

# 17th National Drug Endangered Children Conference: Coming Together for Help, Hope, & Support

## Conference Agenda

August 2023

August 29-31, 2023

Kansas City, Missouri



### Tuesday, August 29, 2023

7:00 AM - 4:30 PM

**Conference Registration**

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

**Continental Breakfast**

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

**Welcome, Opening Ceremony, Dignitaries**

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

**What about the children? - Jerry Moe**

This plenary session explores the experiences of drug endangered children, the child victims of the drug epidemic. Attendees will gain insight on the challenges, risks, and difficulties these children often face when living in households where there is parental addiction. Attendees will also learn how professionals of all disciplines can better help identify, respond, and support these children and families in their journeys to heal. Our efforts to provide help, hope, and support to victims require a coordinated, collaborative multi-disciplinary approach where we join hands to assist children in feeling cared for, nurtured, and safe. Speaker will also examine the professional's individual "Why" for doing this special work that can change the trajectory of these children's lives.

10:30 AM - 10:45 AM

**Break**

10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

**Marijuana: The Danger Remains - James Henning**

This session outlines the risks children face whether marijuana is legal or not. The legalization of marijuana has only served to obscure these risks and in some ways elevated them. This session will discuss the immediate risks to these child victims growing up in households where marijuana and marijuana products are consumed, grown, processed, and illegally sold. Marijuana and

how it is consumed, manufactured, and distributed has drastically changed over the last 15 years, with this change has come the need to educated professionals and communities on what these products are, the techniques used to grow marijuana, and the dangerous processes used to produce high concentrate oils, tinctures, and edibles.

10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

**What's Rewarded Gets Repeated: Simple Engaging Ways to Explain SUD to Your Stakeholders** - Heather Harlan

In policy, enforcement, & public opinion, stakeholders won't support what they don't understand. Professionals often DESCRIBE behavior of an SUD, but few will EXPLAIN in layperson's terms how this devastating chronic brain disorder develops & how we can often prevent it. This session offers easy to understand, interactive strategies to EXPLAIN SUD to your communities and stakeholders so that efforts can be more impactful to child victims and families. Engaging, simple, memorable examples will be provided to attendees to leave them with useable tools for their work.

10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

**Peeling Back the Layers: A Deep Dive into the Intersectionality of Drug Endangered Children and Human Trafficking with Survivor Insights** -

Allison Smith; Russell Smith; June Haskell

The speakers will provide basic information on the intersections of Drug Endangered Children, Substance Use Disorders, and Human Trafficking. They will also take attendees through a deeper dive of these to peel back the many layers and include stories from both professional and survivor perspectives. Case studies and practical experiences will be provided to inform best practice in the intersectionality. The speakers will discuss how children become victims and what professionals across the nation can do to help these victims.

10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

**Pathways to Tribal Law Enforcement Diversion** - Kevin Mariano

This session will discuss how tribal law enforcement can be a key intercept point to divert individuals struggling with alcohol and substance use to treatment and recovery services as opposed to them cycling through the justice system. Critical elements to establishing and implementing a tribal law enforcement diversion program will be explored. A 6-step problem solving/action planning process will be reviewed as a template to identify challenges, resources, analyze underlying conditions, plan a strategy and action steps, and evaluation plan. Multidisciplinary team development, team building, partnership development, collaboration, and communication strategies will also be discussed as a means to establish and implement a successful tribal law enforcement diversion program. The goal of this session is to demonstrate how tribal community wellness can assist child victims and families and can be achieved through collaboration between tribal law enforcement, other key tribal stakeholders, and the community. This workshop session includes audience engagement and adult learning strategies and open Q&A. The speaker will share direct field experience implementing tribal law enforcement led diversion and tribal community policing initiatives.

10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

**Supporting Grandfamilies as Caregivers in the Opioid Crisis** - Chuck Klevgaard

It is estimated that 2.6 million children are raised by family, many of which are grandparents, who step forward to care for them when parents are unable. With the rise in drug use, more grandparents are raising children because the

parents have died, are incarcerated, are using drugs, are in treatment, or are otherwise unable to take care of their children. We understand that these children become victims of the drug epidemic and experience physical and cognitive health challenges as their parents and caregivers face hurdles with housing, school enrollment, health, and legal issues as they struggle with their own grief. This session will present evidence-based interventions designed to strengthen the resilience of these child victims along with tested approaches for supporting grandparents in this role.

12:15 PM – 1:45 PM

**Lunch on own.**

1:45 PM – 3:15 PM

**Tribal Law Enforcement Youth Diversion: Fostering Positive Relationships with Tribal Youth as a Means of Prevention** - Kevin Mariano

This session will provide an overview of how tribal law enforcement youth diversion programs can benefit tribal communities. A case example focused on Camp Triumph will be reviewed. Camp Triumph is a week-long camp for children ages 10 – 16 who have been, or may be victims due to exposure to illegal substances and other substance misuse, gangs, or family trauma. It is a mentor-style camp run by the Isleta Police Department that encourages community building between campers and local law enforcement. Its goal is to provide kids the skills they need to make the right choices, while also building their self-esteem and sense of belonging. It offers both cultural education and physical activity to get kids moving and learning in a healthy and safe way.

1:45 PM – 3:15 PM

**The (Not So) Secret Sauce of Hope** - Kim Halfhill

Our best strategies and interventions are only as powerful as the belief that they will be successful. Hope is the (not so) secret sauce that can fuel change in individuals and communities. But what is hope and where does it come from? The speaker will share the latest research on the science of hope and consider what it means to multidisciplinary work of protecting children and youth and creating safer, healthier communities. Join the speaker as she shares how to cultivate hope in our organizations, communities, and ourselves, thus making the work more meaningful for professionals as well as the victims impacted.

1:45 PM – 3:15 PM

**Developing a Statewide Drug Endangered Children-Handle with Care Collaborative** - Tabatha Curtis; Evangeline Watanabe; Carol Gordon

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn from the Tennessee Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Coordinator and the Tennessee Handle with Care (HWC) Coordinator. Speakers will discuss how they utilize existing substance use prevention coalitions in the development of DEC alliances across a state and how to utilize HWC response too in communities and how they can go hand-in-hand in helping to identify children who have not otherwise been identified by other disciplines. Coordinators will share lessons learned from the development of their DEC response alliances at the grass roots level, successes, and future activities to help victims. Attendees will learn how to focus on victims at the community level with a coalition lens.

1:45 PM – 3:15 PM

**My Corner Store** - Amy Ronshausen

This session will review products sold over the counter in convenient stores marketed as “legal highs.” The session will examine the marketing practices and, more importantly, the impacts of the use of products such as CBD, Delta 8 THC, and Kratom. The speaker will discuss the impacts to children and families

as these products are marketed to them. Attendees will gain great insight on what is on the market being sold to our children and families as well as what may be coming in the future, all making children victims.

1:45 PM – 3:15 PM

**Harm Reduction Saves Lives - Kim Freese**

This session will discuss what harm reduction is, what is happening in harm reduction across the nation, and how harm reduction can impact child victims and families in positive ways, as well as support the work in communities around addiction issues. Speaker will discuss SAMHSA's harm reduction resources and how to utilize them in work to help people with substance use challenges at the community level. SAMHSA's future work to increase harm reduction information and resources will be discussed to provide professionals with guidance for their work.

3:15 PM – 3:30 PM

**Break**

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

**It's Happening Right Here Documentary Screening and Panel - Operation Underground Railroad (O.U.R.)**

This session begins by unveiling the truth that trafficking can happen in every community. In a short and impactful film, various disciplines and survivors of exploitation will discuss how to be aware and prepared to combat trafficking. Despite the darkness of this crime, hope is found when we fight to end trafficking and share experiences to protect others. A panel of experts will discuss the various intersections of trafficking and substance use, how children become victims in many ways, and how professionals and communities can come together to protect children. Resources will be provided to assist professionals in identifying and helping others.

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

**Networking Reception - Appetizers and Soft Drinks Sponsored by Operation Underground Railroad**

**Wednesday, August 30, 2023**

7:00 AM - 4:30 PM

**Conference Registration**

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

**Continental Breakfast**

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM

**Welcome Back and Dignitaries**

8:30 AM – 10:00AM

**Equity and Inclusion in Drug Endangered Children Efforts- Cedric Hall**

History shows us that inequities within many facets of our communities have resulted in historically underrepresented people and communities suffering disproportionate impacts. This includes the impact on the work that we do to help drug endangered children and families as well as the impact that drug endangered children and families may experience. But what does this all mean? Mr. Hall will, in a down to earth way, discuss the meanings of equity and inclusion. He will further provide examples from his personal and professional experiences and from his experiences with professionals and communities across the country. Mr. Hall provides information on this tough topic in a way

that is engaging and inclusive to all of our work across the county. You will not want to miss this session!

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM

**Break**

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM

**From My Lens: Different Perspectives** - Jessica Trimboli; District Attorney Joseph Early; Nicole Cummings

This session will provide information from various professional lenses on how they work with drug endangered victims. Speakers include a teacher, a District Attorney, and a Sheriff's Deputy, all in drug endangered children (DEC) efforts currently. Speakers are from local or state DEC Alliances and from various sized communities including very small and rural to very large and metropolitan. Speakers will each talk about their experiences, from their lens, working with victims who are impacted by familial substance use. They will discuss why they got involved in drug endangered children efforts and how their work has positively impacted victims. Speakers will provide examples of successes, challenges, and how different disciplines can help victims in different ways and how each discipline is important in helping identify, respond, and help drug endangered children.

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM

**Fentanyl: Facts Versus Fiction** - Gary Goldberg

Most people have heard of Fentanyl and many have heard misinformation circulating regarding Fentanyl. This misinformation can be very dangerous to various professionals, children and youth, as well as potential overdose victims themselves. The speaker will share the ins and outs of Fentanyl, debunk misconceptions, and provide examples from across the country. By having accurate information, people can feel safe when working in the field helping child victims and families. And in-turn, keeping children and families safer from this deadly drug.

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM

**A Story of Recovery: It can happen to you** - Allen Burnette

Allen will share his journey through addiction and recovery and provide personal examples of turning points along the way. Speaker will also talk about his drug endangered children perspective and what he is doing now to help others change the trajectory of these child victim's lives. Speaker's inspiring story will leave attendees with hope for themselves, for the children impacted, for families where there is addiction, and for the communities ravaged by substance use.

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM

**The Impact of Familial Substance Use on Children** - Bethany DePugh

This session will focus on defining addiction and substance use disorders, how it is a family disease and how it effects each family member in the family system differently including child victims. Speaker will also discuss and provide examples of how this environment impacts common family roles that each family member assumes, the impact on behavior and how children are directly effected and become victims of familial addiction in different ways. The session will discuss how adults can support and help children in getting help and creating safety plans when needed.

- 10:15 AM - 11:45 AM **The Red Road: Pathways to Reclaiming Our Youth Part 1** – Justine Souto; Gene Red Hail  
Native youth have inherited the ill effects of trauma, domestic violence and substance misuse thrust upon them when generations of their family's experience trauma. Without interventions, how do we show our youth another way that will help them to reach their potential instead of falling into the same cycle of despair? Gene Red Hail will explore ways to help Native youth to thrive through cultural restoration. This session will discuss strategies to connect Native youth to the healing nature of their culture.
- 11:45 AM - 1:15 PM **Lunch on own.**
- 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM **A Journey from Addiction and Homelessness to a Life of Service** – Jen Spencer; Melissa Clark  
Jen will share her story of overcoming methamphetamine addiction and homelessness. The speaker will discuss how her experiences led her to start a non-profit organization called Turtle Shelter Project that helps others in similar situations. Attendees will be shown clothing vests that this non-profit makes to help those struggling with addiction and living on the streets during winter months. Attendees will be shown how to make the vests and provide an opportunity to watch or participate in assembling Turtle Shelter vests. This participation will include pinning fabric together and assembling kits for those suffering from homelessness and addiction across the nation. Attendees will feel what it is like to help victims of this drug epidemic through real life and hands on service opportunity with someone who has been there.
- 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM **Fetal/Neonatal Marijuana Exposure: Speaking for those unable to speak for themselves** - Leeann Blaskowsky  
Expanding marijuana legalization across the country has created an ever increasing question about fetal and neonatal exposure to the compounds found in marijuana. As research continues, the medical community is uncovering many more risks to these tiny victims than benefits, making education a priority to protect our developing and newly born babies. Speaker will provide information about how prenatal exposure to marijuana specifically impacts the fetus, review developmental impacts, and provide information on the impact of use from the legalization. Attendees will also leave with key evidence-based discussion points for patient education and management to assist them in their work with these youngest drug endangered children.
- 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM **Resiliency: The Art of Bouncing Forward** - Brooke Arnold; Marsha Lowery  
Speakers will provide information around the roles resilience and compassion satisfaction play in combating the high levels of compassion fatigue and trauma exposure, which individuals from all disciplines are experiencing now more than ever. Speakers will explore four areas in which resilience can be built and provide engagement activities for improving resiliency and compassion satisfaction. Attendees will benefit from learning how to balance trauma exposure with compassion satisfaction. The skills learned in this session will empower professionals to better help the victims they serve.
- 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM **The Red Road: Pathways to Reclaiming Our Youth Part 2** – Justine Souto; Gene Red Hail  
Native youth have inherited the ill effects of trauma, domestic violence and substance misuse thrust upon them when generations of their family's

experience trauma. Without interventions, how do we show our youth another way that will help them to reach their potential instead of falling into the same cycle of despair? Gene Red Hail will explore ways to help Native youth to thrive through cultural restoration. This session will discuss strategies to connect Native youth to the healing nature of their culture.

1:15 PM - 2:45 PM

**A Child's Experience of Trauma: When Caregivers Misuse/Abuse Substances** - Crystal Williams

When misuse/abuse of substances renders a caregiver unable to consistently meet a child's needs, the child's nervous system comes to feel and interpret these unmet needs as "threats." The response to these "threats" is a nervous system baseline that develops in a "hyper or hypo" aroused state rather than a baseline "regulated" state. This can result in a child who 1) is highly reactive, and easily dysregulated, unconsolable and/or anxious (hyperarousal), or 2) seems "numb," unmotivated, unfocused, detached and/or depressed (hypoarousal). The goal of this workshop is, 1) to provide attendees with an understanding of the development of, and resulting responses to, childhood traumatic experiences stemming from inconsistent and unpredictable caregiving and, 2) to explore behaviors and tools that can support prevention of this disruption in nervous system development in children or help children "rewire" their nervous system after disruption has already occurred.

2:45 PM - 3:00 PM

**Break**

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

**Cinder Girl: Growing Up on America's Fringe** - Holly Rehder

Missouri State Senator Holly Thompson Rehder is the author of the recently published Cinder Girl, Growing Up on America's Fringe. In her memoir the author accurately reflects on growing up on welfare, surrounded by drug addiction and domestic violence, and becoming a teen mother. Ultimately, despite those tremendous odds Ms. Rehder decided to do things different. As a conservative member of public office, Ms. Rehder is known for her unique perspective to the poverty cycle in America and has been a tireless advocate in the fight against opioid addiction; a reality she lived firsthand when her daughter became addicted to opioids following an outpatient procedure. Her daughter is now in long term-recovery, but Holly continues to advocate for successful treatment practices and improved care in mental health services. Holly's story not only shines inspiration on those who are all too familiar with the cycle of poverty, but candidly shares how her faith and tenacity led her to the life she enjoys today.

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

**Holly Rehder Book Signing**

4:30 PM – 6:30 PM

**Turtle Shelter Project Service Project –**

All are welcome to come help for any amount of time. Attendees will be shown how to make the vests and provide an opportunity to watch or participate in assembling Turtle Shelter vests. This participation will include pinning fabric together and assembling kits for those suffering from homelessness and addiction across the nation.

## **Thursday, August 31, 2023**

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

### **Continental Breakfast**

8:00 AM – 9:15 AM

### **Staying the Course: A Long Term Collaborative Approach to Success -**

Daniel Schoonover; Andrea Ehret

Speakers will discuss four real life drug endangered children case studies. All four case studies have been five years in the making, involve a wide variety of collaborative partners, and have both successes and challenges. The speakers will discuss the similarities and differences in different approaches used and will discuss how to keep the families connected to services and support, while maintaining the focus on supporting the child victims impacted as the primary objective. Attendees will be able to ask questions to assist in their own work with children and families in their own areas.

8:00 AM – 9:15 AM

### **Lambi Learns About Addiction - Trish Luna**

Trish will share her original book called Lambi Learns About Addiction: A Book About Prevention. The session will educate attendees about the multi-generational impact addiction can have on the family, providing personal and professional examples. Studies have shown that children exposed to parental addiction are much more likely to suffer lifelong consequences of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), frequently leading to negative life outcomes. However, early intervention and access to effective resources, such as Lambi, can mitigate the potentially devastating damage ACEs can wreak. Lambi is a beautifully engaging story which provides trauma-informed, evidence-based, age-appropriate-tools for children and caregivers to utilize to combat ACEs. Lambi also offers prevention tools through awareness, choices, goal setting, and turning to safe, trusted people for guidance. Professionals from every discipline will want to hear how Lambi can help child victims in their area.

8:00 AM – 9:15 AM

### **Safe Kids, Strong Communities: Unveiling Hidden Risks and Strengthening Community Safety -**

Becky Savage

The speaker will share a personal story to set the stage for attendees learning how they and their community might be placing children at risk and making them victims of the drug epidemic. She will provide information to help attendees learn how to identify hidden dangers in their homes that could potentially be putting their children in danger and what information communities need to provide in order to keep children safe. The speaker will discuss current teen drug use trends and party culture, including the dangers often found outside our home that impacts children and families. Attendees will learn skills on how to talk with children and teens about drugs and the effects of drugs on their body, minds and future. She will leave attendees with useful tips.

8:00 AM – 9:15 AM

### **A Ten-Year Colorado Cautionary Tale: Cataloging Harms and Transforming Data into Actionable Narratives for Policy Changes -**

Julie Dreifaldt

This session will discuss local, state, and national case studies that promote implementing policies that better protect children and youth from the negative consequences of commercialized THC. The speaker will provide information on how laws and policies can impact victims and communities, ways to provide transparency and policy change, how to create a cohesive story about the



effects of marijuana commercialization, and how to empower and engage elected officials, media, partners, health experts, concerned parents, and educators to secure safeguards for children and youth. This session will also provide real life examples from Colorado, both positive and negative, and what has been experienced from a state and communities that have been trying to protect children since legalization.

8:00 AM – 9:15 AM

**Drug Endangered Children, Families, and Communities in Indian Country: A Real Life Story of the Impact of Substance Use** - Judge Richard Blake  
Substance use has impacted so many across the nation. Tribal children, families, and communities have become victims of the drug epidemic; so many Tribal people of all ages are impacted with what feels like no end in sight. Judge Blake will share his experience as a judge for a Tribal Court and the impact that he has seen when substance use hits a family and a tribal community. The speaker will discuss the needs and challenges of tribal communities in finding solutions to address this impact and stop the multigenerational cycle. Judge Blake will also discuss the need for collaboration, a multidisciplinary approach, and a time for healing so that Tribal victims and Tribal communities can come together to fight for the future...their children who are often time the unseen victims.

9:15 AM – 9:30 AM

**Break**

9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

**DEC Investigations A Case Study – Where MDT Partnerships Overlap and Collide** - Dr. Rita Venture; Kimberly Serpe; Neil McGrath  
The Racine County MDT (multidisciplinary team), in partnership with a local Child Advocacy Center (CAC) and law enforcement, will present an in-depth drug endangered children (DEC) case study. This specific and detailed case study will involve law enforcement controlled drug buys, execution of a search warrant with children at the scene, interviews with the child victims, medical exams of the children, and more. How did the partners collaborate for a safe outcome for the child victims? How did partners complete forensic interviews and medical evaluations? How did collaboration and being DEC aware play a part in this case? How were child victims impacted by doing a case in this way? Speakers will discuss case outcomes, lessons learned, collaborative practices, and change opportunities during this interactive session. Attendees will leave with a variety of ideas on what works and does not work in collaborative DEC cases and how to impact children in different ways.

9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

**Building a Trauma Informed Response to Violent Crime** - Leslie Hagan  
This session will provide information on how the human brain uniquely responds to traumatic events on an individual basis and how the perception of that trauma processing and externalization in victims affects juror and law enforcement beliefs on the validity of the crime in question. In addition to the biological effects of trauma, compounding factors such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), alcohol use, and a history of victimization are discussed as they relate to the coding processes of memory. Attendees will be able to take away tips and techniques to develop and deliver a trauma informed response to victims in drug endangered children efforts. This session will also feature an Indian country case that involved strangulation and the effects of a non-trauma informed response to victim interviewing and report writing.

9:30 AM - 10:45 AM	<p><b>Women and Weed</b> - LaTisha Bader</p> <p>This session will outline the rapidly changing culture of cannabis use, including highlighting potency and routes of administration, perception of risk, and common exchanges regarding substance use and women's issues. The speaker will share popular products marketed to women and campaigns targeted to female identified individuals, making them and their children victims of the cannabis culture. Public health, child welfare, and other disciplines' concerns will be discussed, including cannabis use during pregnancy and breastfeeding, influence on self and family, and how to have an intelligent "cannabis conversation".</p>
9:30 AM - 10:45 AM	<p><b>HOPE for Generations</b> - Vicki Richardson; Amy Ferguson</p> <p>Alcohol and substance use by parents and caregivers is one of the leading causes of child abuse and neglect across the nation. This session will discuss how toxic stress and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in these situations affects the developing child's brain and how building resilience can change the children's outcomes through HOPE (Healthy Outcomes Through Positive Experiences). Speakers will also discuss 8 ways to promote positive childhood experiences. They will provide an example and discuss a statewide program that helps to promote these concepts to help victims across a state that are impacted by parental substance use. The speakers will assist attendees in understanding how to utilize concepts in their state and community.</p>
9:30 AM - 10:45 AM	<p><b>Strategies for Managing Unexpected Changes and Adversity</b> - Steve Miller; Dave Closson</p> <p>Have you ever developed your plan, submitted your grant, had it approved, then something beyond your control happens, like a pandemic? What then? What if you're used to training in person and now you can't, what does pivot look like? What if your Project Director decides to leave, but the grant hasn't ended? Some of this happened to all of us in 2020, and we had to pivot, right? Well, all this and more happened to the Mid-America PTTC. The Director who left, Dave Closson, and your other presenter for this session, Steve Miller are going to tell you all about it. You will learn about the accomplishments, new conversation styles, and innovations that have been part of the Mid-America PTTC's first five years of helping professionals and communities help drug endangered children and address addiction. Oh, don't worry this isn't a just a presentation about outcomes and evaluations; we're going teach you what we have learned through focused conversation. You didn't think we were going let you sit there while we did all the talking did you? Get ready for your life to pivot!</p>
10:45 AM – 11:00 AM	<b>Break</b>
11:00 AM – 12:15 PM	<p><b>One Choice for Health: A Data-Driven Message</b> - Dr. Robert L. DuPont; Dr. Caroline DuPont</p>
12:15 PM – 12:30 PM	<b>Closing Remarks and Ceremony</b>