



The Newsletter of David Lawrence Center CENTERED

50 Years of Mental Health & Addiction Recovery

CELEBRATING OUR LEADER



Scott Burgess, DLC President/CEO

From the Board Chairman
William O'Neill



When people ask me to describe David Lawrence Center President and CEO Scott Burgess, I reply with a question: *Have you met him?*

Because with Scott, *what you see is what you get.* I've been on the Board of Directors for about seven years, and I'll never forget the day I met him. My first thought was, *This is the kindest, nicest man in the world.*

That first impression has proven to be lasting. Scott's not fake. He is the real deal. He is totally sincere. He's patient, compassionate, and concerned – all of the things you'd like to see in somebody who's running an organization that does what we do at DLC.

So I wasn't surprised when *Gulfshore Life* named Scott one of its 2018 "Men and Women of the Year." The magazine described him as "a shining example of a servant leader," noting "the six nights he slept on the DLC floor, hunkered down on campus alongside clients and essential staff during Hurricane Irma."

Inside

- 1 LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN
- 2 WHAT'S NEW
- 3 SUCCESS STORY
- 4 ISSUES & ANSWERS
- 5 PARTNER FEATURE & SAVE THE DATE
- 6 PREVENTION CORNER

"Thanks to Scott's networking and spirit of cooperation, agencies and organizations are now working together for the common good."

– WILLIAM O'NEILL, DLC BOARD CHAIRMAN

Yes, that's the Scott Burgess I know – the one we can all rally behind. He is taking DLC to bigger and better places all the time, driven by a servant's heart as well as exemplary leadership, intelligence, creativity, and passion.

Thanks to Scott's networking and spirit of cooperation, agencies and organizations are now working together for the common good. DLC works closely with our schools, law enforcement, service agencies, and more, to bring the best, most holistic help to those in need.

And his work with State Senator Kathleen Passidomo to pass new legislation – the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act – is already making our schools safer and helping students who are dealing with anxiety, depression, fear, and other issues (see page 2).

Please join me in celebrating the man at the helm of DLC, not just because he has a heart of gold, but because he's very, very good at what he does. And I'm grateful for him.



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MISSION

Restoring and rebuilding lives by providing compassionate, advanced and exceptional mental health, substance use treatment and integrated healthcare solutions, available to all.

VISION

To lead the way in transformational care so every individual assisted can achieve what is possible.

David Lawrence Center is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization and is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. The Center is funded in part by the State of Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Collier County Department of Housing, Human and Veteran Services, and private donations made through fundraising efforts.

WHAT'S NEW

New State Law Helps Students

After the death of a family member, a 16-year-old local high school student was struggling with depression. Someone notified the school's social worker, who began meeting with this young woman. And when the student missed school one day, the social worker notified authorities so that they could conduct a welfare check.

Thankfully, the social worker and the deputy got to the student's house just in time. The young woman was about to go through with her plans of committing suicide, but they were able to intervene. They directed her to David Lawrence Center, where she was able to receive the help she needed.

more than ever before, thanks to the new funding.

"The feedback from school counselors, school psychologists, and school administrators has been overwhelmingly positive regarding the addition of the mental health professionals," says Caroline Brennan, Supervisor of Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health Support with CCPS. "They have worked toward the creation of an integrative team that collaborates the needs of CCPS students and families."

Karen Buckner, Director of Children's Community Services at DLC, is also positive about the added resources.

"With more personnel, they're more likely to be aware of students who are struggling, and to be more proactive in providing the services they need..."

**- KAREN BUCKNER,
DLC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY SERVICES**

A life was saved! And it was likely due to new state legislation in effect for the first time this school year – Senate Bill 7026, also known as the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act. Among other things, the new law – which allocated more than \$300 million to school districts statewide – addresses safety issues and provides the schools with more licensed mental health professionals and resources.

Locally, Collier County Public Schools (CCPS) received about \$1.1 million in state funds for its Mental Health Assistance program. CCPS contracts two DLC employees for its team, which now includes seven full-time school psychologists and eight licensed mental health professionals –

Buckner says that with more personnel, they're more likely to be aware of students who are struggling, and to be more proactive in providing the services they need – and even saving lives, as was the case with that 16-year-old girl. Before, with resources and people spread so thin, they were less likely to detect those kids in need.

Buckner also praised the county-wide cooperation and collaboration among various parties – DLC, CCPS, the Sheriff's Office, Catholic Charities, NAMI, and other agencies: "These professionals really come together for the purpose of how we can best serve the youth and families in the most effective and supportive way possible."



SUCCESS STORY

"A Dopeless Hope Fiend"

A decades-long addiction brought me to my knees, but David Lawrence Center helped me stand tall again, with dignity and respect.

By John

I wasn't supposed to be here. I mean, not even here on this earth.

I knew something wasn't quite right in my childhood, when my dad called me a "bastard child" and my uncles called me a "miracle child," only to be shushed by my aunts.

I asked my mom what they meant, and she never really explained... until I was in my 30s and one day, when we were both under the influence, she told me that she had tried to abort me when she was pregnant.

By then, though, I was pretty deep into addiction. My mom never neglected or abused me as a child; she loved me and took care of me. But I had always dealt with depression, often feeling unworthy to live.

I self-medicated with all of the wrong things, drinking and drugging. When I injured my back in 1996, I was prescribed painkillers... and that eventually turned into an opioid addiction.

I had been what they call a "functioning addict" for decades, keeping a job, paying my bills. But the opiates brought me to my knees. They're horrible.

I was in and out of trouble with the law. I spent more than a year in the county jail. I was homeless and buying drugs on the streets. It was no way to live.

I attempted suicide several times. In November 2009, I took 90 Soma (muscle relaxants) and washed them down with half a bottle of Crown Royal. When I woke up in the ICU three days later, the doctor said, "We didn't think we were going to get you back."

I told him I needed help, and they sent me to Crossroads, the addiction recovery program at David Lawrence Center. That straightened me out for a while, but then I quit taking my antidepressants, which led to a relapse. I'm the kind of guy, if you give me any wiggle room, I'm going to wiggle right back into relapse.

But not anymore. Because, in time, I ended up at DLC

again. In addition to the counseling and addiction recovery, I was prescribed Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) with Suboxone. It's like a miracle drug. It eliminated my cravings for any other drugs, and even helped to alleviate some of my ongoing back pain. I never want an opiate painkiller again.

I don't know where I'd be without the help of David Lawrence Center. I'd probably still be out there using drugs, on the streets... if not dead.

I still get counseling at DLC, both group therapy and one-on-one. I'm in a 12-step program. I'm clean and sober, and I'm enjoying time with my young grandchildren. I'm also hoping to get a job again soon. Life is good.

"I don't know where I'd be without the help of David Lawrence Center. I'd probably still be using drugs, on the streets...if not dead."

– JOHN, DLC CLIENT

I can't say enough good things about DLC. I was emotionally, spiritually, and financially bankrupt, and they treated me like a millionaire. They took good care of me and treated me with dignity and respect. They made me feel like I deserve a good life.

I walk in freedom now. I'm comfortable in my own skin. David Lawrence Center took me, a hopeless dope fiend, and transformed me into a dopeless hope fiend.

It's great to have hope again. Because without it, what else do we have to hang onto?

Supporters like you make success stories like John's possible. Thank you for your support!



Priscilla Oliva, Kat Varela, Peter Michaels

The DLC Young Executives are Looking for Members!

DLC Young Executive Membership is open to anyone in the community who is passionate about creating life-changing wellness for every individual. By becoming a Young Executive Member, you are committing to positively impact and significantly alter the future of health and wellness in Collier County.

Membership is a suggested \$50 annual donation. Benefits include:

- Member prices to signature events
- Exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of DLC
- Private Annual Membership Reception
- Young Executives newsletter with insider information
- Name listed as member on website and Facebook page
- Networking with like-minded young executives
- Leadership opportunities
- Philanthropic fulfillment

For more information, visit dlcyoungexecutives.com

ISSUES & ANSWERS

How to Deal with Bullies

What one mom learned after her daughter stood up for a friend in a bullying situation – and what you can learn from it, too.

By Karen

When the phone rang and I looked at my caller ID, I saw that it was my daughter's school. My heart skipped a beat. **Was she in trouble? Was she injured? Or maybe even something good?**

As it turns out, it was a little of all three. Sarah, a high school junior, had been beaten up pretty badly in a fight on the school bus, and she ended up getting suspended. *That was the bad news.*

The good news was that it started because Sarah stood up for a friend who was being bullied. I'm proud of her for that, though she could've handled it better. Looking back on it, Sarah realizes it, too.

"Working together, as parents and children, we can make a difference when it comes to bullying. Maybe we can even put an end to it."

– KAREN, MOTHER OF A DLC CLIENT

Some girls on the bus had been verbally abusing one of Sarah's friends. Sarah intervened and told them to back off. That's when the fight broke out, and although Sarah didn't fight back, she said some awful things to her attackers. It's one of those things where you're proud of your child for trying to do the right thing, but you also see it as "a teachable moment."

My daughter already had some great coping skills for dealing with stressful situations. Sarah had been through the Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) program at DLC, which

teaches you how to handle difficult situations. I'd love to see schools incorporate DBT into their programs, but that's more of a long-term solution.

So, what to do in that spur of the moment when you're witnessing a bullying incident? Call attention to it. Tell the bully (or bullies) to stop. Don't cuss at them or escalate the situation. Simply say "Stop it," or "Quit harassing her," and see if they back off. If they don't, go find an adult and tell them immediately, and ask them to intervene.

If you can't find an adult, alert the sheriff's department. You're thinking, Seriously? Call the cops about bullying? That was my gut reaction, too. But yes. The Collier County Sheriff's Office is serious about bullying, and they've partnered with DLC and local schools to try to put an end to it.

You can call 911, or if you want to remain anonymous, text DNTH8 to CRIMES (274637).

The texting service is a joint partnership among the Sheriff's Office, Collier County Public Schools, and Southwest Florida Crime Stoppers. You can use the service if you witness cyberbullying as well. Encourage your children to add the number to their contacts in their mobile phones.

Learn more at www.collierschools.com/bullying.

David Lawrence Center can also help your child if he or she has been a victim of bullying. Working together, as parents and children, we can make a difference when it comes to bullying. Maybe we can even put an end to it.



WHAT KIDS CAN DO TO STAND UP TO BULLYING

StopBullying.gov, a website managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has five great tips for kids about how to deal with bullying:

1. Treat everyone with respect

Stop and think before you say or do something that could hurt someone. If you feel like being mean, find something else to do. Keep in mind that everyone is different. Not better or worse. Just different.

2. What to do if you're bullied

Look at the person bullying you and tell him or her to stop in a calm, clear voice. If speaking up seems too hard or not safe, walk away and stay away. Find an adult to stop the bullying on the spot.

3. Protect yourself from cyberbullying

Always think about what you post. Being kind to

others online will help keep you safe. Think about who sees what you post online and use your privacy settings.

4. Stand up for others

When you see bullying, tell a parent, teacher, or another adult you trust. Not saying anything could make it worse for everyone. And be kind to the kid being bullied. Show them that you care by trying to include them.

5. Get involved

Find out where and when bullying happens at your school. Then share your ideas about what could help. Talk to the principal about getting involved at school. Be a role model for younger kids.

(Adapted from "What Kids Can Do" at StopBullying.gov)

PARTNER FEATURE

Helping Inmates Conquer Addictions

DLC partners with Collier County Jail to run the Project Recovery program, which helps those incarcerated with substance use issues.

The Project Recovery program in the Collier County Jail system has been around for decades, helping inmates overcome their addictions. And with the opioid crisis that has swept the nation, the need is greater than ever for substance use treatment programs for incarcerated men and women.

David Lawrence Center partners with Collier County Jail to help curb this epidemic and has three staff members on the project – one licensed clinical social worker and two therapists.

DLC is currently holding two groups for men and one for women. Each group includes 15 participants, and runs for 90 days. Participants also receive at least one hour of trauma therapy weekly. Evidence-based therapy groups meet for at least two hours daily, Monday through Friday.

Inmates who want to participate must go through a screening process to make sure they're serious about recovery, and that they won't be a safety risk.

"The program is similar to our intensive outpatient care at DLC," says Beverly Belli, DLC's Director of Adult

Community Services. "We want to give these men and women the care they need."



"We want to give these men and women the care they need."

– BEVERLY BELLI
DLC'S DIRECTOR OF ADULT COMMUNITY SERVICES

Project Recovery also teaches participants better life skills, parenting skills, and how to move on successfully after release, pointing them to other community resources for continued care. "Our hope is that they don't just go to a class for 12 weeks and then forget about it," says Belli. "We want to provide a continuum of care even after after they are released."

SAVE THE DATE



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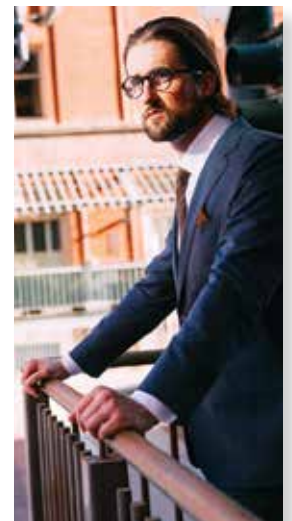
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SYMPOSIUM: \$10 suggested donation per person
VIP MEET THE SPEAKER RECEPTION: \$125

Join David Lawrence Center for our 6th Annual Sound Minds™ Mental Health Symposium & VIP Reception, sponsored by Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida. The symposium will feature Austin Eubanks, an injured survivor of the Columbine shooting and an expert in the addiction treatment industry. Eubanks is a nationally recognized speaker and media contributor on topics surrounding behavioral health and addiction recovery.



Austin Eubanks

"Less than an hour after scrambling out the back door of the Columbine High School library, I was lying in a hospital bed, medicated on a variety of substances intended to relieve my pain."

– AUSTIN EUBANKS

As a Columbine shooting survivor, Eubanks's traumatic experience as a teen was the catalyst to his painful journey through addiction. Now in long-term recovery, he has devoted his career to helping those who have turned to substances as a result of trauma. Austin has spoken to thousands across the nation regarding his personal journey.

PREVENTION CORNER

How Do I Talk to My Kids About Drugs?

Q&A with Jessica Liria, M.S. | Supervisor of Prevention Services



Jessica Liria, M.S.

Q: I know I should be having discussions with my kids about drugs, but I have no idea what to say. How do I bring it up?

A: It may seem tough, or uncomfortable, to talk about substance use, especially if you have younger children. But youth today are exposed to so much that the more we talk to them about what they see, the better. Alcohol and drugs are everywhere they look – in movies, TV shows, music, advertisements, and magazine covers. And depending on your children’s ages, they may even have friends who experiment with substances.

You don’t need a long, drawn-out discussion that covers everything at once. Frequent conversations that last only a few minutes are actually better! Look for teachable moments throughout the day, like driving them to school or sports practice, or during a commercial break when watching TV. Ask them about what they’ve heard or seen, and get to know how they feel about it. Use positive messages that focus on what it means to be healthy and what it takes to reach their goals and be successful. Then explore how using substances can interfere with that.

For more information and resources, visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) www.drugabuse.gov, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) www.nimh.nih.gov, and www.activeparenting.com.

Q: Bullying. Depression. Anxiety. Substance use. It’s overwhelming for a parent. What are some of the warning signs I should look for?

A: The best thing you can do is be as involved in your child’s life as possible! You need to be able to identify behavior changes. Has there been a change in the way your teen is interacting with you or others? Are they hanging out with a different group of friends, or isolating themselves? Are their grades in school suffering? Are they no longer interested in the things they’ve always liked, such as sports, clubs, or activities? Has their appearance changed?

Older children may not want to open up and talk about what they are going through, but actions generally speak louder than words. If you notice behavior changes, use a gentle and concerned approach. Assure them that you are always there when needed, ready to listen. If they do admit to using substances, be understanding and help them explore positive coping skills. And, of course, David Lawrence Center is here to support you and your child.

To learn more about DLC’s Active Parenting programs and register for an upcoming session, please visit: www.davidlawrencecenter.org/parentingprograms/.

Getting to Know DLC’s Prevention Specialist Coral Vargas



Coral Vargas

In her position, Coral Vargas implements evidence-based prevention programs throughout the community, in both in-school and afterschool settings.

Prevention programming focuses on reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors. Youth of all ages, ranging from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, learn about and improve emotion management skills, peer strategies, risk reduction techniques, decision making skills, setting and achieving goals, the negative consequences of substance use, and more. “During my



time working in Prevention, I have had the opportunity to help students develop strategies and skills that will allow them to be successful and thrive throughout their lives,” says Vargas. “It has been very rewarding for not only the kids, but for me as well. I teach them, but they teach me, too!”

LOCATION & CONTACT INFO



MAIN CAMPUS 6075 Bathey Lane, Naples, FL 34116 | Access Center / 24-Hour Emergency Services | 239.455.8500

IMMOKALEE SATELLITE SERVICES 425 North First Street, Immokalee, FL 34142 | 239.657.4434

HORSESHOE DRIVE SATELLITE SERVICES 2806 South Horseshoe Drive, Naples, FL 34104 | 239.263.4013



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