

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



Every one of
us has a
responsibility
to promote
healthy
choices.



Get answers. Get help. Get better.

The Power of Prevention Starts Here.

ABOUT US

We are committed to adapting to the critically changing needs of the communities we serve by providing a continuum of services.

PREVENTION • INTERVENTION • RECOVERY

Experience, passion, and the power of partnering enable us to create momentum and effect positive change in our communities.

WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF PREVENTION...

Dear Friends,

As we finish one year and begin another, I am reminded that the reasons for our founding still exist, and are more critical than ever. Addiction continues to destroy the lives of individuals and families, and we see evidence of this destruction in our daily interactions with people in our community. The opioid epidemic, and fentanyl in particular, has led to the tragic loss of many young and promising lives. Our young people face increasingly dangerous decisions about substance use, with many of them beginning substance use during the preteen and adolescent years when brain development is the most vulnerable to the negative impact of vaping, alcohol, marijuana and other drug use.

But even in the difficult times, there is hope. We recognize that the support and continuing generosity of our friends and benefactors are what make it possible for us to help individuals and families put their lives back together and work to build a healthy, supportive environment for the valuable young people in our community. Together, we can make a genuine difference in our circles of influence.

Thank you for your continuing support of all that we do. We appreciate you more than we could ever express!

Sincerely,
Virginia Guy
Executive Director





WHO WE SERVE

We offer information, consultation, and referral services to individuals and families in all 67 counties in Alabama, in addition to providing direct program services in these 7 counties:

- Baldwin
- Clarke
- Conecuh
- Escambia
- Mobile
- Monroe
- Washington



OUR MISSION

The Drug Education Council had its beginnings in 1967, when a group of civic leaders and professionals founded the Southwest Alabama Council on Alcoholism, dedicated to the rehabilitation of people suffering from the disease of alcoholism. Since 1979, the agency has focused on addressing the need for the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse, through education and prevention programs in Mobile and other counties in the region. In 1986, the name of the agency was officially changed to the Drug Education Council, Inc.

Each of our many programs and practices is based on the four core beliefs that provide the guidance and vision of the agency.

- Every one of us is important and deserves to be nurtured.
- Every one of us has a responsibility to promote healthy choices.
- The abuse of alcohol and other drugs is preventable.
- Addiction is treatable and recovery happens.



OUR VISION

Red Ribbon Leadership Program

The Red Ribbon Leadership Program is working to change the entire social environment of the community through collaboration with schools and families, and the use of multiple prevention strategies to reach youth and their families, to increase community norms that do not favor the use of drugs.

Student leaders in grades K-12 are recognized and presented with a medallion at an Awards Ceremony in the Fall. They design and implement a substance misuse prevention campaign on their school campus for Red Ribbon Week, and then complete a community service project of their choice. Outstanding community service projects receive special recognition, with prizes including scholarships for 12th grade honorees. This unique approach to the traditional Red Ribbon Week idea makes a significant impact each year on the lives of all those involved.

This past September, we proudly presented medallions to 150+ student leaders representing public, private, and parochial schools in Mobile and Baldwin County!



Prevention Education Programs

Prevention Education programs focus on

- Teaching refusal skills
- Developing important life skills
- Promoting positive, drug-free attitudes and healthy lifestyle choices
- Educating students about the harmful consequences of drug use.

In addition to programs focusing on other drugs, this past year, we provided 1,700+ hours of education focusing on preventing youth vaping for community, school, and parent programs. These programs reached over 30,000 people in our communities with timely, factual messages about the dangers these products pose to our young people and their developing brains. This vaping education initiative is ongoing and multi-faceted, and we are working to expand the program to reach even more people across the counties we serve.



Youth Workshop

The Drug Education Council Youth Workshop was held on January 19, 2023 at the GulfQuest Maritime Museum. There were 182 participants, made up of student teams and teachers/counselors from 19 schools in Mobile and Baldwin Counties. Participants heard messages from Alabama Representative Barbara Drummond, USA's Dr. Jack Shelley-Tremblay, University Hospital's Dr. Karen Fagan, Children's and Women's Hospital Dr. Melody Petty, and former Mobile County DA Ashley Rich.

As part of the event, each student team created an individualized prevention plan for their school, with activities designed to increase awareness about the dangers of vaping and other drug use for young people and to help foster attitudes and norms that support healthy, drug-free choices.



International Overdose Awareness Day



The Overdose Awareness Day event featured a concert at the Saenger Theatre in Downtown Mobile, featuring John McAndrew. The event focused on increasing community awareness about issues related to overdose and recovery and decreasing the shame and stigma associated with addiction. There were approximately 800 people in attendance for the concert and Resource Fair. In addition, the lights on the RSA Tower in Downtown Mobile were lit up in purple to celebrate the kickoff of Recovery Month.

A Community Resource Fair featuring local treatment and recovery support organizations was part of the event, with resource tables set up in the lobby of the Saenger Theatre to share information about programs and services. There was extensive media coverage featuring stories about the event and about opioid addiction and overdose in the days leading up to the event.

OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY
FEATURING
JOHN MCANDREW
"THE POWER OF MUSIC IN RECOVERY"

JOIN US AT THE
SAENGER THEATRE
AUGUST 31, 2023
DOORS OPEN AT 5:00
PROGRAM BEGINS AT 7:00

For more information about this event, go to
www.drugeducation.org

**FREE
& OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

#EndOverdose

“REMEMBER those we have lost to the disease of addiction, REACH OUT to those still suffering, and RECOGNIZE those in recovery”



Mobile City-County Youth Council



The DEC coordinates the activities and direction of the Mobile City/County Youth Council, which focuses on improving and maintaining communication between the youth of Mobile, the Mayor, and City/County governments. The Youth Council serves in an advisory capacity to these city and county government officials on matters relating to the youth of Mobile.



Community Outreach and Awareness

The Drug Education Council works with our community partners to respond to emerging drug use trends and related concerns. Press conferences, media campaigns, information forums, and other outreach events allow the agency to keep the community informed about the increasing dangers facing our young people.

Our many collaborations also provide opportunities to promote the importance of making healthy choices and to share the message that there is hope in treatment and recovery for people and families dealing with addiction.



Gulf Coast Conference on Addiction & Recovery



This year's Gulf Coast Conference was a huge success, with 120+ attendees and 21 Sponsors and Exhibitors. Participants had the opportunity to hear from nationally recognized speakers about topics that were current and pertinent to their field.

We also presented the 2023 Josephine Dix Award to Greg Snodgrass of Cumberland Heights in recognition of all his work in the field of addiction treatment. Everyone enjoyed the combination of learning opportunities and fellowship that are unique to this conference.



2023 Annual Luncheon



The annual Luncheon, the Drug Education Council's primary fund-raising event, was a tremendous success, thanks to our Luncheon Committee, and our many dedicated donors and volunteers, who display a passion for making a real difference for all people affected by addiction. 800+ attendees at this once again sold-out event in March were entertained and inspired by guest speaker John McAndrew, who shared his story about the power of music in recovery.

The Drug Education Council presented two awards at the Luncheon:

- Watson Guy Award: Gwen Byrd, Catholic Archdiocese School System
- Joseph Treadwell Award: Mayor Sandy Stimpson



Family Strengthening Programs and Intensive Education Programs



The Chemical Abuse Prevention Program (CAPP) serves youth and their families referred by the school systems and the juvenile court system in Mobile and Baldwin counties. In 2023, over 800 program participants gained insight in areas essential to positive youth and family development, including prevention education, communication skills, and reinforcement of family bonding and attachment.

The Anonymous Juvenile Drug Testing Program provides a valuable prevention and intervention tool to help parents monitor and set clear boundaries for their teens. In addition to free drug screens, these families receive counseling, intervention and referral assistance as needed.

Our Intensive Education programs help clients dealing with job, court, school or family problems due to alcohol or other substance use. These programs provide a comprehensive overview of alcohol and drug-related information, with an emphasis on how it relates to their situation. In 2023, these programs helped nearly 100 individuals get the information they needed about these topics.

Accountability

- Financial accounts are audited annually by an independent CPA firm, following all applicable guidelines.
- The Drug Education Council maintains the Alabama Department of Mental Health-Substance Abuse Services (ADMH-SAS) Divisions highest level of certification for Administration and Prevention.
- Program effectiveness is monitored and evaluated by a variety of methods. The Drug Education Council works closely with professional evaluation consultants to develop appropriate and valid methods of program assessment.
- Evaluation results are used to determine need for modification or improvement of program services.



United Way Partner Agency

