

# DRUG-FREE ASHLEY COUNTY COALITION

## MEETING MINUTES

05-13-2025

### 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 May 13, 2025, at UAM-CTC in person and on ZOOM by Mike Neal, Vice Chair 2024/2025 and DFC Project Director.

IN PERSON		ZOOM
Officer Robert Black	Tank Morris	
Sabrina Blankenship	Mike Neal	Kaylee Box (Guest)
Kathay Brown (Guest)	McKenzi Reynolds	Vivian Guimbellot
Janie Carter	Arlyn Richards	Allyson Carter
Katherine Fenison (Guest)	Lisa Riels	Katie Hernandez
Roman James Hebert	Linda Rushing	Giyermina Mondragon
Sherri Hendrix	Daniel Shelton	Eric Shoffner
Harry Hillier	Sarah Stagg	Chad Sims
Jennifer Johnson	Elizabeth White	
Rayce Johnson	Jazzmine Yarborough (Guest)	
Ryker Johnson	Quentin Yarborough (Guest)	
Dennis Maxwell	Stephanie Yarborough (Guest)	

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes from the April 8, 2025, meeting were approved as written with Officer Robert Black initiating the motion and Ephraim Johnson following with a second. The motion carried.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/INTRODUCTIONS:** In-person visitors Katherine Fenison, Quentin, Jazzmin, and Stephanie Yarborough were introduced.

**NEW D-FAC MEMBERS:** There have been no new members since the last meeting.



### MAY EVENTS:

**MAY 1-9**

D-FAC Coordinators Lisa Riels and Liz White held end of school pizza parties for the Student Leadership Groups.

**MAY 10**

Mike reported on the Fun Day Spring Celebration held in partnership with the E. C. Crossett Youth Center Board of Directors at the Crossett Youth Center on Saturday, May 10. In spite of the rainy weather, the event was a great success. At least 76 individuals attended, and Tempest Alexander, Project Success Coordinator for the Community Empowerment Council, provided the lunch meal of hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, drinks, and cupcakes. Emily Moffatt, owner of the Trieschmann House, conducted an Escape Room experience that was a big hit. Crossett Leadership Youth have been volunteering to help Emily clean up her newly acquired facility as an event venue. She reciprocated by setting up and operating the Escape Room for a unique and engaging activity during the Fun Day. Adults, teens, and youth played outdoor games and kids enjoyed Bouncy Houses. The vendors who provided information about their organizations were Dr. Lula Williams with Family Development Enterprise, Phoenix Youth and Family Services, Community Empowerment Council, and Drug-Free Ashley County Coalition. In addition to providing the facility and playground for the Fun Day, Mr. Orlando Robinson provided his stage, sound system, and musical recordings to provide a festive neighborhood block party atmosphere. Mike said the event opened the door for a continued partnership with the Youth Center. He is also in hopes a similar "safe place" for youth can be planned for Hamburg.

Board Member and Secretary, Kathay Brown, announced that the plan for the summer program at the Youth Center will be for two days (probably Tuesdays and Thursdays) for youth who are school aged. She said they will be a need for adult volunteers and mentors. Registration and further information are available from Board members and Mr. Orlando Robinson, Center Director.

**BUSINESS:** A Nominating Committee of Linda Rushing, Ephraim Johnson, and Dennis Maxwell brought a recommendation for Eric Shoffner to serve a second two-year term as Chairman and for Sherri Maxwell Hendrix to serve as Vice Chairman before the membership. Daniel Shelton moved to accept the recommendation as a motion; Tank Morris seconded, and the motion passed.

### MEETING PLACE CHANGE:

A proposal was presented to change D-FAC membership meetings to noon time and to alternate between meetings in Hamburg and Crossett. Since the bylaws state we "will meet on the second Tuesday of each month," there is no need for a bylaw amendment to change the time and/or place. Members present agreed to try the new schedule. The discussion that followed was the following:

- It is a good idea to get more involvement from Hamburg

- It is worth a try
- Students (such as the leadership groups) might be able to attend
- Lunch is a good idea (Bring your own; chip in a few dollars; let alternating sectors provide lunch, etc.)
- Two locations may be available in Hamburg (Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist & First Baptist)
- New location in Crossett: E. C. Crossett Youth Center

**PROGRAM:** Daniel Shelton, Jr., introduced our guests Mrs. Katherine Fenison, Stephanie, Quentin, and Jazzmine Yarborough. Daniel said he began a rewarding and informative relationship with Mrs. Fenison when he moved to Ashley County. Later, he became acquainted with Quentin, his wife, Jazzmine, and his mother, Stephanie, several years ago in his role as a court advocate. Mrs. Fenison is Jazzmine’s grandmother. Mr. Shelton said he was very proud of Quentin for getting treatment for substance abuse and continuing his recovery journey. This was Quentin’s first presentation to tell “his story”. He and his family felt it is important for healing that he tells his story in hopes of helping others who might be struggling with addiction. Mr. Shelton made the remark that addiction can affect anyone – young or old; wealthy or poor; big city or rural. It is a brain disease and equally devastating no matter whom it attacks.

Quentin relayed that he graduated from Hamburg High School, attended UAM-CTC and became a certified welder, and then joined the U. S. Army. He was successful in the Army and progressed to the rank of sergeant (E-5). Unfortunately, he was involved in a Humvee accident that required three surgeries. It was after that disaster in 2019 that he became addicted to cocaine. His addiction led him to legal problems, and he even had to have an order of protection against him that separated him from his family. In 2021, he overdosed twice on Fentanyl and was brought back to life. His comment was, “But God...” He was blessed to be able to reach out to the Veteran’s Administration (VA) for drug treatment and is now in successful recovery and reunited with his wife and three children. During his ordeal, he had a network of supporters who believed in him and prayed for him. Stephanie stated that his family is very grateful to Mr. Shelton for being an excellent role model and for not giving up and always staying firm. His testimony is that he “is still here because God has a plan” for him. He stated that he is interested in becoming a Peer Support Specialist for the VA. When asked if he could give guidance to the Coalition in helping prevent substance misuse for youth, Quentin stated that helping them deal with trauma is critical.

Kathay Brown commended Quentin for his recovery and his statement that he “took responsibility” for his actions. She reminded the attendees that parents need to be open-minded and realize that the world has changed since we were teenagers. She encouraged us to refrain from comparing our kids and judging them, and she stated she has worked with at-risk kids and has ideas to share.

**SUGGESTIONS:** Sarah Stagg asked if the Coalition could take any action in support of students in the Hamburg School District who have lost fellow students tragically over the past year. Tank Morris offered that we could/should do something in memory of those who have passed away. Mike and others said that we can discuss the suggestion and see if there is something meaningful that we can do.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**JUNE 7 10 am – 2 pm; UAMS Health Fair;** New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, 309 N. Georgia St, Crossett

**JUNETEENTH CELEBRATIONS - Crossett: June 19-21** (Contact Tyiesha Fletcher at 501-944-0788);

**Hamburg: June 14 & 20-21** (Contact Mona Baldwin 870-940-9561 or Linda Hawkins 870-853-6176)

**JULY 16-17 NEXT GEN CONFERENCE** – For more info, contact Tempest Alexander, Community Empowerment Council at 870-329-3016 or Janie Carter, D-FAC at 870-415-0139. Parents and youth ages 13-19 are encouraged to attend (**expenses will be 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	<b>January 2025:</b> Chief Oliver/Officer Kelley
Education	Tracy Streeter	<b>June 2025:</b> D-FAC Curriculum Presentation (Jessie Griffith & Kelley Allison)
Businesses	Kristi Stocker	
Media	Dennis Maxwell	
Youth-Serving Organizations	(Position to be filled)	<b>Feb. 2025:</b> Dr. Lula Williams & Staff, FDE, Inc. <b>March 2025:</b> DeVonda Brown, CASA <b>April 2025:</b> 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	<b>May 2025: Quentin Yarborough’s Personal Story</b>

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, June 10, 2025, 12:00 p.m. noon at 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church, Hamburg, Fellowship Hall.

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