



Message from our CEO

March 22 – 28, 2021 is known as National Drug and Alcohol Fact Week (NDAFW), with the goal of shattering the myth about drug and alcohol use for teens. Many teens are not aware of the risks drug usage brings to their health, to their success in school and to their safety. Here are some sobering statistics: by age 15, about 33 percent of teens have had at least 1 drink. By age 18, about 60 percent of teens have had at least 1 drink. About 4 in 10 people who begin drinking before age 15 eventually become alcoholics. This month on ACTS social media, we will be sharing 10 common myths and facts about substance use. If you want a sneak peek, check out our [YouTube playlist here](#). Also this month during NDAFW, ACTS is hosting a Virtual Coffee Hour so families can learn about resources and services offered through our agency for both teens and adults with substance use disorders. Check out the article later in this newsletter for more details. ACTS is resource in our community helping people recover from drugs and alcohol, and it is a privilege to lead this organization.



Asha Terminello
ACTS CEO

ACTS Holding Virtual Coffee Hour on March 25

Join us for Virtual Family Resource Coffee Hour event during this National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week to learn about resources available to families with loved ones with alcohol/drug problems. This free, virtual event will include topics to be including:

- Addiction
- Treatment Options
- Detox Services
- Medication Assisted Treatment
- Marchman Act
- Al-Anon/Community Support Groups



ACTS Family Resource Coffee Hour is scheduled virtually for **Thursday, March 25** from **9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.** Call 813.246.4899 or email AJuno@actsfl.org by Tuesday, March 23 to RSVP and for the link.

Meet Jennifer Cristiano-Levesque

Starting this month, ACTS is spotlighting our program directors and what their departments do at the agency. Up first is Jennifer Cristiano-Levesque, the Program Director for Special Projects, who recently celebrated 18 years with ACTS. Jennifer moved to this role two years ago this month. Before this role, she worked her way up at the Hillsborough Juvenile Assessment Center where her last position was the program director there. “I enjoyed working at the Juvenile Assessment Center, but I really enjoy working closely with my team to help people have a better life.” In Special Projects, there are currently two main divisions under Jennifer, with a third program in its pilot phase with TPD. First up is the [Hillsborough Community Recidivism Reduction Initiative](#), which is a voluntary program to help individuals in jail receive treatment services. This team engages clients up to 90 days before release from jail and continues providing services for up to a year in the community. The goal is to make sure clients get the help that they need and do not end up back in jail. The other main area of her position is overseeing the [Early Jail Diversion](#) program. Early Jail Diversion provides an alternative to incarceration to people who could be arrested and jailed and have a serious mental illness. This program engages people at the point of crisis to help those in need. In February, [ACTS partnered with DACCO, Gracepoint and BayCare to ride along with the Tampa Police Department on crisis calls](#), and the staff member who went is on Jennifer’s team. “In my team’s role at the agency, we are making a difference in people’s lives – we see some of the people at their lowest point and help them build their life back,” said Jennifer I really like meeting people who are referred to our services and hearing their stories.” To find out more about either of the programs that Jennifer oversees, contact Jennifer at jcristiano@actsfl.org or click on the flyers linked above.



ACTS Receives HUD Funding in Polk County

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has awarded \$2.3 million to four nonprofits operating homeless assistance programs in Polk County. ACTS received three grants totaling about \$649,000. That is a slight increase over last year’s funding, Polk County Housing Supervisor Giffe’ Gill said. The HUD grants for Polk County are dedicated to “scattered site” housing programs for people who have disabilities and are homeless. “Permanent housing is one of those things that, when you’re dealing with people that are chronically homeless specifically, most landlords are not going to rent to them,” Giffe’ said. “Most of them don’t have the skills or even sometimes the mindset to actually live independently, so through our programs not only do we help them get housed, but they also get case management that will kind of mentor and teach these skills and help them learn how to maintain housing, how to live independently and safely.” [Check out this article](#) from The Lakeland Ledger talking about the funding.

For More Information

ACTS, Agency for Community Treatment Services, Inc., is a non-profit serving the Tampa Bay area since 1978. As a comprehensive, community-based behavioral health organization, ACTS mission is to apply the best of contemporary physical and behavioral health interventions and social support services available to assist individuals and families to engage and succeed in recovery. Call us today to find out how we can help you - 813.246.4899 or visit us online at www.actsfl.org.

