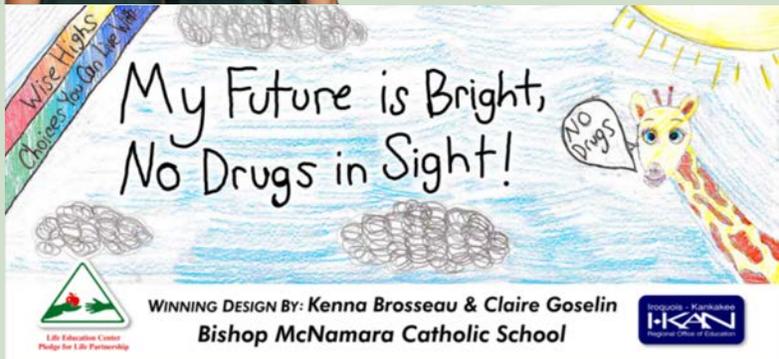
Teens and young adults want freedom. You don't want to be a nag. When it comes to underage drinking, however, there is a lot at risk. Our friends at Partnership for Drug-Free Kids (www.drugfree.org) provides helpful points to setting limits and monitoring your teen.

Planning and implementing a communication campaign with the target audience of parents of eighth through twelfth grade students continues in the Grant Park School District. The campaign allows to us reinforce the message of encouraging parents to talk to their teens about not using alcohol and to understand their influence as parents. We collaborate with community businesses, parents, the village board, churches, media, and law enforcement to help implement the campaign.

"My Future is Bright, No Drugs in Sight!"



Congratulations to Kenna Brosseau and Claire Goselin, Bishop McNamara Catholic School students for their winning design in the billboard contest held annually by the Life Education Center to encourage others to choose "Wise Highs...Choices You Can Live With!"



"Less Drinking, More Thinking" PSA

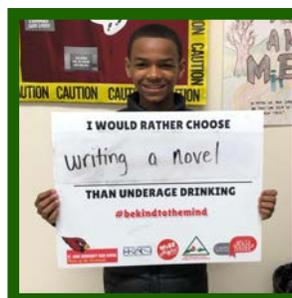
Students from Lorenzo R. Smith School, Robreanna Chapman, Pyper Sabotta, and Carolina Valdez, developed and produced their winning Public Service Announcement (PSA) titled, "Less Drinking More Thinking" at Milner Media.



This PSA was aired during April's Alcohol Awareness month and encouraged their teenage peers to think about their actions and gave the reminder, "You don't have to drink to have fun."

Choose Wise Highs! Be Kind To The Mind!

Youth Advisory Council (YAC) members engaged their peers, along with the community, to participate in a social media campaign titled "Choose Wise Highs! Be Kind To The Mind." The contest was designed by the Youth Advisory Council members who then encouraged groups or individuals in their schools and community to take photos with their school's yard sign displaying the message "I Would Rather Choose _____ Than Underage Drinking" with the hashtag #BeKindToTheMind. This yard sign indicated healthy alternatives (Wise Highs!) than underage drinking.



IT STARTS WITH US



Youth Advisory Council Inspires Action



This year the Pledge for Life Partnership's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) helped further the Partnership's prevention efforts, specifically targeting their peers. Advisors from the Pledge for Life Partnership, Life Education Center Programs, and the Kankakee County Health Department all played a role, empowering the student representatives as they sought to improve health and wellness in the local community as well as at a state-wide level.

The Pledge for Life Partnership Youth Advisory Council was composed of 26 student representatives from 9 Kankakee county high schools.

During the 2018-2019 School Year the Youth Advisory Council Members participated in:

- Community connection speaker-2nd Ward Alderman Michael O'Brien-Kankakee City Council
- Created public service announcement to encourage our community to attend Take Back Day.
- Attended and participated in Take Back Day on October 27, 2018

- Participated and led Veteran's Day ceremony at the Manteno Veteran's Home
- Joined other YAC groups at the Catalyst Youth Summit Cannabust at the Lincolnshire Marriott
- Grant Park High School Youth Advisory Council members presented at their Homecoming basketball game encouraging parents to talk to their kids about underage drinking.
- Community connection speaker-Illinois State Police Sergeant Sigler and Trooper McMillian
- Community connection speaker-Debra Mayconich Baron, PhD-Director of Project SUN
- Illinois Student Leader's Collaboration at the Capitol
- Tobacco Litter Cleanup at local community park
- Promoted and participated in Take Back Day on April 27, 2019 encouraging others to turn in unused or expired medications for disposal
- Participated in April Alcohol Awareness activities: Positive Social Norms restaurant table top display and "Choose Wise Highs Be Kind to The Mind" campaign
- Marijuana, Youth, and Our Community Summit at Kankakee Community College
- Grant Park High School Youth Advisory Council members participated in "Donuts, Coffee, a Cop & Conversation" at Casey's in Grant Park collaborating with the community encouraging parents and other important influencers to talk to their teens about not drinking alcohol
- Planned and participated in efforts for the "Meeting of the Minds" Teen Mental Health & Wellness Summit
- Participated in National Prevention Week activities



Take Back Days Bring In 1,450 Pounds

The Life Education Center in collaboration with the I-KAN Regional Office of Education and the Pledge for Life Partnership participated and promoted Prescription Drug Take-Back Day events in Kankakee County in coordination with the National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days on October 27, 2018 and April 27, 2019.

Partners included Kankakee Area Metropolitan Enforcement Group (KAMEG) in conjunction with local police departments. Also assisting was the Kankakee County Health Department and the Pledge for Life Partnership Youth Advisory Council. The Kankakee High School Green Team assisted in recycling the medicine bottles.

KAMEG Director, Chris Koerner, reported that the two Take-Back events were successful and that approximately **1,450 pounds of unwanted prescription drugs were turned in** for disposal in Kankakee County.

The goal was to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing unused, unwanted, and expired prescription drugs while also educating the public about the potential for abuse of medications.

National Prevention Week, May 12-18 2019

Inspiring Action, Changing Lives

May 12th-18th, 2019 marked the return of National Prevention Week, an annual week-long effort to educate the public and promote action on five key prevention efforts. The Pledge for Life Partnership's Life Education Center programs launched a series of initiatives to address the following:

- Monday:** Prescription & Opioid Drug Misuse
- Tuesday:** Underage Drinking & Alcohol Misuse
- Wednesday:** Illicit Drug Use & Youth Marijuana Use
- Thursday:** Youth Tobacco Use
- Friday:** Preventing Suicide

National Prevention Week is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) aiming to increase prevention of substance use and promote mental health. The theme for 2019 was "Inspiring Action, Changing Lives."

The Pledge for Life Partnership's coalition used the week-long event to spotlight local and online resources for each day's prevention focus. Also highlighted were the #BeKindToTheMind and #WholsMyGoTo Challenge communications campaigns.

Movement to Cultivate a Trauma-Informed Community



Pledge for Life Partnership was selected to participate in the National Leadership Academy for the Public's Health (NLAPH), a year-long program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Public Health Institute's Center for Health Leadership and Practice. This program focuses on improving population health through multi-sector leadership teams. The Kankakee team's applied health leadership project focuses on building a trauma-informed community with the goal of improving public health outcomes.



Representing Kankakee County on this team will be...

- Kate Reed, Drug-Free Communities Coordinator – Pledge for Life Partnership
- Dr. Laura Sztuba, Director of Community Outreach and Planning – Kankakee County Health Dept.
- Juanita Redd, Organizational Development Specialist – Garden of Prayer Youth Center
- Jackie Haas, Chief Executive Officer – The Helen Wheeler Center for Community Mental Health

Dr. Arthur Chen, the Kankakee team's NLAPH coach, traveled from California to recognize the Pledge for Life Partnership. The Partnership hosted meetings with Dr. Chen and statewide leaders, local leaders spanning the 12 sectors, and the impacted population.



The Pledge for Life Partnership maintains Kankakee Iroquois Cares, an online platform to track expansion of trauma-informed care throughout the community. This site currently hosts...

- 60 members
- 50 trauma trainings logged on community tracker
- 20 organizations tracking progress towards the 11 Milestones of a trauma-informed organization



Kankakee County hosted expert trauma trainer Chris Troutt, Executive Director of the Papillion Center in Tennessee for trainings on the Impact of Trauma and Trust-Based Relational Intervention in Kankakee and Pembroke Township. Troutt led a train-the-trainer module in Pembroke for caregivers who come from hard places and are working to help others find hope and healing.



May 15, 2019 was Illinois' Inaugural Trauma-Informed Awareness Day. On this day, Pfl honored local individuals and organizations for being champions in advancing trauma-informed care.



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Youth

Representative
Olivia Wheeler



Mission Statement

As a volunteer-driven coalition serving Kankakee and Iroquois counties, the Pledge for Life Partnership mobilizes and coordinates public and private resources and initiatives to improve the quality of life for children and their families by making the community safer and healthier, focusing on initiatives to reduce substance abuse.

September 2019: Harold the Scarecrow

Harold the Giraffe, the Life Education Center (LEC) mascot, proudly "stood up" at the 2019 Scarecrow Hollow, an annual event hosted by the Bourbonnais Township Park District.

Harold's message for 2019 was **"Step Up, Stand for, & Salute Good Choices."**



Partnership Goals

To maintain a coalition comprised of individuals and organizations whose interests are to promote collaborative efforts to expand and enhance opportunities to impact those youth who are at risk due to substance abuse, violence, irresponsible behavior, disrespectful attitudes, and other environmental conditions.

To engage the community in the articulation and delivery of a lifelong education curriculum which promotes positive human development and effective parenting through greater understanding of the various life stages and the importance of limits, goals, responsible behavior, a balanced diet, a healthy environment, exercise, rest, love, family, friendship, and citizenship.

To increase communication about destructive behavior expectations and consequences regarding tobacco, alcohol, other drugs, destructive behavior, and negative influences.

To provide opportunities for individuals to serve as role models by volunteering to help with substance abuse and violence prevention programs, mentoring programs, and other positive activities for youth and their families.

Fiscal Highlights

As of June 30, 2019, Pledge for Life, Inc. ended the fiscal year with a total cash balance of \$295,061.00.

Revenues for the year were \$11,269.00. Expenses for the year were \$8,512.00. During FY19, the Partnership realized an increase in all funds of \$2,757.00.

The KAN-I HELP account ended FY2019 with a cash balance of \$52,668.00.

