

# Suncoast Institute on Chemical Dependency Newsletter



April 2026



Presented by the  
Community Foundation of Sarasota County  
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## Here's what's been happening on the board and what is to come!

Thanks to the generosity of the November Tea Party friends and guests, we have been able to enhance the delivery of the Suncoast Institute's Chemical Dependency Educational Programs. To date, 358 Sarasota and Manatee community members have completed the "Responding to Addiction Training." Participants include Centerstone, Second Heart Homes, Safe Children's Coalition, NAMI, Harvest House, Teen Court, Sarasota County School System, Project 180, FSU students, and facility.

Our biggest surprise was the engagement of the 35 Teen Court participants. They expressed a strong interest in additional information on prevention and intervention programming. participants. Follow our website for upcoming programs and programs designed for the school-age population.

Director of Education, Linda Christensen, created and delivered a one-hour program, "What Parents Should Know About Youth and Substance Use. Read more details on the Program Delivery Strategy. Contact Linda at [lschris10sen@icloud.com](mailto:lschris10sen@icloud.com), if you would like to set up a training for your Community. More information to follow on Mia Gomez's college sober living programs at FSU.

Welcome our Secretary/Treasurer, Pamela F Paterson. Read her bio on page 3, you will know why we feel so blessed to have her on our team.

We look forward to a record-breaking Giving Challenge on April 15th & 16th NOON to NOON. All donations \$25-\$100 will be matched by the Patterson Foundation.

We have scheduled our next Tea Party Fund Raiser for January 29, 2027, at Stoneybrook Golf & Country Club. Save the date! Contact Denise [dcail@sicdfl.org](mailto:dcail@sicdfl.org) if you would like to volunteer or make a donation of goods and services for our Auction.

Thank you for the role you play in delivering educational programs on prevention, intervention, and treatment initiatives that support long-term recovery systems of care in our community.

*Suncoast Institute on  
Chemical Dependency Board*



**WE HAVE  
MOVED**

Check out our new website:  
[sicdfl.org/](http://sicdfl.org/)

In this  
newsletter  
you can expect:

SICD Events

Upcoming  
Events

Upcoming  
Education  
Programs

Meet Our  
Volunteer

Community  
News

A Heartfelt  
Success

# Education Programs

## Suncoast Training Series

For professionals serving families affected by perinatal substance use

### SESSION I: RESPONDING TO ADDICTION

Featuring: Linda Christensen B.S. Ed., M.Ed.  
Robin Hain B.S. Psy.

**April 7, 2026 11:00am - 1:00pm EST**

The session teaches participants the science of addiction and equips them with practical tools to understand and respond effectively to substance use disorders. Designed to improve helping behaviors and reduce stigma, this training strengthens community capacity to support individuals affected by addiction.

**CEs available!** 2 CEUs included for Florida CPE, LMHC, LMFT, and CISM through CE Broker. The Florida Department of Health Board redesignates this training in the area of child welfare and mental health.

Scan or Click to Register

### SESSION II: JUDICIARY RESPONDING TO ADDICTION

Featuring: Linda Christensen B.S. Ed., M.Ed.  
Robin Hain B.S. Psy.

**April 10, 2026 1:00pm - 3:00pm EST**

This session—designed specifically for judicial professionals—will cover the concepts and tools in the Responding to Addiction training with a specific focus on how judicial partners can apply this knowledge as they serve families affected by addiction.

**CEs available!** 2 CEUs included for Florida CPE, LMHC, LMFT, and CISM through CE Broker. The Florida Department of Health Board redesignates this training in the area of child welfare and mental health.

Scan or Click to Register

### SESSION III: OPIOID USE DISORDER IN PREGNANCY

Featuring: Angela M. Hill, Pharm.D., RPh, CRPh, FAACP

**May 13, 2026 2:00pm - 3:30pm EST**

This session provides an overview of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) in pregnancy, including screening, pregnancy outcomes, and evidence-based treatment. It outlines the roles of obstetric care providers and key considerations across antepartum, intrapartum, and postpartum management.

**CEs available!** 2 CEUs included for Florida CPE, LMHC, LMFT, and CISM through CE Broker. The Florida Department of Health Board redesignates this training in the area of child welfare and mental health.

Scan or Click to Register

This training series is provided through a collaborative partnership of:

## February 26, 5:30-7:30 “Responding to Addiction moves to Zoom:

Our in-person R2A program registered 6 participants, one week prior to the presentation. We moved it to Zoom, and it was supported by Heather Todd from Teen Court (teen attendees received community service hours) The Zoom presentation had 50 participants, 35 of which were from Teen Court. Mia was a participant as well as support, and she provided input on some of the questions the Teens were curious about in the chat. Kids really know how to work a Zoom chat! The Teen engagement has moved SICD build our school age prevention and intervention programs forward.

## March 3, 11:00-12:00 Parent Prevention Education Webinar

Shaun Hoyle from Florida Center Training Institute chose “What Parents Need to Know About Youth & Substance Use”. Linda Christensen’s developed this one hour program to be delivered by zoom to any organizations seeking to support parents in prevention education. The 50 participants received 1 CE credit through The Learning Center on March 3, 2026.

## April 7th & 10th “Responding to Addiction” Webinar

These two presentations were offered to the community through the InDepth Technical Assistance Program that the National Center on Substance Use and Child Welfare initiated in SW Florida. This federal systems-improvement project led locally by partners and supported by national experts like Sean Couch to strengthen how the region responds to families where substance use and child welfare intersect. 161 Community members attended these two Webinars and received CE credits.



April marks Alcohol Awareness Month 2026, a time dedicated to increasing understanding, reducing stigma, and encouraging meaningful conversations around alcohol use and its impact on individuals, families, and communities.

Established by National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Alcohol Awareness Month serves as a national call to action—reminding us of the importance of education, early intervention, and access to support. While alcohol is often normalized in social settings, it’s important to recognize how easily use can shift into misuse, affecting physical health, mental well-being, relationships, and daily functioning.

Alcohol use exists on a spectrum, and challenges can look different for everyone. Some individuals may struggle with patterns consistent with Alcohol Use Disorder, while others may simply be questioning their relationship with alcohol or noticing its impact on their lives. No matter where someone falls on that spectrum, support and resources are available—and recovery is always possible.

This month encourages us to pause and reflect:

- Are we using alcohol to cope with stress, anxiety, or difficult emotions?
- How does alcohol affect our relationships and responsibilities?
- What would it look like to make more intentional choices around our well-being?

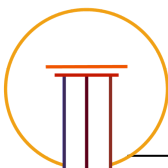
Equally important is how we support others. Creating a culture of compassion and openness can make a meaningful difference for those who may be struggling. By reducing judgment and increasing awareness, we help create safe spaces for individuals to seek help without fear or shame.

At its core, Alcohol Awareness Month is about empowerment—through education, connection, and action. Whether it’s starting a conversation, sharing resources, or taking a step toward personal change, every effort contributes to a healthier, more informed community.

If you or someone you know may be struggling with alcohol use, know you are not alone. Support is available, and reaching out is powerful first step.



APRIL IS  
**ALCOHOL**  
AWARENESS MONTH

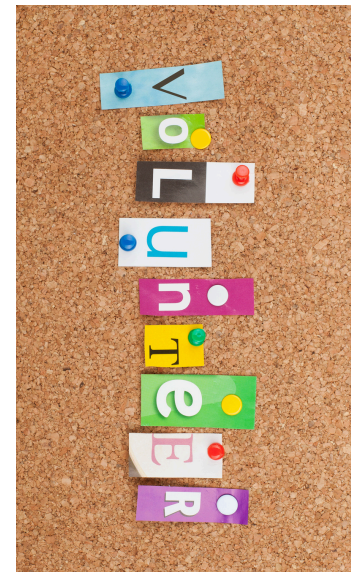


# Meet Our Newest Volunteer

## Pam Patterson, Media Team and Fundraising



Hello, my name is Pam Paterson, and I am excited to be joining the Board of Suncoast Institute for Chemical Dependency. I am a CPA with over 35 years' experience in corporate finance. Recently retired, I spent the last 15 years of my career as the Director of Finance for several different non-profits. I am enthusiastic about learning and connecting with new people. Over the years, I have volunteered extensively through my church with the homeless and underserved communities. I am excited to work in this new area to help further educate the people of the Suncoast about addiction.



### Interested in Joining the Board?

- We are looking to continue to build our board and our volunteers.
- Positions we are looking to fill:
  - Outreach
  - Website Management
  - Fundraising
  - Grant Writing
  - Family Support Groups
  - Crossroads Career Program Facilitator
  - Treasurer
- Volunteers are always welcome to support events in the community!



## Community News - Bridge a Life Superhero Race, 2026

-Maggie, Director of Communication



February brought energy, excitement, and a powerful sense of community as we participated in the 15th Annual

Superhero Fun Run/5K, hosted by Bridge a Life. Families and vendors arrived early, setting up their booths as the sun began to rise. There was a special kind of magic in the air as more and more superheroes—of all ages—gathered in capes, masks, and bright smiles, ready to take part in the day's events. The youngest heroes kicked things off with their fun run, bringing enthusiasm and joy to the course, followed by the 5K races where participants of all ages came together in support of an incredible cause.

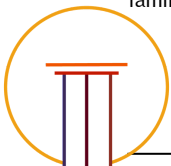
This annual event is more than just a race—it's a celebration of resilience, connection, and community. Bridge a Life continues to serve as a vital resource for foster and adoptive families, offering ongoing support through education, community events, and essential resources. Their mission centers around strengthening families and ensuring that children and caregivers feel supported, connected, and empowered.

Events like the Superhero Fun Run/5K help raise awareness and critical funding to sustain these services. From providing training opportunities to creating spaces where families can build meaningful relationships, the impact of Bridge a Life is felt far beyond race day.

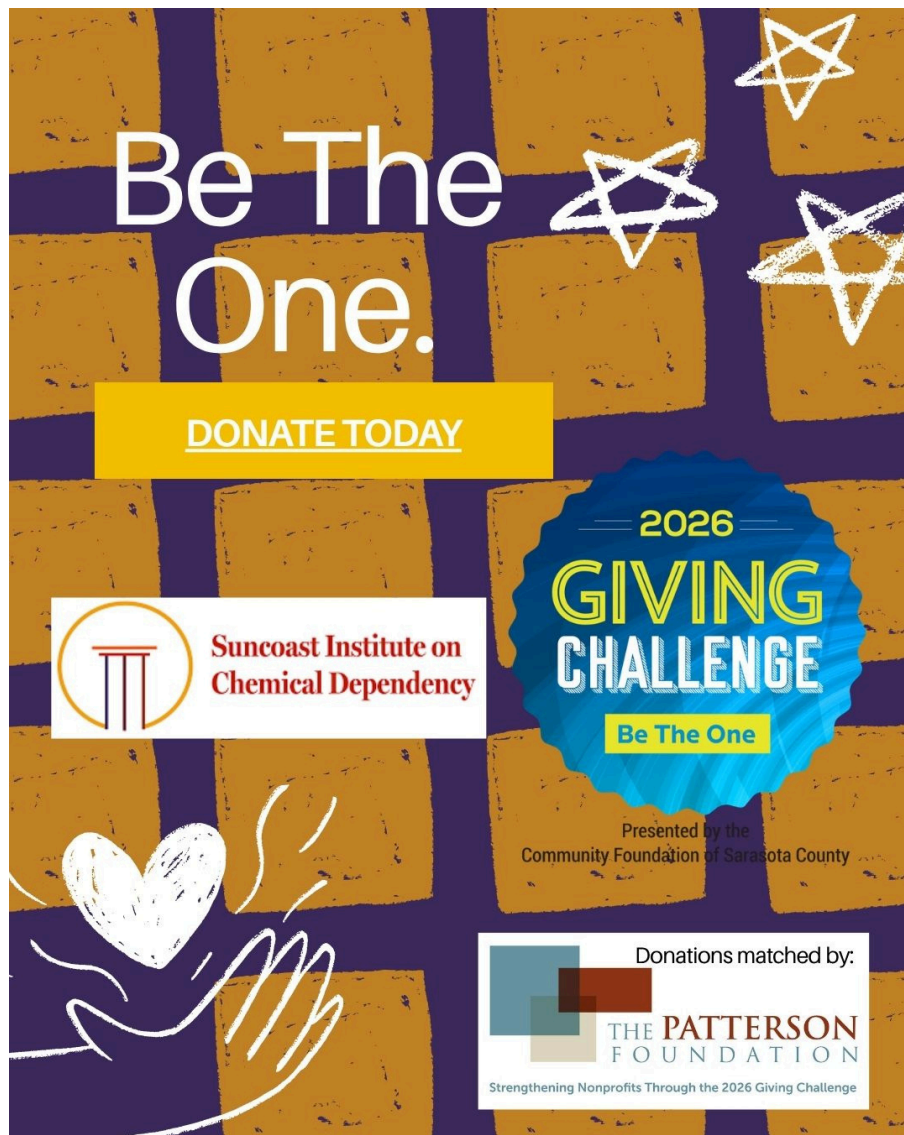
We are grateful to have been part of such an inspiring morning and to stand alongside an organization making a lasting difference in the lives of so many. Whether you ran, volunteered, or simply came out to cheer, your presence contributed to a powerful reminder: every act of support helps strengthen a family—and every family deserves to feel like heroes.



May every step we take echo a promise: that every child-- loved, unseen, hurting-- matters deeply, and we choose to care.



## Upcoming Opportunity to Support: Giving Challenge 2026



Here's your opportunity to make an even bigger difference: The Patterson Foundation will match donations between \$25 and \$100 during the 24-hour giving event—doubling the impact of your generosity and helping support the causes that matter most to you!

*Thank you!*

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| SUNCOAST INSTITUTE ON<br>CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY                                                                                                                                                                               | 941-479-0520                                          |
|  <a href="http://www.sicdfl.org">www.sicdfl.org</a>  | Bible Verse of the Quarter:<br><u>Isaiah 43:18-19</u> |