

# Because of our DEC Alliance...

We are providing *help, hope and support.*

What is a DEC Alliance?

Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Alliances are multidisciplinary teams of professionals, sharing a common vision, collaborating effectively and changing responsively. These alliances are set up to engage and assist professionals and members of the community through awareness efforts, training, technical assistance and local resource development. DEC Alliances work together to identify at-risk children and families, intervene appropriately and provide targeted services. DEC Alliances are willing to do things differently from what they have done in the past in order to change the trajectory of children's lives, break the cycle of generational substance misuse, and support healthy families and communities.

## COLLABORATION

*Before our DEC Alliance, it was common for families and children to be served by multiple agencies and organizations, but no communication or resource linkage occurred among the professionals serving the families. After the formation of our DEC Alliance, professionals are aware of the importance of collaborating and sharing information, lines of communication between professionals have been opened and we are keeping our children's best interest in mind.*

## INTERVENTION

*A School Resource Officer (SRO) trained in both Drug Endangered Children Awareness and Handle With Care noticed warning signs a child was exhibiting. He contacted the patrol officer who had initiated the Handle With Care notice to the school for more information. The SRO learned one of the child's parents had been arrested the previous night, and the other parent had been arrested while the child was at school. The SRO kept the child from getting on the bus and going home to an empty house, made an additional report to the Department of Children Services and made sure proper resources were in place for the child. Because of the SRO's training with DEC, he knew the child was at risk and understood the importance of intervention and sharing information with other professionals.*

Local Tennessee DEC Alliances



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## DEC COORDINATOR

*Law enforcement identified a teenager in need of clothes, shoes, and hygiene items. He had been in and out of foster care and Department of Children Services custody for most of his life due to drug exposure and other unfortunate events. Law enforcement reached out the local DEC Coordinator to see what resources were available to help the teenager with his needs. Through connections the DEC Coordinator had within the community, they were able to identify resources within the school system for children who were deemed homeless; this teenager met the criterion. Together, the team's efforts were able to secure funds to purchase new clothes, socks, under garments, shoes, personal hygiene products, and school supplies for the teen. They also connected him to other resources, and caring adults to offer him hope and show him he is not alone.*

*Many DEC Alliances have a DEC Coordinator. DEC Coordinators are familiar with their community's resources and services, they bring professionals together to help connect them with one another and provide support to the DEC Alliance. DEC Coordinators help DEC Alliances identify, intervene and provide hope to children, families and their community.*

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## AIDING STUDENTS

- *A School Resource Officer asked the DEC Coordinator to accompany him on a visit to a female student who displayed behavioral issues including vaping. During the conversation, she revealed she had been couch hopping, had no familial support system and needed to re-enter mental health services. The SRO, DEC Coordinator and County Juvenile Magistrate aided the young lady in mentorship, applying for her first job, transporting her to her first interview, provided clothing and food, and visitation after her foster care placement.*
- *After locating and returning a runaway child law enforcement officers determined the child was experiencing a clothing disparity and contacted the DEC Coordinator for assistance. The DEC Alliance had previously received monetary donations to assist with such incidents and were able to take the child shopping for new clothes.*

## FRONT PORCH FUN PACKS

*This project created a way for School Resource Officers to check in on the welfare of students while providing a fun and needed gift to the student's family to help through the pandemic and ease the visits. The Front Porch Fun Packs were filled with hygiene items, local organizations resource information, lock boxes, snacks, and games to help encourage family engagement. Community partners donated the items and helped assemble the Front Porch Fun Packs.*

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## MULTI-COUNTY SUPPORT

*Multiple counties often make up a DEC Alliance, virtual meetings help facilitate participation across counties. Through multi-county collaborative efforts a DEC Alliance was able to bring Dr. Ira Chasnoff to their area to train their Alliance and community members on "The Mystery of Risk; Drugs, Alcohol and the Vulnerable Child." Following the training, the DEC Alliance established a subcommittee to implement Family Resiliency Centers and Handle With Care Initiatives in their area.*

## FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

*Through participation of parent partner members on the DEC Alliance, they are exploring an opportunity to bring Family Treatment Court to their area. It is much needed and has worked well in other counties in the state. The dedication and initiative the DEC Alliance members are taking to get things started in their areas has been inspiring.*

Local Iowa DEC Alliance

