



2021 Annual Report



Letter from the Chair & Executive Director

Dear Friend:

I am pleased to report that Drug Free America Foundation, Inc. (DFAF) enjoyed a highly productive year in 2021, underscored with many successes. A distinct highlight of the year was celebrating the organization's 25th anniversary with a gala in St. Petersburg, Florida in October. We showcased the ongoing work and commitment to prevention, education and advocacy, made possible by the vision and leadership of our founders Ambassador Mel and Betty Sembler.

This year DFAF continued the previous year's strategy of bringing the expertise of renowned colleagues together through virtual meetings, webinar presentations, and panel discussions to inform and influence government and coalition leaders to traverse changing drug policies. As people became more comfortable safely interacting publicly, DFAF hosted its 9th Annual Tampa Drug Summit in person in August. The Summit, featuring 22 accredited educational sessions and 28 vendors, was conducted over two days.

Also on the domestic front, DFAF staff developed and presented workshops both virtually and in person across the U.S., reaching hundreds of participants and qualifying them for professional educational certifications. Workshop topics presented include Public Health Risks of Marijuana Legalization; Opioids: America's Modern Scourge; and Marijuana Use in Pregnancy and While Breastfeeding.

DFAF continued to be a leader in the international domain in 2021, despite continued impacts of the global pandemic. We hosted our first Virtual Prevention Summit titled *Reframing Global Prevention Practices and Policies*, that brought together more than 200 international attendees and featured prominent experts. In March, we participated virtually in the 64th session of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), meeting in Vienna, Austria. Among other activities, this year we co-hosted a side event titled *Reframing Global Prevention Practices and Policies During COVID 19*, that was attended by over 100 participants. In October, DFAF partnered with the World Federation Against Drugs to host a training on Drug Demand Reduction Advocacy. The online event was attended by more than 100 global participants and featured presentations from drug demand reduction experts from around the world.

An exciting addition in 2021 was the launch of our new podcast, *Pathways 2 Prevention*, where we join with stakeholders from the drug demand reduction spectrum including government, academia, clergy, preventionists, treatment professionals, and persons in long-term recovery. Participants discuss the innovative and inspiring work being done in global substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery.

Please take a few moments to peruse this annual report which provides a more detailed overview of Drug Free America Foundation's accomplishments for 2021. In the meantime, please accept our gratitude for everything you have done to make these achievements possible. Without you and the dedication and commitment of our many partners and contributors, none of this would be possible. Thank you!

Sincerely,



J. Tyler Payne, Esq.
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "J. Tyler Payne".



Amy Ronshausen
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Amy Ronshausen".

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Ambassador Mel Sembler

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Vision & Mission

Drug Free America Foundation, Inc. is committed to developing strategies and educational programs that prevent drug abuse and promote sustained recovery.

The Drug Free America Foundation, Inc. vision is a world where all people live free from the burden of drug abuse.



GALA

Mission Possible! Celebrating 25 Years of Drug Abuse Prevention, Education, and Advocacy

In October 2021, supporters, donors, volunteers, and staff of Drug Free America Foundation gathered in St. Petersburg to celebrate our 25th anniversary and to honor the ongoing work and commitment to prevention, education, and advocacy, curated by Ambassador Mel and Betty Sembler in 1995. In addition to recognizing the milestones and achievements of Drug Free America Foundation over the years, the annual fundraising gala, held at the Feather Sound Country Club, featured our popular silent auction with unique items bringing in substantial donations to the organization.



The emcee for the

event was Trey
Malicoat, M.S.,

a highly

talented

motivational

speaker and

non-profit

fundraiser committed

to DFAF's vision of *"a world where all people live*

free of the burden of drug abuse," provided

compelling and personal insight to the evening

and rallied our guests around the event theme of

Mission Possible!



Following dinner, DFAF Executive Director Amy

Ronshausen gave a foundation update, sharing

the many programs and events that DFAF

contributes to prevention both nationally and

internationally. She shared that, *"while the*

challenges have been many, we have not only met

those challenges, we have surpassed them. And

because of our past successes we are confident in the

future and know our goals are truly... mission

possible."



On this special occasion, the outgoing Chairman

of the DFAF Board of Directors, James Holton,

Esq., passed the gavel to the incoming Chairman

J. Tyler Payne, Esq., who provided the welcome

message.



The keynote address, *The Fierce Urgency of Now*,

was provided by Carlton Hall, a renowned

national and international presenter and

prevention consultant, who is a friend, colleague,

and valued collaborator with DFAF.





Youth

Drug Free America Foundation is committed to the development of healthy and safe youth in our communities. Throughout 2021, DFAF educated children and youth on various substance and health related topics, empowering them with knowledge to make healthy choices for proper growth and development, aiding in the prevention of substance use and other risky behaviors.

DFAF participated in the nation's largest drug prevention campaign, engaging with students during Red Ribbon Week. In partnership with prevention educator Jason Dorr, we conducted interactive sessions with more than 1,000 students during each grade level's PE period at Curlew Creek Elementary and Azalea Elementary in Pinellas County, Florida. Students eagerly participated in the program

that highlighted strategies to overcome peer pressure and prevent initiation into substance use. At the end of each session, the students took a pledge to be drug-free and proclaimed,

"Drug-Free Looks Like Me," the 2021 Red Ribbon Week theme.

Students signed the Pledge To Be Drug-Free banner and were



provided with "Drug-Free Looks Like Me"

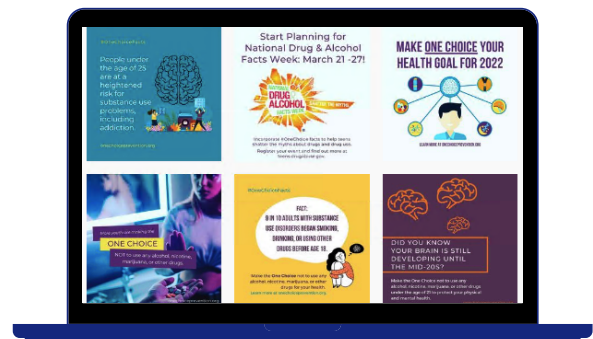
stickers, coloring pages, and DFAF's Protective Factor one-pager tied in red ribbon as their

'diploma' for completing the presentation, which the students were excited to receive!



Through DFAF's partnership with the Lunch Pals program in Pinellas County, we were informed of the need for Take Stock in Children (TSIC) program mentors. TSIC provides students with hope for a better life by offering college scholarships and a caring volunteer mentor who meets with the student throughout their middle and high school years. Our Program Manager, Chantel Lincoln, volunteered for this opportunity, becoming a mentor for students at East Lake High School. Chantel meets with her mentees during their lunch period where she conducts enrichment activities, guides their progress on high school graduation, and aids in college preparation. She also presents during virtual TSIC group sessions educating and empowering the students on topics related to substance use prevention including adopting the One Choice health goal.

DFAF partnered with Dr. Robert DuPont and his team at the Institute of Behavior and Health to create a social media presence and develop social media content for their One Choice health message which is no use of any alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, or other drugs by youth under age 21 for reasons of health. DFAF joined the One Choice Community which is a collection of prevention organizations, coalitions, and individual leaders that aim to expand the data-driven, youth-led One Choice prevention message while amplifying youth voices in prevention.



Other highlights from this year include presenting to youth and parents at the STAND Youth Leadership Summit, Dr. Sharif Mohr's mentorship to a St. Pete Community College student on their prenatal THC project, hosting a social media campaign for youth during National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week, incorporation of our Youth Protective Factor one-pager into Elks August Drug Awareness Program, and tabling at the ribbon cutting ceremony for Victory High School, the first recovery high school in the Tampa Bay region.



Methamphetamine (Meth)

The most commonly misused stimulant globally is **methamphetamine**. Meth use surpasses opioid use in some regions of the U.S. and is a major contributor to violent crime.

Methamphetamine is typically found as a white, bitter-tasting powder or pill or as glass-like fragments or shiny, bluish-white rocks.

ALERT: Meth is also found pressed into counterfeit pills disguised as ecstasy to attract new users and is also found mixed with highly deadly synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

A Closer Look

The majority of meth encountered in the U.S. is produced by transnational criminal organizations in Mexico. Over the last decade, meth supply and purity have increased considerably while the price has dropped to historic lows. Meth production is associated with chemicals that are toxic to both human and environmental health.

The use of meth, exposure cases reported to U.S. Poison Control Centers, overdose deaths, and treatment for meth use disorder have all been increasing over the past decade.

- In one year alone, the number of adults aged 26 or older who used meth **increased 43%**
- Meth is now involved in more deaths than prescription opioids or heroin, with the **number of deaths** involving meth **quadrupling** between 2013 and 2019

STIMULANTS

Stimulants are drugs that speed up messages between the body and brain resulting in increased heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature. When stimulants are taken, a large amount of dopamine is released in the brain resulting in feelings of euphoria and well-being.

Dopamine is the chemical messenger within the brain responsible for pleasure, motivation, and motor function, so people misuse stimulants to get high, increase activity, reduce appetite, and to boost excitement and self-confidence.

The stimulant class of drug is diverse and includes:

- Prescription drugs used to treat conditions like ADHD such as Adderall (amphetamine), Vyvanne (lisdexamphetamine), and Ritalin (methylphenidate)
- Illicit drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine (meth), a synthetic cathinone known as bath salts.
- Stimulants can be found in different forms such as pills, powders, rocks, crystalline shards, and liquids, which can be swallowed, smoked, snorted or injected.

Understand the Side Effects

- Inability to sleep
- Paranoia
- Exhaustion
- Nervousness
- Aggression
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Extreme sweating
- Vomiting
- Inclinations toward suicide or homicide

Side effects fluctuate depending on the type of stimulant taken, how much is used, and the method of consumption.

Beware of Binge

People who abuse stimulants often **binge**, meaning they take large amounts of the drug over a short period of time, typically until their body runs out. Some people may take stimulants in a "fun" pattern, using them every few hours over a period of several days without eating or sleeping. The sudden stoppage of taking stimulants can cause a "crash" resulting in extreme tiredness, depression, anxiety, and drug cravings.

Withdrawal and Overdose

Regular users of stimulants can quickly develop a **tolerance** that requires increasingly larger doses of the drug to feel the usual effects. Tolerance can rapidly lead to **addiction**, which in turn results in **withdrawal syndrome** when the drug use is discontinued.

Symptoms of Stimulant Withdrawal

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Intense cravings that cause a person to continue to use despite the negative consequences
- Psychosis
- Tiredness

Symptoms of an Overdose:

- Fever
- Seizures
- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Organ failure

Drug overdose deaths involving stimulants have increased over the last decade, with deaths involving methamphetamine more than **quadrupling** and deaths involving cocaine more than **tripling** between 2013 and 2019.

Research

Creating, compiling, interpreting, and disseminating new research is fundamental to the mission of DFAF. Our staff regularly reviews the literature for new medical and public health research related to marijuana and other drugs for the development of new resources, magazine articles, blogs, educational campaigns, social media content, public health alerts, and more.

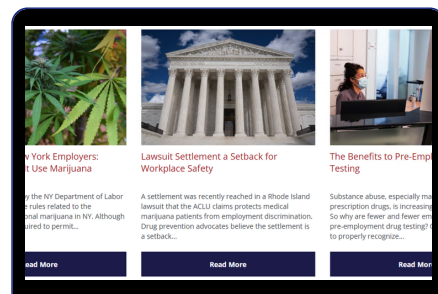
During 2021, DFAF published 38 new blogs on the DFAF and NDWA websites covering diverse topics like neonatal abstinence syndrome, youth substance use trends, rising rates in marijuana positive drug test results, prenatal THC exposure, among many others.

In response to the rising stimulant crisis, DFAF published new resources on stimulants and methamphetamine.

DFAF has a long-standing partnership with the National Narcotics Officers Association Coalition (NNOAC), an umbrella organization representing 40 state narcotic associations which monitors all relevant Federal legislation and policy focusing on domestic and international drug-related crime issues. This partnership provides DFAF with the opportunity to publish articles in their magazine, *The Coalition*, and in their Spring 2021 issue, DFAF's article, "The Evolving Threat of Synthetic Opioids," was published, reaching an audience of approximately 55,000 law enforcement officers.



Additional highlights for 2021 include publishing Epidemiologist, Dr. Sharif Mohr's, Commentary, "Capping THC levels in medical marijuana is smart policy" in the Orlando Sentinel; letter drafted for state policymakers on THC limits; and bulletins released on disturbing data related to Florida including the rising rates of prenatal THC exposure.





Professional Training

DFAF hosted our 1st Virtual Prevention Summit that brought together more than 200 international attendees and featured prominent experts such as DFAF's esteemed advisor, Dr. Robert DuPont. This event allowed DFAF to partner with important global organizations such as the World Federation Against Drugs and others to gain knowledge, network, and build the capacity of all organizations and participants.



In 2021, DFAF staff developed and presented at workshops both virtually and in person across the U.S. reaching hundreds of participants qualifying them for professional educational certifications.

Some of these include:

- "Public Health Risks of Marijuana Legalization" for the Northland Prevention Conference training over 200 participants on the impacts of marijuana legalization.
- "Opioids: America's Modern Scourge" for Missouri Opioid Summit educating more than 100 prevention and public health professionals on the epidemiology of opioid use disorder and current trends in the epidemic.
- "Marijuana Use in Pregnancy and While Breastfeeding" webinar featuring Dr. Torri Metz, MD, MS, from the University of Utah with 30 participants.



Professional Training, Cont.

Most importantly, DFAF's premier educational conference, the *9th Annual Tampa Drug Summit*, was held in person in August 2021 gathering more than 250 professionals from the prevention, treatment and recovery, mental health, medical, judicial, and law enforcement fields. The Summit, featuring 22 accredited educational sessions and 28 vendors, was conducted over two days. The Summit is a joint project between DFAF and the Hillsborough County Anti-Drug Alliance and serves as a successful model of how global and local organizations can work together to impact statewide outcomes.



International

DFAF continued to be a leader in the international domain in 2021 despite continued impacts of the global pandemic.

In March, we virtually participated in the 64th session of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) meeting in Vienna, Austria. The CND is important to our international goals and positions DFAF to fully participate in global drug demand reduction through meetings, networking, and forming partnerships with diverse international colleagues. This year we hosted a side event titled *Reframing Global Prevention Practices and Policies During COVID 19* that was attended by over 100 individuals and was co-hosted with the Turkish Green Crescent, World Federation Against Drugs, and the Uganda Youth Development Link. Additionally, DFAF participated in a side event titled *World Progress and Challenges of Drug Free Working Place*, organized by the Green Crescent Malaysia with the support of the Drug Free America Foundation, the International Federation of Non-Government Organizations for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse (IFNGO), and Kıbrıs Türk Yeşilay Derneği.

In October, DFAF partnered with the World Federation Against Drugs to host a virtual training on Drug Demand Reduction Advocacy. The online event was attended by more than 100 global participants and featured presentation from drug demand reduction

experts including, Mariano Montenegro, Director of the Colombo Plan Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Trainer for UNODC, Latin America and the Caribbean; Humberto Soriano, Attending Physician, U.C. Christus Health Network, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Department of Gastroenterology and Nutrition, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile; Kristin Kidd, Coordinator, SE PTTC at Wake Forest School of Medicine; and Dr. Kevin Sabet, President and CEO of Smart Approaches to Marijuana.

To build capacity and unite partners working globally on similar issues, DFAF revived our past Global Task Force, adding new members and reconnecting with past colleagues.

As part of this effort, we send out a monthly Global Task Force

Newsletter and host quarterly online meetings. Our refocused efforts have enabled more participation and better organization around global conference and meetings, ensuring that prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts are a priority to global stakeholders.

Much of our international efforts are made possible by our partnership with the Colombo Plan, with the support of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).





Media

An exciting addition in 2021 was the launch of our new podcast, Pathways 2 Prevention (P2P), where we join with stakeholders from the drug demand reduction spectrum including government, academia, clergy, prevention and treatment professionals, and persons in long-term recovery, to discuss the innovative and inspiring work being done in global substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery.

DFAF debuted the first P2P episode on 4/20 featuring Dr. Kevin Sabet from Smart Approaches to Marijuana to discuss his new book, *Smokescreen: What the Marijuana Industry Doesn't Want You to Know*. Additional guests featured this year included Dichen Choden of the Colombo Plan to discuss her pilot project to train Afghan teachers, Augusto Nogueria of ARTM Macau to discuss creating opportunities and working with people in recovery, and

other great interviews with global experts including Theo Caputi, Boro Goic, Dave Closson, Shane Varcoe, and Pamela McColl. Since launched, P2P episodes have received 760 downloads! Stay tuned for new episodes released monthly and subscribe on Buzzsprouts or your favorite podcast platform.



PATHWAYS
2 PREVENTION

Throughout the year, DFAF conducted numerous educational campaigns highlighting both national and international awareness days related to substance use including Substance Use Prevention Month, Mental Illness Awareness Week, National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week, National Recovery Month, National Prevention Week, and World Drug Day, among many others.

DFAF collaborated with national and international organizations for these campaigns and incorporated DFAF branded material, such as resources and videos, relevant to the specific theme.



DFAF proudly supports organizations within the drug demand reduction field. This year, DFAF supported West Central Florida's public television station WEDU and their program, Up Close with Cathy Unruh Florida Kids & Alcohol Special. This special took a look at current events and social pressures that drive youth to alcohol and substance use featuring a sit down with renowned child psychiatrist Dr. Christian Thurstone, who specializes in youth substance use and addiction. Additionally, they talked with a student and local expert about their experiences and the ways they are working to help.



Social Media

Social media is an essential outreach and educational tool that enables us to promote our resources, blogs, and webinars; conduct virtual campaigns in collaboration with international partners; as well as highlight drug trend alerts and noteworthy research and news articles, to a global audience expanding our reach.

Overall, DFAF has an impressive social media following with 80,444 followers on Facebook, 2,690 followers on Twitter, 506 followers on Instagram, and 217 subscribers to our YouTube channel.

Social media is measured by the number of impressions (Twitter and YouTube) and post reach (Facebook), defined as the number of times the content shown on social media browsers and the number of people who viewed the post, respectively. Our digital reach for 2021 was over 213,000 on Facebook and impressions were over 56,000 on Twitter and over 34,000 on YouTube. Our social media posts generated over 7,900 engagements and our videos on YouTube had over 8,300 views.

Additionally, DFAF regularly promotes material on each social media platform for both One Choice and the Recovered Users Network (RUN) to expand their social media presence.





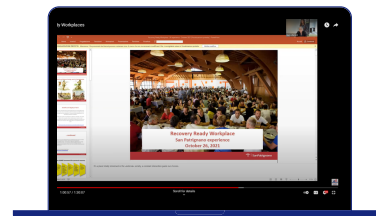
National Drug-Free Workplace Alliance

As the workplace division of DFAF, the National Drug-Free Workplace Alliance (NDWA) provides valuable, low-cost benefits to employers. Businesses can receive services that include: a written drug free workplace policy; access to discounted drug testing and EAP services; supervisor, employee, and parent training; one-on-one consultation; news updates; and much more.

During 2021, NDWA implemented 116 new programs that affect more than 1,000 employees and supervisors. Our online training programs attracted students from across the country with nearly 535 participants completing the courses this year. Since its inception in 2008, more than 6,900 people have participated. The online courses are vitally important to businesses that are regulated by the transportation industry such as aviation or trucking. Supervisors of drivers/operators regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation are mandated to receive specific drug-free workplace training.

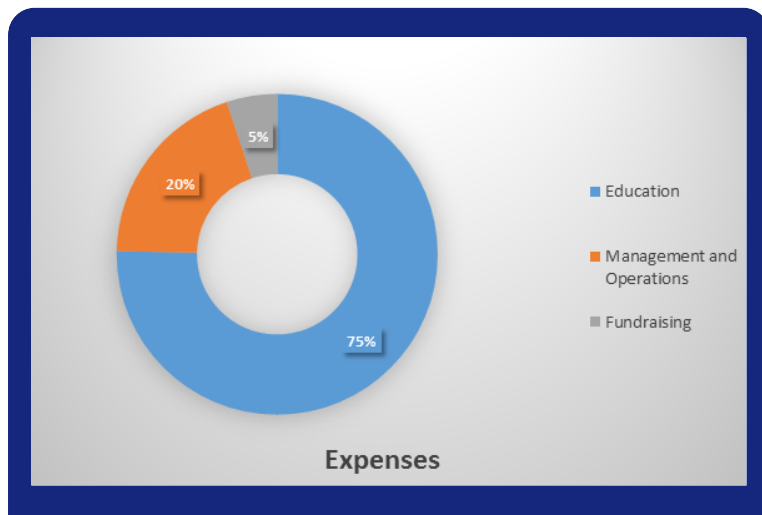
For owner/operators and small family-run businesses, the quality of our training content and nominal cost make it invaluable.

In 2021, DFAF through its NDWA division co-sponsored and assisted in coordinating and marketing the INL/CICAD webinar entitled "Recovery Ready Workplaces." Over 1,400 persons internationally registered, with 868 persons attending the webinar from countries in North and South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa.



Also through its workplace division, DFAF hosts a workplace-based prevention virtual workgroup on the website of the International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP). In 2021, more than 70 pieces of content were posted to the workgroup with more than 130 since inception in 2019. More than 50 persons worldwide are participants.

Finances



Our Divisions



International
Scientific and
Medical Forum
ON DRUG ABUSE



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