

DRUG-FREE ASHLEY COUNTY COALITION

MEETING MINUTES

04-08-2025

INTENDED OUTCOMES OF MEETING:

Share status of community connections/meetings, upcoming events and build knowledge/capability.

AGENDA ITEMS:

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS: D-FAC Website: <https://www.drugfreeac.org>

The meeting of the DRUG-FREE ASHLEY COUNTY COALITION was called to order at 4:00 p.m. on April 8, 2025, at UAM-CTC in person and on ZOOM by Mike Neal, Vice Chair 2024/2025 and DFC Project Director.

IN PERSON		ZOOM
Tempest Alexander	Jennifer Johnson	MSGT Joshua Adams
Stacey Barnett	Rayce Johnson	Alexia Anderson
Kathay Brown (Guest)	Ryker Johnson	Allyson Carter
Janie Carter	Beau Kilcrease	Dr. Scott Bransford
Roman James Hebert	Mike Neal	DeVonda Brown
Sherri Hendrix	Arlyn Richards	Tyisha Johnson-Fletcher
Katie Hernandez	Orlando Robinson (Guest)	Sharron Mims
Victoria Herrera	Linda Rushing	Giyamenia Mondragon
Harry Hillier	Sarah Staggs	Arnetta Pugh
	Elizabeth White	Lisa Riels
		Terri Rogers
		O'Brennan Moss (Guest)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from the March 11, 2025, meeting were approved as written with Linda Rushing initiating the motion and Elizabeth White following with a second. The motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/INTRODUCTIONS: In-person visitors from Crossett Youth Center, Orlando Robinson and Kathay Brown were introduced.

NEW D-FAC MEMBERS: New members are Dr. Scott Bransford, McKenzi and Brandi Reynolds.



MARCH EVENTS:

- MARCH 10** Ray Renosa made presentations to Hamburg High School and Crossett High School 11th and 12th grade students about his life that included the abandonment of him and four siblings on the streets of San Antonio, Texas, when he was only two years old. He touched the hearts of students and adults at both Hamburg and Crossett High Schools with his encouragement and determination to rise above his unfortunate childhood. These assemblies were sponsored through a mini-grant from the Region 4 Partnerships for Success, Community Empowerment Council, Inc., in response to students' requests to hear inspiring personal experience stories.
- MARCH 13** Students and volunteers participated in the Arts in the Park at Crossett Library. D-FAC had a table of give-away items, educational information, and awesome balloon animals.
- MARCH 20** In conjunction with the Crossett Area Chamber of Commerce quarterly Lunch and Learn, Chairman Eric Shoffner presented information on the Drug-Free Ashley County Coalition and information pertinent to the county in terms of substance abuse and overdose deaths. [The scheduled presentation to be made by Camp Alliance on the AR Student Empowerment Project and Operation Saturation Narcan training by Called2Duty and the AR Drug Director's Office was cancelled due to unsafe driving conditions caused by ominous wildfires.] Naloxone training and distribution from the UA Criminal Justice Institute resources was made available after the conclusion of the Lunch & Learn session.

PROGRAM

Before introducing Mr. Orlando Robinson, Director of the E. C. Crossett Youth Center, Mike quoted Dr. Bruce Perry who said, "The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change, and the most powerful therapy is human love." Mike stated that he sees the collaboration and partnership with the Youth Center as a valuable key to a long-term goal of the Drug-Free Ashley County Coalition. That goal is providing "safe places" for our youth to congregate and healthy substance-free activities.

Mr. Robinson presented information about the newly renovated facility located at 3rd Street and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. He stated that the Center has been deeded to the City of Crossett and is to be used for the education and growth of our youth. Mr. Robinson said that in prior years, the Center was considered to be primarily for youth from the Black communities, but that it is no longer to be segregated. It is for the whole community and will have after-school programs, educational and fun programs. Retired teachers will teach reading and assist with schoolwork. There will be a library and reading area as well as a computer lab and games. He stated that UAMS has a program that will be offered that is an intervention for teen pregnancy. Additionally, the program will provide education in infant care for young mothers. He stated that he sees the partnership of the Youth Center with D-FAC to be a good thing for the community and for Ashley County.

Mr. Robinson stated that the target age for youth is up to age 18, but activities will be grouped by appropriate ages. He said the Board of Directors is working on securing funds for summer programs but that this first year things will be limited. He encouraged people to come visit the Center and to volunteer to teach skills to the youth. He mentioned that many skills and especially social skills

are becoming extinct and that it is up to us adults to teach our youth the things our parents and other adults taught us. He asked for suggestions and ideas and stated that he does not have a spirit of being threatened by someone who has an idea – he is open. Mr. Robinson recognized Board member Sarah Stagg who stated she is willing to conduct yoga classes for the youth.

Mr. Robinson introduced Ms. Kathay Brown who is the Secretary of the Board. She commented that she has recently moved back to Crossett and stated that we must come together because a lot of good can come from working together.

Mike added that he hopes a mentoring program can be part of the partnership D-FAC and the Youth Center can accomplish. With that in mind, he introduced the “Invasion” (a Spring Celebration Block Party) he and the Youth Center Board are planning for May 10 at the Youth Center. He said there will be bouncy houses, face painting, balloon animals, a basketball tournament, food and fun! MSGT Adams with the ARNG Counterdrug Unit will be available that day to assist. Tyiesha Johnson-Fletcher is on the Youth Center Board and has designed a flyer that will be distributed a couple of weeks before the event.

DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS/UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Tempest Alexander recognized a visitor, Mr. O'Brennan Moss from Future Builders, Inc., in Little Rock. Mr. Moss is the coordinator of their tobacco prevention program and is working with the Boys and Girls Clubs in Jefferson County. He has an area of seven counties: Ashley, Bradley, Cleveland, Drew, Grant, Jefferson, and Lincoln. He is very willing to get better acquainted and work with Ashley County to learn more about the Coalition and ways we can work together. He asked for information to volunteer for upcoming events, and Mike will work with him and Tempest to determine future collaborations.
- A Nominating Committee of Linda Rushing, Ephraim Johnson, and Dennis Maxwell was appointed to bring a recommendation for Vice Chairman before the membership, but to date, no one has been identified for the position. The committee will continue to solicit the right person for this important position. Anyone interested in learning more about the position should speak to someone on the committee or any current officer.
- Sarah Stagg has agreed to accept the Secretary/Treasurer position and therefore has been officially appointed by the Executive Committee.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

APRIL 26 Drug Takeback Saturday -- Takeback is from 10 am to 2 pm in participating locations.

Volunteers are needed for Gammel's Pharmacy in Crossett.

Members were encouraged to contact Hamburg Police Department and Wilmot Mayor's Office to volunteer at those locations.

MAY 10 Spring Celebration at Crossett Youth Center, 3rd Street & Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

MAY 15 Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse Prevention Conference; 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Crossett Community Building, 105 West 2nd

To register, contact Phoenix Youth & Family Services at 870-364-1676

or email kdavis@phoenixyouth.com or apugh@phoenixyouth.com

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION - More information to follow!

JULY 16-17 NEXT GEN CONFERENCE – More information to follow! Parents and youth ages 13-19 are encouraged to attend (expenses paid).

Program presenters are needed for 2025! Please let Eric, Mike and/or your Sector Leaders know if you are feeling like it is your turn to express why your sector is important to the work of the D-FAC Coalition!

COALITION SECTOR	REPRESENTATIVE-LEADER	PRESENTATION-PROGRAM
Youth	McKenzi Reynolds	
Parents	Mandy Morris	
Law Enforcement	HPD Chief Johnny Oliver	January 2025: Chief Oliver/Officer Kelley
Education	Tracy Streeter	
Businesses	Kristi Stocker	
Media	Dennis Maxwell	
Youth-Serving Organizations	(Position to be filled)	Feb. 2025: Dr. Lula Williams & Staff, FDE, Inc. March 2025: DeVonda Brown, CASA April 2025: Orlando Robinson, Crossett Youth Center
Faith-Based Organizations	(Position to be filled)	
Civic & Volunteer Groups	Sherri Maxwell Hendrix	
Healthcare Professionals	Dr. Barron Griffin	
State, local & tribal agencies	Sharron Mims	
Treatment	Yolanda Johnson-Martin	

NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at UAM College of Technology-Crossett

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m. and minutes were submitted by Janie Carter.