

conversation starters

SUMMER 2024

The newsletter of PreventEd

Embracing Change and Transition

By Tom Etling



Tom Etling
Board President

Last week was pretty special. It was a week (after several months!) of transition. We said goodbye to two incredible forces for good, Nichole Dawsey and NJ Sterneck. And we welcomed (although she has helped lead us for over 16 years) Jenny Armbruster as our Interim Executive Director.

Transition is a complicated thing. And I am not even talking about the finance,

program, service and administrative complexities! Transitions are emotional. We are reflective, excited, confident, forward-thinking, and most of all thankful.

The Board of Directors is incredibly grateful for Nichole Dawsey's service to PreventEd. Nichole is a fearless fighter for our people and our community. She is collaborative and compromising, but don't confuse that for settling. She had a unique gift of knowing the destination and then crafting the journey while getting everyone invested and on board.

We have accomplished so much already and are looking forward to the second half of 2024. We are excited to expand our "In the Weeds" campaign, grow our Certified Peer Specialist services into the City of St. Louis, and embark on our strategic planning process to understand how we can better serve our clients and community in 2025 and beyond.

Jenny Armbruster is uniquely skilled to help us get there. The world of non-profits gets more complicated every day, and the opportunity to connect with all of the diverse perspectives of our region is something we will continue to embrace.

We could not provide the extraordinary level of service and support to our clients without all of you. Thank you. 🍃



Left to right: Tom Etling, PreventEd Board President; Leah Picker, PreventEd Board Vice President; Jenny Armbruster, PreventEd Interim Executive Director; Nichole Dawsey, PreventEd Former Executive Director; Tom Goldberg, PreventEd Board Member; Angie Winschel, PreventEd Board Member

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Where There's a Will, There's an NJ.

By Harriet Kopolow

August 5, 1996, was a lucky day for me. It was the day NJ Sterneck started working for NCADA (now PreventEd). Finding prevention specialists who could teach, loved kids, and were committed to our mission was never an easy job, but in June of 1996 I had an even bigger challenge. I wanted to hire someone who could move within a short period of time into a position where they could manage prevention programs and mentor staff. Frustrated with the lack of qualified people, I called my friend Joy Sterneck, shared my discouragement, and pleaded for her help in finding the right person. Joy responded, "What about my sister-in-law, NJ?" And, as they say, the rest is history!

Over the years, NJ has equipped hundreds of students with the skills and motivation to cope with stress, manage anger, make friends, resist peer pressure, make healthy choices, deal with bullies, and resist the temptation to become involved with alcohol and other drugs. She has been incredibly successful in her efforts. How do we know that? The teachers in NJ's classrooms attributed positive changes in their students to NJ. Through the years, principals, counselors, and teachers made sure that NJ returned to their schools to work with their students as they progressed through the grades.

NJ's warmth and intelligence combined with her skills in teaching, organizing, developing relationships and program management led her to many leadership roles within our Agency. As NJ enters retirement, she can reflect on the legacy that has resulted from an incredible career as well as the love and respect of the many whose lives she has touched. And we all know now that August 5, 1996, was really the day that our Agency and our community got lucky. We are deeply grateful to NJ for her leadership in all aspects of our work. We wish her rest, recreation, reflection on an amazing career, and new adventures as she enters retirement. She will truly be missed. 🍷





**SCAN TO SIGN UP
FOR TI UPDATES**



2024

Prevent + Ed

TI is back!

Since 1980, PreventEd has led Teen Institute (TI). A powerful camp that equips high school students to prevent substance misuse among their peers and communities while also cultivating leadership skills. This year, we are excited to announce that TI will take place at Camp Wyman from November 21-24.

WHY TI?

- Learn meaningful information to advocate for real change in your community.
- Earn Volunteer Hours for attending.
- Make lifelong friends (seriously)!
- Have fun!

TI also places an emphasis on fostering a space conducive to the development of relationships with diverse peers from all over the region. We include structured social activities where participants continue to hone their team-building skills. These sessions demonstrate and reinforce the fact that having fun does not need to revolve around the use of alcohol and drugs. Students leave TI prepared and empowered to be positive influences on their peers, their families, and their communities.

Scan the QR code above to sign up for TI updates and reminders or visit prevented.org/ti

For more questions and information, contact Grace DeClue, gdeclue@prevented.org or Ali Stambaugh, astambaugh@prevented.org, 314.962.3456

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please visit our website for the most up-to-date event information and registration: prevented.org/events

Getting In the Weeds on Cannabis Legalization

PreventEd is digging into the weeds to bring youth, young adults, their parents and other support systems the facts about cannabis. In the Weeds is a robust initiative that dispels myths and shares facts so adults across Missouri are equipped to have often uncomfortable but necessary conversations about cannabis use.

Head to prevented.org/intheweeds or scan the QR code to listen, download and submit your questions. And, continue checking back on the page as we'll be updating it regularly with new resources as laws and research about cannabis develop.

**in the
weeds**

Powered by PreventEd



Have a question? We'll answer it on the Preventable podcast. Scan the QR code above to submit!



Racial Equity Day Away 2024

By Amber Campbell

The Racial Equity Committee (REC) began the 3rd Annual Day Away with a discussion facilitated by Undo Bias, providing staff an opportunity to talk about the difficult questions surrounding current racial equity issues. Staff heard informative presentations from Clark E. Porter, MSW of U.S. Probation Office and Tymesha C. Buckner-Dobynes of St. Louis County Juvenile Office on racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Following a delicious lunch catered by Haveli, a locally owned traditional Indian restaurant, we concluded the day with a field trip to St. Louis Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum where staff experienced educator-led tours of each exhibit. 🗨️

Prevent+Ed

Trivia Night

Friday, October 4

Join us for a Trivia Night and Silent Auction!

Doors Open-6:00pm • Trivia Begins-7:00pm

Sunset Hills Community Center

Visit prevented.org/trivia for more information

YOP Tax Credits Available

We have 50% YOP tax credits available for eligible donations! These are tax credits for 50% of your donation that decrease your tax liability.

THINGS TO NOTE

- Tax credits are NOT deductions. Deductions reduce your income before taxes owed are assessed. Tax credits directly reduce the amount of tax you owe.
- Donations given through donor-advised funds are not eligible for tax credits (i.e. Schwab Charitable Fund).
- Tax credits are available on qualifying donations made through 3/31/2027.
- Eligible donations may be redeemed when you file your tax return.
- Any remaining tax credit balance can be used during the next five years.

For more information on making a YOP eligible gift, reach out to Mike Foley at mfoley@prevented.org or 314.912.9039.

PreventEd Gives Back

By Nichole Dawsey

PreventEd staff “gives back” to various nonprofits throughout the year. Sometimes these opportunities are gifts of goods or dollars, and other times we give the gift of service. This summer we decided to combine all three ways of giving back when we selected Life’s River in Washington, Missouri.

Life’s River is a shelter for unhoused families in Franklin County and is the first of its kind in the county! When it opened its doors in May, we noticed that the facility lacked an outdoor play area for its youngest residents.

PreventEd staff collected various items including bubbles, hula hoops, and various balls. We purchased a basketball hoop and a picnic table and assembled all the items on site. We are so thankful that Life’s River is now open and accepting families and are grateful to be their community partners. 🍀



Left to right: Courtney Hinton, Community Strategist III; Tracey Mack, Prevention Educator; Joyce Kariuki, Associate Director of Community Strategy; Stacie Zellin, Community Strategist III