



# The Newsletter of David Lawrence Center CENTERED

*50 Years of Mental Health & Addiction Recovery*

● STUDENTS  
ARE AFRAID.  
WE'RE HERE  
TO HELP.

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**From the CEO**  
*Scott Burgess*

We were just coming down from the excitement of our 50th Anniversary Gala Celebration when tragedy dominated the headlines again – a horrific school shooting in Parkland, Fla., just across the state. The massacre, which left 17 people dead, rocked the nation once again, and we’re still feeling the fallout here in our own community.

Almost immediately, our phones started ringing with local calls from:

- Students, stressed out, experiencing anxiety and depression;
- Parents, worried about their kids, wondering how we could help;
- Educators, on higher alert than usual, in the wake of the shooting;
- Law enforcement, confirming their commitment to keep us safe.

And of course, our staff was shaken up. Yes, we’re professionals, ready to do our jobs well. But we’re also parents and aunts and uncles, concerned for the children in our lives.

Since the shooting, we’ve had a lot of referrals related to children who are worried that something like this could happen in their school, in their community. We deal with most of these cases in an outpatient manner, but right now, we’re also working with over 30 youth – collaborating with local law enforcement – who are considered to have “high-risk” potential. Several need treatment in our inpatient setting as well as in robust aftercare services with DLC. Taking care of these children is a priority. There’s so much anxiety and depression, and I don’t see it going away for a while. Sadly, this appears to be our societal “new normal.” That new normal, unfortunately, includes acknowledging the possibility that a similar tragedy could happen right here at home. That’s why we have to work together with law enforcement, school officials, parents, and students to look for – and report – any signs of trouble or suspicion. The old adage has never been more true: ***If you see something, say something.***

As part of our preventive efforts, we’ve recently started collaborating with the Collier County Sheriff’s Office on a new program called the Mental Health Intervention Team. The Sheriff’s Office has officers specially trained in dealing with people who struggle with mental health issues and/or addictions, with the goal of getting them the help they need and diverting them from jail. David Lawrence Center has a full-time mental health clinician embedded on that team, and already, we’re seeing positive results.

There have been reports that the Parkland shooter had indicated – in his words, in his behavior, and on social media – that he was a threat to the community and the school. People noticed and even reported it, but due to a host of unfortunate factors, the end result was tragic. We are working tirelessly, with our partners and community each day, to ensure Collier’s health, wellness and safety. Please help us. Again, I urge you: ***See something? Say something.*** Students, tell a parent, teacher, coach, youth pastor – any adult you trust. And adults, call law enforcement or call us, and we’ll do everything possible to intervene and prevent another horrific incident.

Working in collaboration, looking out for each other, reporting suspicious behavior... when we do all these things as a community, we’ll all be safer and better off. ***We’re in this together.***



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MISSION

Restoring and rebuilding lives by providing compassionate, advanced and exceptional mental health, substance abuse 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.

DONOR NEWS

DLC "Fills the Gap"

Former board member Douglas Johnson, a generous donor with wife Sheila, gives high praise to DLC, which now has a lovely "Serenity Garden" in the couple's name.

As a senior executive in health administration, Douglas Johnson, Ph.D., first encountered mental illness during the 1970s and '80s. That's when the American health care industry went through deinstitutionalization – the shutting down of state mental hospitals in favor of group homes and more compassionate communities.

"Programs like DLC are an essential component of good community healthcare, and public safety, for that matter."

– DR. DOUGLAS JOHNSON, DLC DONOR

Johnson has been ardent about helping people with mental illness ever since. When he and wife Sheila retired to Naples, Johnson – former President of Sentara Health Care in Virginia – offered his experience and expertise to healthcare boards in the community. A friend recruited him to join the board at David Lawrence Center, which he chaired for a couple of years.

"Programs like David Lawrence Center are an essential component of good community healthcare, and public



A BENCH IN THE "SERENITY GARDEN"

safety, for that matter," says Johnson, who once served as the U.S. Navy Assistant Surgeon General. "David Lawrence Center contributes significantly to our community, providing mental health services throughout southwest Florida. There's a lot of need for such services, and DLC fills that gap."

In addition to Doug's board service since 2009, the Johnsons have consistently made generous financial contributions to the Center. DLC wanted to do something special to recognize the Johnsons' generosity, and built the "Serenity Garden" in their name.

The garden, built by Caple Landscape Management, is in front of the Children's Partial Hospitalization Program building. With a water fountain as its centerpiece, it includes palmetto trees, a cypress tree, and a variety of plant life – plus a table and benches for relaxing lunches and refreshing conversations.

Johnson says he and his wife weren't involved in the planning of the garden: "It was their creation, not ours, but we're very appreciative. It's very nice."



"SERENITY GARDEN"

# SUCCESS STORY

## “I Can’t Live Like This Anymore”

*After years of drinking, drugging, jail, and totally messing up my life, I finally found the help I desperately needed... at DLC.*

**By Jon**

I’ve spent more than a fourth of my life behind bars... and about half of it in my own personal prison, made by my own choices.

I grew up in a broken home, spending my childhood with my dad, who was good to me and taught me morals. But when he fell on hard times financially and could no longer support me, I had to move in with my mom, who was drinking and drugging. I ended up getting high with her at a very young age, and by 13, I was drinking and drugging too.

That was my lifestyle through my teen years, plus I was selling drugs and getting in trouble with the law. When I was arrested at 18 on 10 felony charges, you’d think that would be a wake-up call. But I was sent to drug court, where they gave me a second chance. I was put on probation, but violated it immediately, and I just found ways to manipulate the system. I wasn’t willing to work on myself; I was just looking to get it over with.

Over the years, I spent 104 months in jail altogether. That’s a total of eight years and eight months, but I still never learned. I was a mess, and I didn’t care.

Things got even worse when I was 22 and my dad died. Well, he had a heart attack and was brain dead for 15 minutes before they revived him. Then he was kept alive on machines, unable to move or talk or anything. He was basically a vegetable, wasting away. It was so awful, I couldn’t even bring myself to visit him in the hospital. It just tore me up inside. I didn’t know how to handle my emotions.

And so I would drink more, take more drugs, and dive deeper into a criminal lifestyle, so I wouldn’t have to deal with it. I was only interested in myself. I didn’t care about anything else. I just went off the deep end. After a year, the family decided to pull the plug on my dad, and he died.

Death was pretty much part of my life through my 20s. Over the years, a lot of friends died, mostly from overdoses. But none of it was enough to make me stop the harmful life I was living. Then one day, another close friend died, and I finally said, “Enough. I can’t live like this anymore.”

I was mentally and spiritually broken.

### Second chance

Right about that time, in 2014, I was arrested again, for drug possession charges and driving on a suspended license. Somehow, I ended up in drug court again, which never happens. You usually get one shot at drug court, and if you blow it, you don’t get another. But my case must have slipped through the cracks.

Looking back now, I think it was a God thing, a miracle, for me to get a second chance like that. Because this time I was ready to make some changes. I was beaten and broken, and they gave me this opportunity. And I wasn’t going to mess it up.



Part of my sentence included 90 meetings in 90 days, including three counseling sessions a week at DLC. That’s when and where things really started turning around.

The counselors at David Lawrence Center taught me how to be accountable and responsible. They taught me time management. They got me involved in a 12-step program and taught me how to live sober. They put me in situations where before, I would’ve made the wrong choice, but now I was equipped to make the right choice. They taught me a lot of life skills, how to deal with emotional things. They taught me a lot of things I couldn’t see about myself.

**“After years of drinking, drugging, jail, and totally messing up my life, I finally found the help I desperately needed... at David Lawrence Center.”**

– JON, DLC PATIENT

David Lawrence Center was amazing in helping me get my life back on track. They showed me how to be of service to other people. I got involved in volunteering. I got a job, and I’ve held it all along.

I do a lot of work with drug court, and in the recovery community, helping others. I tell my story at detox centers and 12-step meetings, trying to give people hope. I feel bad for all the lives I messed up when I was a drug dealer; now I want to help people get clean.

I’m engaged now too, and my fiancée and I are fostering two teenagers. We got a call from DCF, saying these kids needed a foster home, because they’d been bounced around so much.

Can you imagine that? Me, the former drinking and drugging criminal, earning enough trust that DCF would ask me to foster a couple of kids. I never would’ve believed it a few years ago. But people trust me now – my customers trust me, my family trusts me, and even I trust myself, which is a big deal.

I’m so grateful to David Lawrence Center in playing a big part in this transformation. I couldn’t have done it without them.

***Supporters like you make amazing success stories like this possible. Please consider another gift today to help more people like Jon.***



# ISSUES & ANSWERS

## Screenagers

Teens spend up to 8 hours a day looking at screens. A new documentary takes a closer look at the ramifications... and you can see it at a special upcoming screening.



**Lisa Tabb**  
Screenagers Producer

### How much screen time is too much?

That's the question that many parents of teenagers are asking, and Dr. Delaney Ruston was among them. With a 14-year-old son who loved videogames and a 12-year-old daughter asking for her first smartphone, Ruston, a physician, did some research about the power these screens wield over

our children. She learned that youth spend anywhere from six and a half to eight hours each day on these devices, which can affect their minds in all sorts of ways, positive and negative.

These findings inspired Ruston, an experienced filmmaker, to direct the award-winning documentary, *Screenagers: Growing Up in the Digital Age*, which looks deeply into the issue.



*Screenagers* will highlight DLC's 5th Annual Sound Minds Mental Health Symposium on March 24. Ruston will not attend the screening, but producer Lisa Tabb will lead a discussion afterward, and then at a reception. The event is open to ticket holders.

Tabb and Ruston have screened the hour-long film more than 4,000 times in 50-plus countries. It's been viewed by 2 million people, all in group settings that spark lively discussions. Audiences include parents, teachers, students, physicians, hospital personnel, mental health professionals, and others.

We asked Tabb about the film, and what she and Ruston have learned along the way during the screenings.

"If you're a parent, psychologist, counselor, teacher, coach, or anyone else interacting with kids and families, you're dealing with this issue," says Tabb. "*Screenagers* is both an eye opener and a way into a conversation. People are able to identify with characters, whether it's a parent or a kid or a dynamic. They see themselves in the film."

Tabb says Ruston didn't originally intend to include her family in the film, but changed her mind when she realized how it might help other families. "It turned out to be a great way to tell the story, just by showing her own struggles," says Tabb.

*Screenagers* is well-researched and full of evidence-based science so viewers can better understand the topic and act accordingly. "Parents are hungry to find solutions," says Tabb, "and we believe the best way is to open a dialogue in the community and support each other."

She says typical family struggles include "putting boundaries around the ever-creeping tsunami of screen time – the battles



of having this device in our pockets at all times, when our children's brains are not developed fully enough to resist this addictive device. We need to help them build skills that can create balance, because it can take over their lives.

"We need to create rules and guidelines that will help the kids, including the places and times we're not going to be online or on the phone. Those kinds of rules can be really helpful – whether that's no screen time during meals, in the hour before bedtime, or in our bedrooms when it's time for sleep." She says Ruston's family has a no-screens rule in the car, "because that's a magical time to have conversation with each other."

Some experts are concerned that so much screen time – texting, social media, videos, etc. – may hamper teens' communication skills.

**"We need to create rules and guidelines that will help the kids, including the places and times we're not going to be online or on the phone. Those kinds of rules can be really helpful – whether that's no screen time during meals, in the hour before bedtime, or in our bedrooms when it's time for sleep."**

– LISA TABB, SCREENAGERS PRODUCER

Additionally, Tabb says some studies show "increased feelings of depression with overuse of social media," and that in spite of the medium's ability to connect, many teens feel isolated. "They see all these things happening on social media, and they see the places they're feeling left out. Social media also poses a higher risk of micro-aggression and cyberbullying. We'll talk about all of that at Sound Minds."

The *Screenagers* website has a wealth of resources, including a weekly conversation called "Tech Talk Tuesdays." The film is not available to buy, rent, or stream online; it can be seen only at scheduled screenings, like the upcoming Sounds Minds symposium.

**Learn more about the film at [ScreenagersMovie.com](http://ScreenagersMovie.com). View the full details about Sound Minds at [davidlawrencecenter.org/events/sound-minds-2018/](http://davidlawrencecenter.org/events/sound-minds-2018/).**

# PARTNER FEATURE

## Body, Mind, and Spirit

*How David Lawrence Center is partnering with the faith-based community for a fully holistic approach to help, hope, and healing.*

Reverend Sheila Zellers is an evangelist, and these days, she's preaching a new gospel to go along with the old story: She's spreading the good news of David Lawrence Center.

"When you realize that one in four people are touched by mental illness, that means you've got them in your church," says Zellers, a pastor with Naples' Motivated by Love Ministries. "And when you're dealing with someone with a serious mental illness like bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, what are you going to do? Are you just going to say, 'God bless you,' and leave it at that?"

"I believe in miracles, and I know God can do supernatural things. But with severe mental illness and addictions, we have to do more than just pray for these things. Mental illness is something in the brain that needs to be repaired and restored, and that's often above the pay grade of the pastor or the rabbi. We need professionals. We need David Lawrence Center."

Zellers is taking the lead for the local faith community in uniting with DLC to launch the new spiritual initiative, "Mindful Compassion: A Missional Movement." Partnering with local churches and houses of worship, DLC is mobilizing faith organizations to provide transforming love, support, and hope to those affected by mental health issues by creating caring congregations and communities.

Darcy Taylor, Chief Development Officer at DLC, says they hope to "create a strong coalition of churches who share the belief that our faith mandates us to serve those afflicted with mental illness, and to provide them and their families with the support and hope they need."

"We recognize that the Church, not DLC, is uniquely qualified to change the lives of those who need our support, for they can provide the understanding and guidance as patients battle in spiritual, emotional, and physical realms to overcome their

afflictions. Body, mind, and spirit are all important components to our overall treatment programs."

Taylor stresses that the initiative is an interfaith effort. "Whether you're a Muslim, a Jew, a Catholic, a Protestant, or whatever you are, we want to bring a diverse faith-based experience to all of our clients. We want our faith community to play a larger role in our overall work."

**"Mental illness is something in the brain that needs to be repaired and restored, and that's often above the pay grade of the pastor or the rabbi. We need professionals. We need David Lawrence Center."**

**- REVEREND SHEILA ZELLERS**

Zellers knows the devastation that mental illness and addictions can bring upon a family. Her father was a recovering alcoholic, and she lost a brother to opioid addiction. About 30 local churches are already on board with Mindful Compassion, but Zellers wants them all to know about DLC's services.

"I don't want this to fall through the cracks," she says. "If our churches don't know about the help that David Lawrence Center offers, how can they be most effective? We need to promote this from the pulpits and our faith-based groups. We need to refer people to David Lawrence, give them a place to go to get the help they need. It needs to be part of our outreach as a faith community."

**If you are a faith-based organization and wish to learn more about the Mindful Compassion initiative, please contact Darcy Taylor at 239-354-1419, or email us at [spiritcare@dlcmhc.com](mailto:spiritcare@dlcmhc.com).**

## SAVE THE DATE

### DLC YOUNG EXECUTIVES' ELEVATE WELLNESS SERIES

APRIL, 6, 2018



Join the David Lawrence Center Young Executives for the Elevate Wellness Series Cooking Demonstration – From the Kitchen to the Office.

Amy Peters, Executive Chef for the David Lawrence Center,

will be demonstrating healthy meals that are quick and easy for young professionals. Chef Amy will discuss the importance of healthy eating habits, and how it effects overall health. She will also discuss how healthy meal planning is promoted and

facilitated for DLC residential clients. Attendees can look forward to learning how to make: Mason Jar Salads with homemade dressings and 20 different toppings; quinoa, cranberry walnut, feta salad with a dill dressing; Italian hummus with tortilla chips; spicy white bean and veggie soup, and Chef Amy's healthy brownies. This event will be held at David Lawrence Center's Telford Conference Room and is open to all community members. Registration is limited. Tickets: \$25.



# COMMUNITY FEATURE

## When Law Enforcement Is on Your Side

*DLC Board Member Kevin Rambosk is a strong advocate for those struggling with mental illness and addiction. And it helps that he's also our local Sheriff.*



*Kevin Rambosk,  
Sheriff & Board Member*

Since the tragic school shooting in Parkland, Fla. last month left 17 people dead, students across the U.S. have taken a stand against such violence, demanding the attention of lawmakers and media outlets across the nation.

These students are bold, courageous, and strong... but they're still kids. And many of them

are scared, wondering when and where the next shooting will occur. People here in our own community are among those expressing their fears and concerns, and David Lawrence Center has received a number of calls from anxious parents and students.

Fortunately, DLC has a board member who not only shares these concerns, but also plays a vital role in protecting our schools and students – Collier County Sheriff Kevin Rambosk.

We arranged a Q&A with Sheriff Rambosk about the school shootings, but also about the relationship between law enforcement and mental health, and what it means for our community.

**People are concerned about shootings and safety at school. Can you describe your department's plans for prevention, and how you'd respond to a similar emergency?**

**Sheriff Kevin Rambosk:** We have had increased presence at our local schools since the shooting in Parkland. But even before that, we have had a presence at each school in the district. In addition to law enforcement on site, we have many tactical tools at our disposal to combat potential threats. We have investigated every threat made since the recent shooting and will continue to do so.

**Describe your partnership with David Lawrence Center.**

**Rambosk:** Our deputies collaborate with staff at David Lawrence Center on a daily basis. When an officer in the field encounters an individual with a mental illness who is a danger to themselves or others, he or she uses their training to determine whether that individual is a potential candidate for mental health intervention. That decision begins our involvement with DLC for a particular case or individual.

Here at the Collier County Sheriff's Office, we've seen an increase in the number of interactions our deputies are having with those affected by both mental illness and addiction in recent years. As law enforcement officers, we don't want to send individuals to jail if there is a better alternative that helps them seek proper treatment. That's why we've partnered with DLC for years, hoping to avoid unnecessary jail time for those struggling with mental illness and substance abuse. Our relationship with DLC and other local mental health facilities is tantamount to successful treatment for these individuals, and it helps the community overall.

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– KEVIN RAMBOSK, COLLIER COUNTY SHERIFF  
& DLC BOARD MEMBER

**Can you give a recent example of what that looks like?**

**Rambosk:** Deputies recently responded to a call concerning a husband and wife who were having an argument. The husband told deputies his wife was depressed and acting out of the norm; he worried she was contemplating suicide. Deputies made contact with the wife and determined that she met the criteria under the Florida Baker Act to be taken into protective custody. She was transported for an evaluation by mental health professionals.

**Many law enforcement people have been trained how to deal with the mentally ill, particularly learning to discern who's a true danger and how to de-escalate such situations. Have you and your officers had such training?**

**Rambosk:** Back in 2008, we began Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for agency members. The program teaches deputies how to divert those in need of treatment into programs. Since we began the program, about 1,000 people have received the training and more than half of those were deputies. My goal is for 100 percent of our deputies to receive this training. The training gives deputies the tools to recognize signs of mental illness in the field, and it offers de-escalation techniques that can resolve a problem or a potential problem with a citizen.

## 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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