

Quarterly Newsletter

SUNCOAST INSTITUTE ON CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY

January 2025



Here's what's happening with the board and what is to come!

We at Suncoast Institute on Chemical Dependency are building our team to expand our reach and resources in 2025. Our mission is to offer free educational programs to anyone seeking information on the disease of addiction. We source local experts who provide free educational speaking programs on prevention, treatment, and resources to support long-term recovery.

SICD-FL.org offers on-site customized educational programs to local organizations, community groups, and recovery homes. We provide resources and information at local Health and Wellness Fairs. We actively collaborate with Drug-Free Sarasota, Sarasota Substance Use Coalition, School Health Advisory Committee, and Behavioral Health Stakeholder's Consortium.

We have multiple opportunities to participate in our organization. Attend the orientation meeting and discover how your skills can support our growth. Together we can bring hope to more families and community member impacted by the disease of addiction.

Board Member/Volunteer Recruitment Orientation

1/23/25 -Thursday Fruitville Library 100 Apex Rd Sarasota, FL

Two- time slots: 2:00-3:00 and 3:00-4:00pm

Pre-registration email Robin_Hain@yahoo.com

When you pre-register you will receive an application that will give you a preview of some of the positions we are looking to fill to expand SICD's reach in our community.

Suncoast Institute on Chemical Dependency Board

In this newsletter you can expect:

Community News

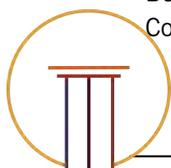
Upcoming Events

Trainings

Meet Our Board

Stories of Impact

Join SICD





Community News - Sarasota Fights Fentanyl 2024

On September 1st, 2024, we had the privilege of participating in the first Sarasota Fights Fentanyl event at JD Hummel Park. Throughout the event, we met many others sharing stories of hope, resilience, and honor.

Many organizations from across Sarasota and Manatee Counties shared resources including recovery centers, onsite intakes, Narcan, literature, family supports,

resources, and even clothing.

Cheering on hundreds of walkers as they crossed the Ringling Bridge, carrying signs to honor those lost, and pride in those who have survived.

We shared and heard stories from survivors, fighters, and families. Many speakers shared after the walk was finished, touching us all.

We look forward to participating again in 2025!

Upcoming Events

1/14 - MAT Panel, Fruitville Library, 6:00-7:30 PM

1/23 - Board Member and Volunteer Recruitment Meet and greet, Fruitville Library. Email Robin at Robin_Hain@yahoo.com

1/30 - Board Meeting, Fruitville Library, 2:00-4:00 PM

2/20 - Responding to Addiction, Fruitville Library, 1:00-3:30 PM

Email Linda Christensen at Lschris10sen@comcast.net to schedule "Responding to Addiction" Training at your site for March 2025!

April 2025 - SICD will focus on the largest sub-segment of Substance Use Disorder- Alcohol Use Disorder. For updates, go to, www.sicd-fl.org



Responding to Addiction

A Comprehensive Training on Addiction

Thursday, February 20, 2025 | 1:00 - 3:00 PM EDT

Fruitville Library
100 Apex Road Sarasota, Florida, 34240

As the addiction and overdose crisis reaches troubling milestones - **100,000 overdose fatalities last year alone** - all leaders and key stakeholders in the community are needed to address the problem. The Responding to Addiction training is designed to **increase knowledge about addiction and develop skills and strategies to help your community.**

The training and participant manual was developed by the Addiction Policy Forum with an Expert Review Panel composed of prominent researchers and physicians in the addiction field.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEARN

- The Science of Addiction
- The Signs and Symptoms of Addiction
- Evidence-Based Treatment Options
- Medications to Treat Addiction
- Engagement Strategies

WHO SHOULD GET TRAINED?

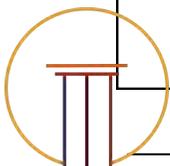
- Families, Friends, & Caregivers
- Clergy
- First Responders
- Employers
- Educators
- Health Care Providers
- Community Based Service Providers
- Other Community Members

Seating is Limited!

Reserve Your Seat today!

Please email to reserve your seat:
Linda at
lschris10sen@comcast.net





Meet Our Board



Linda Christensen,
Director of Education
Programs

Linda joined our board in 2019.
Learn more about Linda in this
months stories of impact. (page 4)



Jennifer Fretz-Smith,
Director of Outreach

Jennifer Fretz is a Florida native and has lived for 12 years in Bradenton-Sarasota. Jennifer has 3 children, Dallas, Alexis, and Myrakel. Jennifer is a servant first and a leader second. Her nonprofit, Bailes Consulting Services, helps individuals find their passion and purpose through housing and employment, striving to help individuals find freedom from addiction and substance use while keeping their children out of foster care. One child kept out of foster care, and one mom clean and sober is a success in her book.



Interested in Joining the Board?

- We are looking to continue to build our board and our volunteers.
- Positions we are looking to fill:
 - Congressional Outreach
 - Community Outreach - Sober Living Programs
 - Website Management
 - Social Media and Email/Constant
 - Education
 - Fundraising
 - Grant Writing
 - Family Support Groups
 - Crossroads Career Program Facilitator
- Volunteers are always welcome to support events in the community!

*Join our
team,
we are better
together!*



Our tree could be found on display at UTC mall this holiday season!

Thank you to all of those who voted. Your donations help to support our mission.

Our tree went to a deserving family bringing some holiday spirit during a difficult time.

Over \$23,100 awarded to 32 deserving charities in our community.



Stories of impact: Linda Christensen shares her personal story and why she joined the SICD Board.

In 1984, while teaching sixth grade, I read an article in the Weekly Reader with my sixth grade class about crack cocaine being “the most addictive substance known to man.” At that moment, I silently prayed, “Please, God, don’t let my brothers get involved with this drug.” They were already struggling with substance misuse, which tragically led to their addiction to methamphetamines. Little did I realize then, that I, too, was on a path to addiction —alcohol, the most abused substance of all. Growing up in a family with a history of alcohol addiction on both sides, I didn’t fully understand the genetic predisposition I carried. My journey with alcohol began at 18, during my college years, a time when drinking and recreational drug use were prevalent. The culture of the 70s, shaped by the Vietnam War and the “Sex, Drugs, and Rock n Roll” mantra, fed into these behaviors. As I entered adulthood and started my career, alcohol use continued, though I became a high-functioning alcoholic, masking my struggles through work and personal responsibilities. Meanwhile, my brothers had started using substances much younger, which exacerbated their addiction. Over the years, I realized alcohol had become my coping mechanism, especially during a marriage to someone diagnosed with bipolar disorder. My recovery journey was far from linear, with many setbacks, but after entering retirement and a new marriage, I experienced another relapse. Now, six years into recovery, I can confidently say that I have found myself and my voice... My recovery was intertwined with a new calling—volunteering with the Suncoast Institute on Chemical Dependency (SICD), a faith-based organization dedicated to providing free education on addiction. This organization became my purpose. It was here that I found my voice, advocating for addiction prevention, recovery, and reducing the stigma surrounding substance use disorders.



As the Director of Education Programs at SICD, I am proud to engage with local organizations such as the Sarasota Health Advisory Committee, Drug Free Sarasota, the Behavioral Health Consortium, and others to spread awareness and education. Our work includes offering workshops like Responding to Addiction, a free, informational session that covers the science of addiction, recovery therapies, and family engagement. This is just one example of our efforts to educate the community and reduce the impact of addiction. SICD is also having a panel discussion January 14, at 6:30 pm, at the Fruitville Library in Sarasota: MEDICATION ASSISTED THERAPY PANEL. Join us to learn how MAT can support recovery from substance abuse.(See flier in newsletter for more info). But while our programs are free, they come with a cost. We rely entirely on donations and volunteers to fund SICD’s activities, including event costs, media fees, and essential services. I am reaching out to ask for your support, whether through donations or volunteering, to help us continue our work in the community. Your contributions will enable us to provide more educational programs, increase public outreach, and support those suffering from addiction. Together, we can make a difference. Thank you for considering how you can help us in this vital mission. Your support would make a real impact in the fight against addiction, and as we head into the new year, it would bring a much-needed blessing to our community. God Bless you,

-Linda Christensen

Thank you!

SUNCOAST INSTITUTE ON CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY	941-479-0520
www.sicd-fl.org	Bible Verse of the Quarter: <u>3 John 1:2</u>
