

2025 DEC CONFERENCE

SPEAKER INFORMATION (In alphabetical order)

Laurie Arwine

My name is Laurie Arwine and we lost our youngest son, Bailey, on April 5, 2022. He will forever be 22 years old. Bailey was poisoned by taking one pill he thought was Percocet but was really a fake pill that was laced with fentanyl. For the past two years, we have been working with law enforcement agencies and the US Attorney's office to bring the person responsible for Bailey's death to justice. Losing Bailey was the most painful and heartbreaking experience our family has ever gone through. Bailey was not only a son, he was a grandson, a brother, an uncle, a nephew, a cousin and close friend to many. We have faith there will be a purpose for our pain and hope by sharing Bailey's story with others, lives will be saved, and families will be spared the heartache and pain of losing someone they love.

Kevin Brownell, Assistant Polk County Attorney

Kevin Brownell is an Assistant County Attorney in Polk County, Iowa. Within the Polk County Attorney's Office, he has served in the Juvenile Division since 2006 working primarily on delinquency, child in need of assistance, and mental health commitment cases for the betterment of children, families, victims, and the community. He has served on the Polk County Alliance for Drug Endangered Children since 2013. He is a graduate of Creighton University School of Law in Omaha, Nebraska and he graduated from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois.

Tabatha Curtis, BS, CPSII

Tabatha Curtis is the former Director of the Franklin County Prevention Coalition. She has over 20 years of experience working in the field of prevention and over thirty-three years of experience in working with youth and families. Tabatha has extensive knowledge and experience as a trainer in the outcomes-based Strategic Prevention Framework planning process and was a coalition coach for the Partnership for Success grant for the state of Tennessee. Ms. Curtis also was responsible for mentoring coalition development within the state of Tennessee. She has served as a grant peer reviewer for the state of Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and the Drug Free Communities Grant program. Five years ago, Ms. Curtis embarked on developing Drug Endangered Children Response Communities within established prevention coalitions. Ms. Curtis had the insight of how both programs Drug Endangered Children and Prevention Coalitions were utilizing the same multi-sector/discipline model. Tennessee developed six response communities in 2020 and now has grown to twelve response communities in 2024 under her leadership as the TN. Bureau of Investigation- Drug Endangered Children Alliance statewide coordinator. Tennessee's model is a national promising practice. The programs Ms. Curtis oversees provides a multi-faucet approach to meeting the needs of children and families by implementing prevention and intervention programs in schools and extracurricular settings; ongoing community mobilization

integrating law enforcement into community organizations; parent engagement opportunities and/or referral to services related to substance use prevention. MS. Curtis is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University, a graduate of the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions Academy, a National Drug Endangered Children certified trainer, National Drug Endangered Children Alliance executive board member, a graduate of the TN. Bureau of Investigation Director's Leadership Academy and a Level II Certified Prevention Specialists.

Jim Harris, MSW, Ed.D.

Dr. Jim Harris is the owner of Opportunities Consulting Services and the Associate Director of the West Virginia Autism Training Center at Marshall University. He has had several roles in the health and human services field throughout his career as an early interventionist, parent educator, educational consultant, university professor, and behavioral health therapist. Dr. Harris has presented at a variety of conferences from the local to the international levels on such topics as behavioral intervention, parenting, positive behavior support, trauma-informed care, organizational change, and more. He has also worked with a variety of public and private entities including the Fred Rogers Company, United States Department of Education, and the United States Department of Justice.

Deric Kidd, President & Co-Founder

Deric Kidd is the President and Co-Founder of Become Their Voice. He is a devoted husband to Kathy, the Vice President and Co-Founder, a proud father to Paige, 29, and Sebastian, who is Forever 17. With a lifelong passion for soccer, Deric played for 40 years, which inspired him to coach youth soccer for a decade, helping to mentor and shape young athletes. In addition to his contribution to the community, Deric has been a mortgage banker for 25 years and has owned multiple businesses with his wife, Kathy. He finds strength in his faith, which fuels his commitment to making a lasting impact in both his personal and professional life.

Nicholas Pietrack, Founder/Director

Nick Pietrack (Pronounced: "Pea-Track") is the Founder/Director of the Open Arms Foundation of Jasper County, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting vulnerable children and families in crisis. In addition to Open Arms, he serves as an Assistant County Attorney in Jasper County, where he prosecutes felony drug, and felony child abuse cases as well as Child in Need of Assistance cases (CINAs). He is a member of the Jasper County DEC Team and the Vice President of the Iowa Chapter of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (Iowa APSAC). Pietrack brings extensive experience in addressing the intersection of criminal justice, child welfare, and community support.

Nikki Romer, LMSW, Director of Alliance Development

Nikki Romer is the Director of Alliance Development for National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (National DEC), where she is responsible for overseeing and expanding partnerships and relationships at the state, tribal, and local levels. She is also an adjunct professor teaching courses in the criminal justice department. Prior to joining National DEC, Nikki served as the lead forensic interviewer interviewing children who were victims of maltreatment or witnesses to crimes and served as an expert witness. She formed a multidisciplinary team (MDT) to help identify, respond to, and serve children who are victims of severe neglect, and she spearheaded efforts to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). Nikki also worked as a Victim Service Specialist with the Iowa Attorney General's Crime Victim Assistance Division and served for six years as a certified peace officer, where she was a patrol officer, hostage negotiator, and field training officer. Nikki earned her master's degree in social work from the University of Iowa in 2013 and is a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) in the state of Iowa.

Fred Rottnek, MD, MAHCM

Dr. Rottnek is a Professor and the Director of Community Medicine at SSM Health/Saint Louis University School of Medicine and the Program Director of the SSM Health/Saint Louis University Addiction Medicine Fellowship. His clinical practices include family medicine, addiction medicine, and correctional healthcare. He teaches in the School of Medicine and the School of Law. Board-Certified in Family Medicine and Addiction Medicine, he is the Medical Director for the Assisted Recovery Centers of American (ARCA) and Juvenile Detention in Family Court for the City of St. Louis. He serves on the board of the Community Health Commission of Missouri.

Bryant Strouse Special Agent in Charge

Bryant Strouse is a Special Agent in Charge (SAC) with the Iowa Department of Public Safety - Division of Narcotics Enforcement (DNE). SAC Strouse supervises DNE Zone 1 (Central Iowa), which covers the areas of Des Moines, Ames, Marshalltown, Ottumwa, and Osceola. SAC Strouse spent two years in Federal Law Enforcement before joining DNE. SAC Strouse has extensive experience conducting both State and Federal drug investigations and is a regular instructor at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy and the Iowa DPS Academy. Prior to coming to Central Iowa as the Special Agent in Charge, SAC Strouse served as a Special Agent with DNE assigned to the Fort Dodge field office where his primary focus was Federal methamphetamine cases.

Evangeline Watanabe MSW

Evangeline Watanabe began her role as Statewide Handle with Care Coordinator in March 2022. She completed her undergraduate education at Covenant College in Economic Community Development in 2012. She has a Master's in Social Work from the University of Tennessee with a concentration in organizational leadership. She also has earned certificates in Human Services Management, which is a graduate-level certification from the Network for Social Work Management and Supporting Students Exposed to Trauma from the 3C Institute.

Evangeline's work experience has ranged from case management to policy and procedure development for both corporate entities and non-profit organizations. Beginning in late 2020, she developed a trauma-informed program for children ages 8-13 with Dream Streets, a local non-profit, that collaborates weekly with the West Nashville Police Precinct's Community Engagement team. Both her educational background and work experience have her expertly positioned to develop frameworks and structures for the Handle with Care program to be implemented statewide.