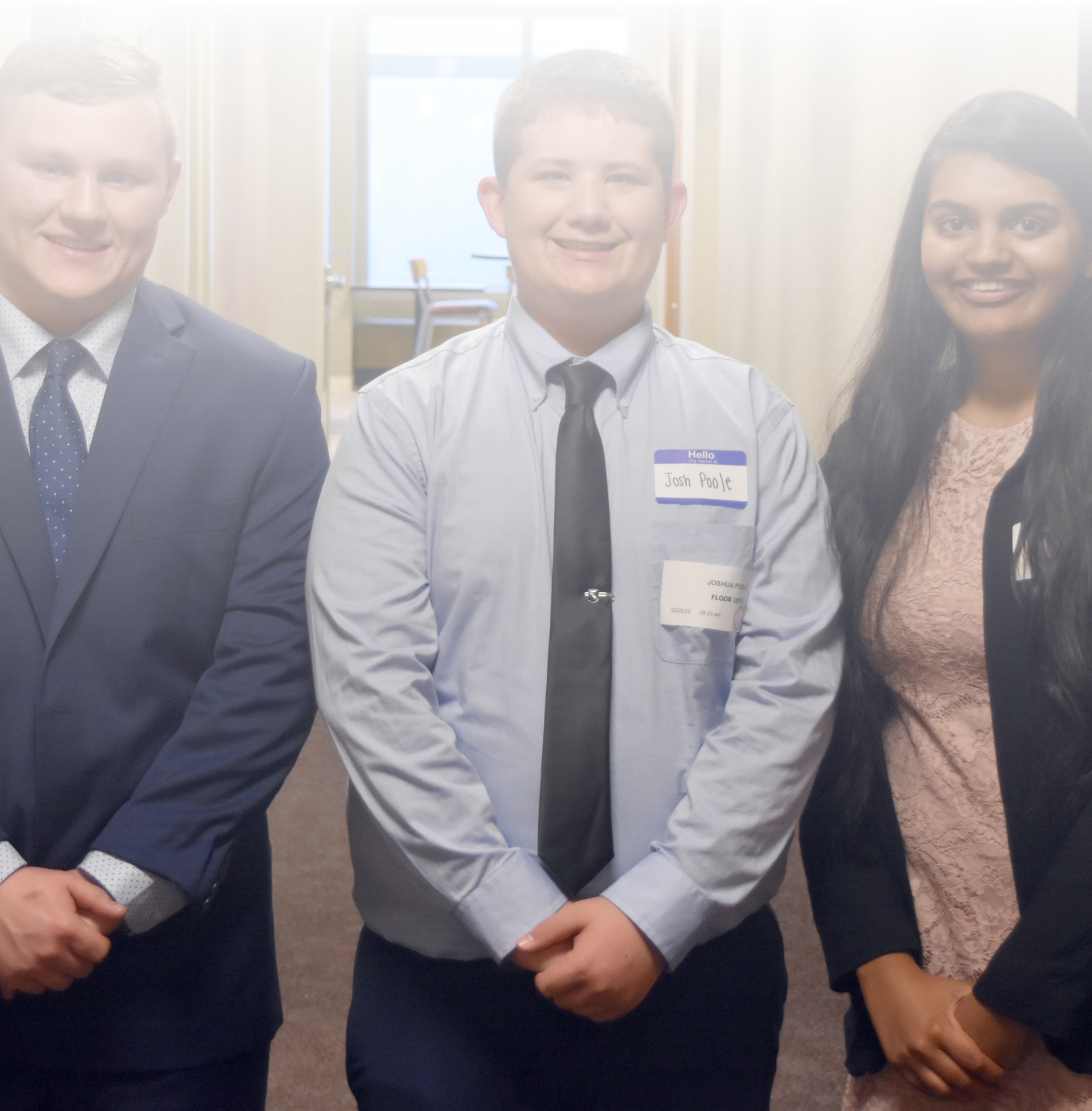


Prevention Action Alliance

Annual Report

July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020





Letter from the Executive Director

On behalf of the board of directors and the staff of Prevention Action Alliance, I want to thank you for helping us be responsive to the needs of Ohio's communities, families, young people, colleges and universities, and prevention professionals.

At the risk of sounding obvious, last year was unprecedented. A year ago, no one would have predicted the impact that the novel coronavirus would have on Ohio. All aspects of our society have been impacted, from how we work and learn, to how we celebrate and socialize. The work of Prevention Action Alliance was impacted as well. As we all were working to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Prevention Action Alliance team saw this time as an opportunity to build upon our work and execute the mission of the agency.

With your support, Prevention Action Alliance was able to respond quickly and effectively with new communication strategies and tools to provide education, empowerment, and advocacy to prevent substance misuse and promote mental health wellness. I am proud to share the outcomes of the Prevention Action Alliance team's innovative adaptations to the challenges created by the pandemic.

Within the first weeks of the pandemic, the Prevention Action Alliance team created Everyday Prevention, a daily email series designed to assist families with the new challenges they faced due to increased togetherness, and increases in anxiety, stress, and depression. Data indicated that the mental health of children, youth, and adults was negatively impacted due to changes in daily activities and structure, the fears of the virus, and isolation from friends and extended family. Everyday Prevention used the Search Institutes' proven 40 Developmental Assets as a foundation and provided parents and other caring adults with practical, easy to use, and proven strategies that develop assets for growth and success.

Another innovative response to the needs of our network members was the development and implementation of the Prevention Action Alliance Coffee Klatsch, a virtual gathering of prevention professionals and subject matter experts. Prevention professionals across the state shared their need for a platform to discuss new ideas, respond to changes in the work, and connect with one another. The initial Coffee Klatsch spotlighted the data that identified increased consumption of alcohol during states' shutdown orders and discussed the evidence-based strategies that prevention professionals and community coalitions could employ to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors. Since that initial Coffee Klatsch, this learning and engagement strategy has discussed problem gambling, racial reform, suicide prevention, and community engagement with hundreds of participants.

The coronavirus pandemic also impacted the annual We Are The Majority Rally. Through the creativity of the OYLPN Youth Council members and resourcefulness of the Prevention Action Alliance team, the annual We Are The Majority Rally was re-imagined and restructured to become a virtual event, live-streamed and viewed by thousands of youth and adult allies across the state and the nation. From the safety of their homes, youth celebrated and supported their healthy choices and reminded their communities that the majority of young people do not misuse alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other drugs.

I would be remiss if I did not spotlight the first, inaugural Prevention Advocacy to Action Summit that was held in December 2019, under the leadership of then-Executive Director Marcie Seidel. This innovative and educational advocacy summit made its debut and positively impacted the work of prevention professionals and community stakeholders as they worked together to address youth use of e-cigarettes. Completely supported by the development activities of the Prevention Action Alliance Board of Directors, the first Prevention Advocacy to Action Summit on Vaping launched a new platform for the agency as we continue to advocate on the behalf of prevention.

It was during this unprecedented year that we learned of Executive Director Marcie Seidel's decision to retire. We are forever in her debt for the leadership, vision, and dedication that she invested on behalf of Ohio communities, families, and professionals. As Marcie was fond of saying, "Everyone has a role in prevention" and I thank her for ensuring that Prevention Action Alliance was well positioned upon her retirement to continue its important work.

The death of George Floyd in May of 2019 shook the world and rekindled the flame that illuminates the ugly truth of racism that all too many people know all too well. We at Prevention Action Alliance are committed to doing our part against racism. We declared racism a public health and prevention priority, but the Prevention Action Alliance team didn't stop there. We have led Coffee Klatches and conversations about racism, intend to hold the Prevention Action and Advocacy Summit on Racism: Promoting equity through cultural competent prevention in May 2021, and are committed to learning more about and doing our part to combat systems of oppression and violence and to promote love, change, equality, equity, and unity. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we initiate conversations, share relevant research, and illustrate best practices.

Sincerely,

Fran Gerbig

Fran Gerbig
Executive Director



OUR MISSION

Leading healthy
communities in
the prevention
of substance
misuse and the
promotion of
mental health
wellness.

Awareness

The world is constantly evolving around us and with those evolutions come new substances, new trends for drug use and mental health issues, and new tools and strategies for preventing substance misuse and promoting mental health wellness. At Prevention Action Alliance, we work to raise awareness about the issues that affect everyday people, families, and communities.

Supporting Everyday Prevention

Everyone has a role in prevention, and prevention can happen every day. In order to support everyday prevention in a virtual world, we created Everyday Prevention. Everyday Prevention shared practical tips for implementing the Developmental Assets Framework by Search Institute.

We shared 40 tips, one for each of the 40 Developmental Assets. During the 2019–2020 fiscal year, 283 people from nine states signed up to receive daily Everyday Prevention emails. Afterward, we surveyed participants to see how effective and useful the campaign was. 84 percent of survey respondents said the campaign increased their awareness of how to engage with youth, and 88 percent said Everyday Prevention increased their awareness of the positive benefits of the Developmental Assets.

Keeping Parents and Teachers in the Know!

The 2019–2020 fiscal year saw a lot of upheaval in families and schools. Not only did COVID-19 shut down schools across the country, but the pandemic created a surge of mental and behavioral health issues. To respond to this surge, we created parent and teacher tips to help adjust to the new normal.

These Know! tips help parents, educators, and other caring adults play their role in prevention by protecting the young person in their lives from unhealthy behaviors, including alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. The COVID-19 pandemic puts young people and parents under incredible stress, and we shared ways they can combat feelings of stress, loneliness, isolation, anxiety, and depression. During the 2019 fiscal year, we shared these tips with more than 60,000 parents and teachers monthly.

Preventing Problem Gambling

Ohio for Responsible Gambling, which Prevention Action Alliance supports, launched the Get Set Before You Bet public awareness campaign in 2015. This campaign addresses the risk of problem gambling by highlighting warning signs of problem gambling and encouraging people to get help if they need it. Ohio for Responsible Gambling also ran the Change the Game campaign, which raises awareness about youth gambling and helps adults prevent youth gambling.

To raise awareness among their target audiences, the campaigns ran pre-roll video, social media, display, and search ads. In the 2020 fiscal year, the two campaigns' ads were viewed more than 24 million times. Additionally, more than 4,000 people took the Get Set Before You Bet quiz and more than 1,200 people visited the Community Toolkit.

Helping Parents through 2020

“Prevention Action Alliance is taking the lead in providing parents with these not-easy-to-have conversations but breaking them down into manageable talks.”

—Amy Macechko
Health and Wellness
Coordinator,
Talawanda School
District



Know! To Thrive In Uncertain Times

Teachers, we encourage you to share this Know! tip with parents in your network to help them guide their teens and tweens during this pandemic.

We know that for many tweens and teens, their social connectedness is what drives them. When their social lives are not only disrupted but literally stopped in their tracks, it can have devastating consequences. At this point, the novelty of being out of school has likely worn off, and the reality of social distancing has set in. And while being six feet apart or hunkered down in our homes slows the spread of this virus, the physical and mental implications can include isolation and loneliness.

This ongoing isolation and loneliness can lead to **depression**, which can in turn lead to numerous adverse mental health and physical impacts, such as:

- Feelings of sadness, anxiety, and hopelessness
- Increased irritability
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Feelings of fatigue—even after plenty of sleep
- Trouble concentrating and completing assigned schoolwork
- Aches and pains for no apparent reason (headaches, stomachaches, cramps)
- New or increased use of alcohol or other drugs
- Thoughts of self-harm, including suicide

Study after study shows the importance of social connectedness to one's physical and mental health. While experts typically encourage youth to put down the electronics and enjoy in-person interactions, these are unique circumstances. People of all ages are encouraged to grab their electronic gadgets

Building a First-Class Prevention Workforce



**3,185 People
Trained**

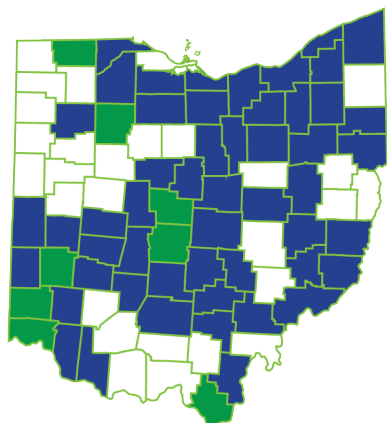


**6,862 Hours of
Continuing
Education Provided**



**57 Possible New
Prevention
Specialists**

Statewide Impact



■ Training hosted/attendees came from here

■ Attendees came from here

54 In Person

31 Online

85 Total
Trainings
Provided

1,962

People **trained
online** during the
COVID-19
pandemic

118

**Prevention Action &
Advocacy Summit**
attendees learned how
to prevent vaping.

283

Preventionists from
9 states took part in
our **Everyday
Prevention**
initiative

**Prevention
Action Alliance**

Learn more about
Prevention Action Alliance at
preventionactionalliance.org

Educate

At its core, prevention is about educating people to make healthy decisions, but changing behavior isn't always easy. It can take concerted effort to correct misinformation, teach positive coping skills, instill values and principles of healthy decision making, or drive awareness of problems that exist in the communities where we live and thrive. To help our prevention partners in their quest to serve their communities, we provide educational resources and support to thousands of prevention professionals and organizations.

Those resources include:

- Fact sheets and infographics
- Training services
- Tips for parents and teachers
- Information about prevention, addiction, and various substances
- Tools for communicating about underage drinking and social hosting
- Resources for raising awareness about prescription drug misuse
- And more

Training Ohio's Prevention Workforce

One of the fundamental ways we support prevention across communities is by developing the prevention workforce. During fiscal year 2020, between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020, we provided more than 3,000 people the skills and strategies they needed to prevent substance misuse and promote mental health wellness in their community. These workshops, conferences, webinars, and other skill-building sessions ranged in content from fundamental prevention knowledge to emerging solutions for combatting the youth vaping epidemic to how to support schools, parents, and children as they resume school during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Helping Families Across Ohio



Amy Macechko

Amy Macechko always had a passion for working with teenagers and communities. She studied at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and began her career teaching high school psychology in Illinois. When she and her husband moved to Ohio, she found herself chasing those same passions in a different way. In 2006, she came to work as the health and wellness coordinator at the Talawanda School District and as the project coordinator for the Coalition for a Healthy Community – Oxford Area.

"I always had a passion for mental health and working with young people," Amy said. "I was looking for opportunities to work with youth and the community, and

this was a perfect blend of what I wanted to do."

In her role, she helps the parents, community, and school district staff in supporting the healthy development of all young people in the school district. It's a big job—the Talawanda School District serves approximately 3,000 students in not only Oxford, but also the surrounding Oxford, Milford, Hanover, and Reily Townships. Her role frequently involves collaborating with businesses, doctors and pediatricians, clergy, government leaders, parents, teachers, school administrators, and many others.

To help her do that, she relies on Know! Parent Tips. Know! Parent Tips are a free resource from Prevention Action Alliance for parents, teachers, and others who work with young people. They share timely information about how to have conversations with young people about substances, mental health, and a wide host of other health-related topics.

Amy sends each, twice-monthly Know! Parent Tip to the Talawanda School District, coalition members, and a list of community members.

"Know! Parent Tips are a great tool to open the door and show the shared interests we have with our partners," Amy said. "We all have a role to play in prevention. It is vital that every caring adult assesses who are those young people that I can talk to and help."

"Parents and caregivers are the single greatest protective factor in the lives of young people," Amy said. "It's more important now than ever that they know this. Our youth are getting messages left and right and some are true and some aren't. As adults, we have to make sure that we're giving them accurate information."

Over the years, Amy has said she's seen and heard parents interact in different ways with the Know! Parent Tips she helps disseminate. One parent, she said, uses the Know! tips as a checklist to ensure that she's having conversations about current trends influencing her children—influences like e-cigarettes, underage drinking, cyberbullying, and more.

Now, she appreciates that the Know! tips address other current trends, including how to talk to kids about the George Floyd protests and COVID-19 as well as how to host fun, social, and virtual neighborhood activities.

"Prevention Action Alliance is taking the lead in providing parents with these not-easy-to-have conversations but breaking them down into manageable talks," Amy said. "What's happening in the world today is having a tremendous impact on the mental health of our youth. When young people are anxious or scared, they turn to substance use or their mental health worsens. It's critical that we help our young people."

"The Know! tips provide us with relevant, timely material that we can share with parents, caregivers, and other caring adults who interact with the young people in the Talawanda School District," said Amy. "Know! tips empower adults in our communities to know the role they play in prevention and give them the talking points they need to have these difficult conversations with the young people in their lives."

Lending Youth a Voice

Photo: Jade Eilers

"It's so challenging to figure out who you are. We are constantly told we are too young to do anything yet it's our generation that's screwing things up. We are often confused and frustrated by this. When you don't know what you stand for or who you are, you can get pushed into the wrong directions easily."

—Jade Eilers,
Ohio Youth-Led
Prevention Network
Youth Council
Member and Miss
Ohio High School
America 2020

Empower

The Prevention Action & Advocacy Summit

We hosted the first-ever Prevention Action & Advocacy Summit to assemble experts and resources to create and share policy-based solutions to the youth e-cigarette epidemic that has swept the country. This day-long summit brought together more than 180 prevention leaders to learn emerging practices in the prevention of youth e-cigarette use. It also brought emerging leaders, such as Logan Kazelman.

Logan, a member of the Ohio Youth-Led Prevention Network Youth Council at Prevention Action Alliance, presented at the first-ever Prevention Action & Advocacy Summit. He taught 40 prevention leaders about the different kinds of e-cigarettes, the health history of e-cigarettes, and how manufacturers market their sleek devices to teens and young adults.

The second Prevention Action & Advocacy Summit will be held virtually in May 2021. The topic will be racism, and we'll work to address disparities in prevention, promote cultural competency, and examine social determinants of health. Sign up for updates about the Prevention Action & Advocacy Summit on Racism to stay informed.

Funding Innovative Prevention Programs

We awarded 42 grants for a total of \$386,016.

Those grants funded a wide array of activities, including supporting youth leaders in prevention and sending them to Washington D.C., building community capacity across the state to prevent problem gambling and promote responsible gambling, and expanding or jump-starting prevention strategies across the state—even when those strategies had to go virtual to meet the needs of their communities during a pandemic.



A problem
well stated is
a problem half
solved.

Charles F. Kettering



Creating the Next Generation of Leaders

Roshan Kumar was shocked when he read about two cases of human trafficking that occurred near his home in Dublin, Ohio. He thought he lived in a community that didn't have to deal with things like that.

"I was 14 years old at the time," Roshan said. "The reality check that came from my research shocked me, and I saw it as a way to help my community."

He talked to his mother, who recommended he join the Asian American Community Services. At 14 years old, he joined AACCS as a youth ambassador to raise awareness about human trafficking. In that youth-led prevention role, he learned about the Ohio Youth-Led Prevention Network at Prevention Action Alliance and applied to join the OYLPN Youth Council.

The OYLPN Youth Council consists of up to 25 high school students from every region of Ohio. It advocates for youth-led prevention with state legislators, empowers teens to stand up for their communities, promotes protective factors in peers' lives to prevent drug use, and organizes and leads the We Are The Majority Rally, an annual event that draws in thousands of teens to celebrate the healthy choices youth make. Roshan went to his first WATM Rally not as a participant but as a leader.

"Not only was it the first time I had ever been at the We Are The Majority Rally ... but it was also my first time on such a big stage in front of so many people," Roshan said. "My fellow council members and adult ally at the time helped me work through my initial anxiety, gave me a nice start and a place to collect my thoughts, and I was able to present really well." Participating in the OYLPN Youth Council for four years has helped Roshan grow as a person, public speaker, advocate, leader, and a future doctor.

"I didn't always use to be a leader," Roshan said. "I was shy... always second-guessed myself. I kept to myself a lot, but being a part of OYPLN forced me to take a leadership role. I was able to grow from a pretty shy kid to someone who was able to take the role of leadership and continue and grow as OYLPN continued."

"I'm going to become an osteopathic physician, and a lot of being an osteopathic physician comes from being able to talk to your community and being able to connect with your community as well as possible," said Roshan. "OYLPN and PAA have both given me opportunities to talk with various people across Ohio whether it be normal kids around different schools in different parts of Ohio or it be school principals or it be the fellow leaders I have to interact with on a month-to-month basis in the Youth Council."

Building Confidence

Photo: Roshan Kumar
at the 2019 We Are
The Majority Rally

"I was shy... always second-guessed myself. I kept to myself a lot, but being a part of OYPLN forced me to take a leadership role. I was able to grow from a pretty shy kid to someone who was able to take the role of leadership and continue and grow as OYLPN continued."

—Roshan Kumar,
Ohio Youth-Led
Prevention Network
Youth Council
Member

Advocate

Advocacy is the act of lending your voice to improve the lives of others. When you educate lawmakers about prevention and the importance of supporting public health, you help create a safer, healthier world for families and communities throughout Ohio. At Prevention Action Alliance, we work with those willing to lend their voices by connecting them to lawmakers and regulators, giving them information and data about prevention, providing news about prevention advocacy, and more. To help prevention advocates, we provide:

- Training and workshops on how to advocate for prevention
- Statistics about prevention, addiction, and drug misuse
- Infographics to illustrate complex prevention topics
- Ways to contact your legislator and opportunities to meet that person
- Monthly advocacy webinars that examine the state of prevention advocacy in Ohio
- Weekly advocacy updates about legislation, prevention news, and opportunities for advocacy

Building a Safer, Healthier Ohio

As a statewide prevention organization, we're heavily invested in the prevention needs of communities throughout Ohio. Over time, we've found that there are several issues impacting our state as a whole. Accordingly, our priorities for prevention are:

- Ensuring that prevention experts and other key stakeholders have a seat at the table when public policy affecting prevention is being considered.
- Reducing the ability of youth to secure alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs to prevent or delay the onset of drug use.
- Building local capacity to solve local problems through the use of policies, programs, and processes.
- Addressing disparities in behavioral health to improve equity for communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
- Increasing and sustaining prevention budgets to ensure there are a sufficient number of resources and experts available.
- Increasing mental health education across the lifespan, including by having certified mental health educators using evidence-based programs in our schools.



Advocate for Families across Ohio



Thom, Bonnie, and Teddy Shuman.

Bonnie Shuman has been coming to the Ohio Statehouse for three years to advocate for families struggling with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). But, really, she's been advocating for families like hers for 28 years.

It was 33 years ago that she and her husband Thom saw a photo of a young boy, about 18 months old, who needed a family to adopt him. They agreed to open their home to Teddy, who has FASD.

FASDs are a group of conditions that occur in a person whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. They can cause a range of issues, the CDC says, including hyperactivity, learning disabilities, speech and language delays, problems with the heart, kidneys, or bones, and others. FASDs can cause these issues to become more profound.

"There are a lot of symptoms of FASD, and they vary from person to person just like they would in other diseases," said Bonnie. "The important thing to know is there's no safe amount of alcohol to drink. And it's 100 percent preventable."

Teddy's more severe mental and developmental health issues, which began when he was turning 7, multiplied stress in the Shuman home.

Bonnie and Thom had to restrain Teddy at times. Because of his unpredictable meltdowns, they couldn't trust babysitters to care for him, take him grocery shopping, or take family vacations. They had to contact agencies, residential facilities, advocate for Teddy's needs, travel to and from therapy, and fight against institutions that held so much power over his care.

"You basically lose life," said Thom, Bonnie's husband. "If we went to Thanksgiving and Teddy was ready to leave, you needed to go right then. If he had a blowup at church (where Thom preached), Bonnie would have to get him out of there or I would have to interrupt the worship service."

"Your whole life turns upside down," Thom said. "At the same time, this is your child. You love them, and you try to provide them with the best life you can."

While logistical strains are immense, the emotional strains are more exacting.

"At times," Bonnie said. "I did not love my son."

Like many parents raising a child with a disability, Bonnie and Thom turned to a support group to help navigate the challenges presented by FASD and give them an outlet for advocating for children like theirs. The group spoke to teachers, nurses, Head Start organizations, foster parents, and others.

Finally, after 14 years of placements in three states, Teddy was court-ordered into

Catalyzing Change

"Bonnie is the driving force behind this bill. Without her energy and effort and determination, this wouldn't have gone anywhere. PAA was the catalyst that helped it take place."

—Thom Shuman, advocate for prevention.

the Columbus Developmental Center. Bonnie and Thom struggled with driving from Cincinnati to Columbus, so they packed up and moved to the capital city.

It was at Columbus Developmental Center where things finally started to click, according to Bonnie.

"We found a community that really understood what FASD was," said Bonnie. "For the first time, Teddy had relationships with peers, staff that understood him; and he developed into this delightful, wonderful, capable person."

Around the same time, Bonnie felt that the community around her was catching on to FASD, how it was caused, and what few resources were available to families. She joined the Ohio FASD Steering Committee and, in addition to raising awareness, she advocated for policies to prevent FASD.

She decided on a simple idea—getting places that sell alcohol to put up signs that say "the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy may result in birth defects."

She set out alone but determined.

"When you have FASD in your life, you feel like you're on an island like you always have to do it alone," said Bonnie. "You hear all these stories about families getting bills passed, but I found out it doesn't work like that. I realized I couldn't do it alone, and I was feeling really hopeless."

"That's when Fran and J.P. came into my life and where Prevention Action Alliance came to be a real friend to me," Bonnie continued.

Prevention Action Alliance Executive Director Fran Gerbig invited Bonnie to bring her testimony to PAA's annual Advocacy Day, which connects advocates for prevention like Bonnie to state legislators. J.P. Dorval, PAA's advocacy and public policy liaison, helped connect Bonnie to information, resources, and legislators.

Bonnie took her idea and, with dozens of advocates from across Ohio, descended upon the Ohio Statehouse with data, stories, and a will to improve health outcomes. After two years of advocating with PAA on behalf of her bill, it was introduced as Senate Bill 340, sponsored by Senators Stephanie Kunze and Teresa Fedor. SB340 would create a warning about FASDs at the point of sale for alcohol products.

"I just hope this legislation will start the ball rolling," said Bonnie. "This whole thing will not be an end, it's a start of working to address FASD."

Bonnie credits getting her bill introduced to luck—luck in finding senators who would listen to her and sponsor the bill, luck at serving on a committee with Fran, and luck at finding Prevention Action Alliance to help her.

"You have to have folks with you who know what they're doing or who can find out very accurate information," said Bonnie. "You need someone who can connect the dots."

"Bonnie is the driving force behind this bill. Without her energy and effort and determination, this wouldn't have gone anywhere," said Thom. "PAA was the catalyst that helped it take place."

Meet the Board of Directors



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Sean Oziegbe
Civil Operator at the Ohio National
Guard Counterdrug Task Force

Nathan Krætz
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Our Finances

Income

Federal Grants	\$1,049,136
Other Grants.....	\$1,524,607
Product Sales.....	\$24,183
Training Services	\$71,804
Other	\$7,130
Total	\$2,676,860

Expenses

Program Services.....	\$2,534,744
General and Administrative.....	\$202,288
Fundraising.....	\$144
Total	\$2,737,176

Investment Income

Investment Income	\$30,604
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Change in Net Assets

Net Assets—Beginning of Year	\$1,515,681
Decrease in Net Assets	\$29,712
Net Assets—End of Year.....	\$1,485,969



Prevention Action Alliance

Thank you for playing your role in prevention!

The vital work that we do wouldn't be possible without support from our prevention partners. We thank the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services for playing its role in prevention.

