



| 2026 MARION COUNTY

DIGITAL PROGRAM

| This digital program has been designed to help you make the most of your Zero Suicide Summit experience while providing valuable information about suicide prevention efforts in Marion County.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR CHAMPION OF HOPE SPONSORS



MERIDIAN
HEALTHCARE

SCAN HERE TO
LEARN
MORE



Meridian has been proudly serving communities throughout North Central Florida with compassionate care since 1971. We have expanded our service area to include 13 patient service centers to better support those who face mental health and substance use challenges



SCAN HERE TO
LEARN
MORE



Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Inc. (H.O.M.E.) a program of LSF, established in 2004, and our community work together to provide teen mothers and girls at risk of sex trafficking with needed resources, including education, parenting classes, life skills, career development, counseling and other means of evidenced-based programs and support as we lovingly transition them into adulthood and rebirth.



2026 Marion County Zero Suicide Summit

Dr. Christine Cauffield

CEO LSF Health Systems

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to the Marion County Zero Suicide Summit.

It is a privilege to gather with so many individuals who share a common purpose: creating a community where every person experiencing emotional pain knows they matter, knows help is available and knows they are not alone.

As a clinical psychologist, I have spent much of my career helping people navigate trauma, mental illness, substance misuse and loss. One lesson has remained constant throughout those years: healing rarely happens in isolation. Recovery happens when people are surrounded by compassionate individuals and systems that refuse to give up on them.

That is exactly what today's summit represents.

Suicide is a community issue. It affects families, schools, businesses, health care systems, law enforcement agencies, veterans, older adults and young people alike. No profession, neighborhood or family goes unscathed. Preventing suicide requires each of us to recognize our role in creating connected, supportive communities where people feel safe asking for help.

The Zero Suicide approach challenges us to move beyond awareness and into action. It encourages us to strengthen partnerships, improve systems of care and ensure that every opportunity to identify and support someone at risk is met with compassion and evidence-based intervention.

Here in Marion County, this work remains critically important. According to the Florida Department of Health, approximately 90 county residents died by suicide during the most recently published reporting year, underscoring the continued need for coordinated prevention efforts across our community. According to data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WISQARS Leading Causes of Death Reports, more than 49,000 lives were lost to suicide in 2023 across our nation.

Those numbers remind us of the urgency of our work, but they do not define it. What defines this work is hope and the people deserving of that hope. It is the teacher who notices a struggling student, the physician who asks one more question, the first responder who connects someone to care, the family member who listens without judgment and the community that chooses compassion over silence.

Today's summit is an opportunity to learn from one another, strengthen our partnerships and renew our shared commitment to preventing suicide across Marion County. Every relationship we build and every conversation we have today moves us closer to a future where fewer families experience the heartbreak of losing someone they love.

At LSF Health Systems, we are proud to work alongside dedicated providers, community organizations and local leaders throughout North Florida to improve access to behavioral health care and promote wellness across every stage of life. Together, we can continue building communities where hope, healing and connection are always within reach.

Thank you for being part of this important effort. Your commitment truly makes a difference.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Christine Cauffield".

Dr. Christine Cauffield

Chief Executive Officer, LSF Health Systems, Inc. | Executive Vice President, SAMH

Organized by Experts. Built for Marion County.

LSF Health Systems brings decades of behavioral health expertise and proven results to organize this summit - giving sponsors confidence their investment is in capable hands.

About LSF Health Systems

As a 23-county behavioral health management organization, we create communities where every child, adult, and family has access to the behavioral health care they need to live well and be well. LSF Health Systems pursues that vision every day - developing and sustaining an integrated system of behavioral health care through a network of services built on integrity, innovation, and collaboration. This summit is not a side project. It is our mission in action.



Clinical Expertise Driving the Agenda

Every session and workshop is shaped by LSF Health Systems' frontline experience - ensuring evidence-based, outcomes-focused programming.



A Proven Convener

LSF Health Systems has a demonstrated history of aligning healthcare systems, government agencies, and nonprofits around shared mental health goals.



Statewide Reach, Local Roots

LSF Health Systems operates across Florida with deep local relationships in Marion County - connecting providers, schools, veterans' groups, and faith organizations.



Accountability Beyond the Summit

LSF Health Systems will steward commitments after the event - tracking outcomes and ensuring sponsor investments translate into lasting results.

Summit Focus Areas: Youth & School-Based Prevention · Veteran Mental Health · Rural Access to Care · Faith Community Integration · Crisis Response Training (QPR / Mental Health First Aid)

Marion County Has a Mental Health Crisis

Behind every death by suicide is a family shattered, a seat left empty, a neighbor gone too soon. Marion County is not a passive observer of Florida's mental health crisis - it is one of its most urgent epicenters.

15.3

YOUTH SUICIDES PER
100K (AGES 12-18)

More than double Florida's rate

85.5

TEEN SELF-HARM
HOSPITALIZATIONS PER 100K

27% above the statewide rate

Top 5

FL COUNTIES WITH LARGEST
VETERAN SUICIDE INCREASE

2019-2023, *The Fire Watch*

When most Florida counties saw suicide rates drop during COVID-19, Marion County's **rose** - reflecting deep structural gaps in mental health access that this summit is designed to address.

"These are not statistics. These are children."

— Florida Department of Health, Marion County (September 2022)

Marion County's veteran population, rural communities, and rapidly growing senior population all carry elevated suicide risk. The convergence of these factors makes this county one of the most critical sites for intervention in the state.

The broader context: Florida's statewide suicide rate reached 14.4 per 100,000 in 2023 - 14% above the national average. Marion County consistently **exceeds** even that elevated baseline.



Zero Suicide - Marion Summit Agenda September 3rd, 2026

College of Central Florida – The Klein Conference Center
3001 SW College Rd, Ocala, FL 34471



8:00-8:45am	Registration, Breakfast, and Networking	
8:45-9:00am	Opening Remarks Dr. Christine Cauffield, <i>CEO of LSF Health Systems</i>	
9:00-9:15am	Special Guest Ben Marciano, <i>Mayor of Ocala</i>	
9:15-9:35am	Suicide in Marion County: How Do We Compare? Curt Bromund, <i>CEO of Marion Hospital District</i>	
9:35-10:35am	Panel Discussion: Moderated by Debra Velez, COO Marion Hospital District Alex Caban, <i>Chief of Department Health and Safety of Marion County Fire Rescue</i> Dr. Vernon Phillips, <i>Chaplain of Marion County Sheriff's Office</i> Jennifer Martinez, <i>Executive Director of Marion Senior Services</i> Jesse Blaire, <i>EMS Captain of Ocala Fire Rescue</i> Joe Hassler, <i>Chaplain of Ocala Police Department</i> Robin Lanier, <i>Vice President of Marion County Services at SMA Healthcare</i>	
10:35-10:50am	Break	
10:50-11:35am	First Responder Suicide Prevention: Moving from Good Intentions to Coordinated Action Kellie O'Dare, Ph.D., <i>Deputy Executive Director of UCF Restores</i>	
11:35-11:45am	A Word from Our Sponsors	
11:45am-12:45pm	Lunch and Networking	
12:45-1:45pm	The Power of Listening Kevin Briggs, <i>Sergeant, California Highway Patrol, Ret.</i>	
1:45-2:00pm	Break	
2:00-3:00pm	Breakout Sessions:	
	The Power of Listening Q&A Session with Kevin Briggs First Responders Only, Room: 107	Every Life Matters: The Power of Training in a ZS Approach Samantha Lawson-Davis, <i>LSF Health Systems</i> Room: The Klein Center
3:00-3:15pm	Break	
3:15-4:00pm	Aspiring for Zero: Unlocking the Framework for a Suicide Safer Community Lindsay Brown, M.Ed, Ed.S, <i>Suicide Prevention Advocate</i>	
4:00pm	Closing Remarks	

Meet This Year's Keynote: A Voice That Has Stood at the Edge



2026 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Sergeant Kevin Briggs

*"Guardian of the Golden Gate Bridge" • Ret. California Highway Patrol •
International Crisis & Suicide Prevention Speaker*

TED Talk: 6M+ Views

200+ Lives Saved

23-Year CHP Career

Amazon Best-Selling Author

AFSP Award Recipient

FBI & Secret Service Trainer

For over two decades, Sergeant Kevin Briggs patrolled the Golden Gate Bridge - one of the most frequently visited sites for suicide in the world. Through compassion, eye contact, and an extraordinary gift for listening, he talked more than 200 people back from the edge.

200+

LIVES BROUGHT BACK FROM THE
BRIDGE'S RAIL

6M+

TED TALK VIEWS: "THE BRIDGE
BETWEEN SUICIDE AND LIFE"

23 yrs

CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL
CAREER

"I know you must be in tremendous pain. If you want to talk, I'm here to listen."

— Kevin Briggs, spoken to a person on the bridge's railing, whose life was saved that day

Today Briggs trains first responders, educators, and community leaders worldwide through **Pivotal Points**, the organization he founded. His book *Guardian of the Golden Gate* is an Amazon bestseller. His story has been optioned by Hollywood.

Why Kevin Briggs at this Summit? Marion County needs to hear - from someone who has stood at the very edge with the most desperate of souls - that prevention works and that every person is one caring conversation away from choosing to live.

BEN MARICANO

CITY OF OCALA MAYOR

For over 20 years, Ben Marciano has dedicated his life to serving the Ocala community. Starting as a health trainer, he quickly rose to become the executive director of the DeLuca YMCA, transforming it from one of the lowest-ranked facilities in the region into a thriving center for health and wellness. His passion for fitness and community service led him to co-found Zone Health and Fitness, a premier gym with two locations in Ocala, providing thousands of residents with resources to stay active and healthy.



Ben holds an associate degree in Criminal Justice from the College of Central Florida and has remained deeply involved with local law enforcement and community outreach. Now serving as Mayor of Ocala — one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation—he prioritizes public safety, mental and physical health, and community engagement. In his role as mayor, he oversees the Ocala Police Department, supporting and strengthening several community-focused initiatives. He was also instrumental in bringing back the Mounted Unit and introducing the first annual OPD Ball in 2024.

A dedicated advocate for youth programs and community service, Mayor Marciano works closely with organizations such as the Chief Greg Graham Legacy Foundation, The Centers Ocala, Boys & Girls Club, The Community Foundation for Ocala/Marion County, Project Hope, the American Heart Association, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and Men's Prayer Breakfast. He is also a strong supporter of mental health initiatives, partnering with programs like Wear Gloves, Saving Mercy, and local domestic violence and sexual assault centers. His commitment to youth and family services was recognized with the prestigious Chairman's Award from the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services, the organization's highest honor.

Ben and his wife, Danielle, are proud parents of three children and are active members of Blessed Trinity Catholic Church.



CURT BROMUND

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER – MARION COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

With a diverse career spanning over three decades in leadership, healthcare, education, and business, Curt Bromund built a reputation for transformative and innovative strategies that left a beneficial mark on the communities served. Currently, as the Chief Executive Officer for the Marion County Hospital District, Curt was instrumental in pioneering healthcare and public health projects that aim at improving the health and well-being of Marion County's

residents. This includes key achievements like the creation of a \$15M annual public health grant system, the Fitness and Nutrition in Schools (FANS) program, the Active Marion Project (AMP), and the visionary Beacon Point treatment campus aimed at tackling the opioid crisis and substance use disorders for uninsured and income-constrained citizens of Marion County.

Before this, Curt served in various leadership capacities as CEO at Childhood Development Services, Inc. in Ocala, FL. Here, the responsibilities encompassed a wide array, from directing HR and finance functions across multiple counties, to crafting strategies for expanding the corporation's funding sources. The tenure at CDS is also marked by the oversight of a multitude of federal, state, and proprietary programs (\$69M annual budget with 400 employees operating in 42 counties).

Beyond his multi-disciplinary corporate journey, Curt also made significant contributions to academia in his community. As an Adjunct College Instructor at the College of Central Florida since 2011, Curt was awarded the Adjunct Instructor of the Year in 2018 and was instrumental in developing the curricula for business administration courses, providing a pragmatic blend of theory and real-world applications.

The earlier years of Curt's career saw significant contributions as the President of Bromund Consulting Group, authoring "The Roadmap to Effective Leadership," and serving as an integral part of the executive team at Financial Independence Network Ltd., Inc. (ranked 63rd in Inc. 500's fastest growing privately owned companies in the U.S.).

Educationally, Curt holds an MBA from the University of Florida and a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Governors State University. A former Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR), Curt has also been an active contributor on several boards and committees, emphasizing a commitment to community development, education, and public policy.

Throughout his career, Curt consistently participated in visionary leadership roles, and committed himself to the community's well-being, and displays a unique ability to bring innovative ideas to fruition.

DEBRA VELEZ

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER – MARION COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

Debra Velez is a nationally recognized public health and human services executive with more than 30 years of experience developing innovative programs and leading systems change initiatives that improve the lives of children, families, and communities. Since beginning her career, she has dedicated her work to strengthening families, preventing child abuse and neglect, expanding access to behavioral health services, and addressing complex social and health challenges through collaboration, prevention, and evidence-based solutions.



Throughout her career, Debra has designed, implemented, and overseen a wide range of prevention and intervention programs focused on child welfare, maternal and child health, kinship care, substance use disorders, homelessness prevention, domestic violence, behavioral health, and community wellness. Her expertise in program development, strategic planning, and resource leveraging has resulted in the successful acquisition of more than \$3 million in legislative appropriations and more than \$20 million in grant funding to support community-based initiatives. She has built successful partnerships among healthcare organizations, schools, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community leaders to create sustainable solutions that improve outcomes for vulnerable populations.

As Chief Operating Officer of the Marion County Hospital District, Debra provides executive leadership for strategic investments and initiatives that improve access to healthcare, behavioral health services, prevention programs, and community wellness throughout Marion County. She oversees innovative public health strategies that impact approximately 150,000 residents annually and has played a key role in expanding services related to behavioral health, substance use disorders, domestic violence, chronic disease prevention, and health equity.

Debra's leadership and innovative approaches to community health have earned her statewide and national recognition for excellence in public health, prevention, child welfare, and systems transformation. She has received numerous awards recognizing her contributions to improving outcomes for children and families, advancing behavioral health services, and strengthening community-based systems of care. She is a sought-after speaker, trainer, and consultant who regularly presents at local, state, and national conferences on topics including behavioral health, prevention science, public health innovation, community partnerships, and systems change.

Debra holds a Master of Arts in Counseling, a Bachelor of Social Work, and is a certified Six Sigma Green Belt. She remains passionate about creating sustainable solutions that improve the quality of life and strengthen the health and well-being of future generations.



DR. VERNON PHILLIPS

DIRECTOR OF CHAPLAIN SERVICES & PEER SUPPORT UNIT - MARION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Vernon currently holds the position of Lead Chaplain and serves as the Director of Chaplain Services and Peer Support Unit with the Marion County Sheriff's Office. He has a Doctorate of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling, EdS in Community Care and Counseling: Traumatology from Liberty University, and has worked in law enforcement for several years. He is a Clinical Pastoral Therapist, Marriage & Family Therapist, and a Board

Certified Christian Counselor with the National Association of Christian Counselors (NACC).

Vernon is a Certified Crisis Chaplain (CCC) with the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, a Certified Compassion Fatigue Professional (CCFP), a Certified Mindfulness-Informed Professional (CMIP), and certified in EQ-i + EQ 360 with Multi-Health Systems, Inc (MHS, Inc.). In addition, he is trained in PAIR (Prevention Assessment Intervention and Recovery) Suicide with the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC), Individual and Group Crisis Intervention with the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF), Peer Support and Resiliency with Crisis System Management (CSM) and Law Enforcement Alliance for Peer Support (LEAPS) amongst other training.

Vernon desires to bring awareness to the growing concern of mental health and wellness in the law enforcement community and, as such, founded the nonprofit Critical Aspects. Critical Aspects, Inc. addresses various topics, such as the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual impacts of the law enforcement profession. As the President/Founder of Critical Aspects, Inc. and the host of the Critical Aspects of Law Enforcement Podcast, Vernon seeks to help change the stigma of mental health and wellness within the law enforcement community.

CHIEF ALEX CABAN

CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT HEALTH AND SAFETY – MARION COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Alexander Caban has dedicated 25 years to the fire service and currently serves as the Health and Safety Chief with Marion County Fire Rescue. Throughout his career, Alex has served in leadership roles involving operational response, firefighter health and wellness, occupational safety, training, physical fitness, injury prevention, and first responder behavioral health.



Alex serves as Director of Marion County Fire Rescue's Peer Support Team and has played a leading role in developing and expanding the department's approach to mental health and suicide prevention. Following the devastating loss of fellow firefighters to suicide, Alex became deeply committed to changing the culture surrounding behavioral health in the fire service. His work focuses on early intervention, peer support, reducing stigma, building trusted pathways to professional care, and ensuring behavioral-health resources extend beyond the firefighter to their spouses and families.

Alex holds a bachelor's degree in Emergency Management from Barry University and is a Certified Trauma Professional and Certified Recovery Specialist. He is a trained Peer Supporter and StruggleWell Guide through the Boulder Crest Foundation and has completed Mental Health First Aid, UCF REACT, and Advanced REACT training. His fire-service credentials include State Certified Health and Safety Officer, Peer Fitness Trainer, Fire Officer II, and Live Fire Training Instructor.



JESSE BLAIRE

EMS CAPTAIN – OCALA FIRE RESCUE

Jesse Blaire is the EMS Captain for Ocala Fire Rescue. Jesse began providing BLS services as a transport EMT in 1997 transitioning to the paramedic role in 2000. Since then, Jesse has begun practicing as a first response paramedic for Ocala Fire Rescue, a flight paramedic for the ShandsCair Critical Care Transport Program and a TEMS medic for the Ocala Police Department's SWAT Team. He is also the co-founder of the University of Florida's Critical Care Transport Paramedic Program. He developed and implemented a Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program at Ocala Fire Rescue focusing on chronic disease management, opiate use disorder and dementia/Alzheimer care.

JENNIFER MARTINEZ

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MARION SENIOR SERVICES

Jennifer Martinez has served as Executive Director of Marion Senior Services since August 2015, leading local, state, and federally funded programs that support older adults throughout Marion County, as well as overseeing the county's paratransit transportation system. Prior to joining Marion Senior Services, she held leadership positions with Outback Steakhouse, Hospice of Marion County, and the Marion County Children's Advocacy Center.



A dedicated community leader, Jennifer has served on numerous boards and advisory councils, including the Community Foundation's Nonprofit Business Council, the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the Ocala Women's Network, and the Marion County Sheriff's Advisory Council. She is also an active member of the Florida Council on Aging and currently serves as First Vice President of the Florida Association of Service Providers.

Jennifer's leadership and commitment to community service have earned widespread recognition. She was named a Top 40 Under 40 professional, received the 2010 Business Advocate of the Year Award for her advocacy on behalf of local nonprofits, and led Marion Senior Services to be recognized as Nonprofit of the Year by the Community Foundation in 2023.

A long-time Ocala resident, Jennifer earned a degree in Hospitality Management from the University of Central Florida. While she is proud of her professional accomplishments, her greatest source of pride is being the mother of her daughter, who is currently attending Florida State University.



JOE HASSLER

CHAPLAIN - OCALA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chaplain Joe Hassler brings more than a decade of ministry experience in the church, correctional, and law enforcement settings. He currently serves as the Chaplain for the Ocala Police Department, providing spiritual care, crisis support, and wellness guidance to officers and staff. His broad background informs his insight into the challenges faced by first responders and their vital role in caring for the community that they serve.

ROBIN LANIER

VICE PRESIDENT – MARION COUNTY SERVICES AT SMA HEALTHCARE

Ms. Lanier holds a Master's degree in Healthcare Administration from Webster University and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Flagler College. She is Six Sigma Yellow and Green Belt Certified.



Ms. Lanier has more than 30 years of progressively responsible experience in behavioral health, child welfare, Medicaid-funded services, quality and utilization management, accreditation, program administration, and executive leadership. Since July 2021, she has served as Vice President of Marion County Services for SMA Healthcare, supporting planning, implementation, fiscal oversight, policy development, operational performance, and staff leadership for SMA.

Previously, Ms. Lanier served as Interim Chief Executive Officer of The Centers from November 2020 through July 2021, directing operational and fiscal functions, strengthening policies and procedures, communicating with the Board of Directors, and supporting senior leadership. From 2017 to 2020, she served as Director of CMA at The Centers, overseeing Marion County child welfare services in coordination with Kids Central, Inc., including dependency and adoption case management, transportation, visitation coaching, and more than 100 FTEs.

Prior to her current SMA role, Ms. Lanier held senior leadership positions with The Centers, Kids Central, Inc., and Partners for Children and Families, overseeing adult mental health, child welfare, targeted case management, quality and utilization management, Medicaid compliance, accreditation, data reporting, grant monitoring, and multi-program operations. Her prior roles included supervising large multidisciplinary teams, managing program budgets, supporting Joint Commission and Council on Accreditation activities, coordinating behavioral health services for children and adults, and monitoring service quality and fidelity.



KELLIE O'DARE, PH.D

**RESEARCH ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR & DEPUTY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UCF RESTORES**

Dr. Kellie O'Dare is a nationally recognized researcher and educator focused on advancing mental wellness, suicide prevention, and organizational resilience within public safety. She serves as Research Associate Professor and Deputy Executive Director of UCF RESTORES. She is also the Founder of the 2nd Alarm Project. With a Ph.D. in Social Work and background in public health and policy, her work centers on

translating research into practical, sustainable solutions. She has secured more than \$8 million in external funding to advance applied research, prevention initiatives, and statewide capacity-building efforts for public safety. She is especially passionate about supporting first responder families, recognizing their critical role in resilience and long-term wellbeing. In addition to her professional expertise, Dr. O'Dare brings meaningful personal connections to the fire service. She is the niece of Shawn T. O'Dare, a firefighter/paramedic killed in the line of duty in Miami-Dade County, and the spouse of a current Florida professional firefighter/paramedic. Her work is grounded in both the science of and her lived experience in the first responder community.

SAMANTHA LAWSON

SR DIR TRAINING INSTITUTE • SAMH - LSF HEALTH SYSTEMS

Samantha Lawson Davis is a seasoned behavioral health leader with more than 20 years of experience in training, workforce development, and organizational leadership. As Senior Director of the International Training Academy of Excellence at LSF Health Systems, she leads the development of evidence-based, trauma-informed training programs that strengthen Florida's behavioral health workforce. She holds advanced degrees in Organizational Leadership, Industrial Psychology, and Business Administration and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education at the University of Florida. A certified instructor in crisis intervention, suicide prevention, de-escalation, and Mental Health First Aid, Samantha is recognized for building collaborative training networks, advancing workforce excellence, and improving systems of care through education, innovation, and advocacy.





LINDSAY BROWN, **M.ED. ED.S.**

SUICIDE PREVENTION ADVOCATE

Lindsay Brown, M.Ed. Ed.S. is a suicide prevention subject matter expert and consultant with nearly 20 years of experience. Most recently, she was the Director of Training and Partnerships with the Florida LEADS Zero Suicide Project, a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that worked to build suicide safer communities throughout Florida.

Beginning her work as a suicide hotline counselor, she earned her masters and specialist degrees in Mental Health Counseling from the University of Florida and served people in crisis through individual and group counseling. Since joining the suicide prevention grant implementation team at University of Central Florida, University of South Florida, and Florida Behavioral Health Association in 2015, Lindsay has trained over 8,000 people in suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies and coached countless behavioral health, health, school and community support service systems in suicide evidence-based practices. She currently leads Florida's Zero Suicide Learning Collaborative and the Florida Zero Suicide Coalitions Alliance.

THANK YOU

TO OUR SPONSORS

CHAMPION OF HOPE SPONSOR



LIFELINE SPONSOR



COMMUNITY ADVOCATE SPONSOR





MERIDIAN HEALTHCARE

Meridian has been proudly serving communities throughout North Central Florida with compassionate care since 1971. We have expanded our service area to include 13 patient service centers to better support those who face mental health and substance use challenges. Our services include inpatient, residential treatment, outpatient, and community-based programs. For the convenience of our patients, we also offer a primary care clinic, a pharmacy, programs for moms in recovery, support services for veteran families, housing programs, transitional housing, telehealth appointments and more. We are more than a crisis center but a community and a community resource.

Our values require H.E.A.R.T

Hope —

A healthy dose of hope helps us stay positive on the most challenging days.

Empathy —

We are committed to compassion, understanding and genuine human connection

Accountability —

We all have the responsibility to work with integrity as we strive to deliver high-quality care.

Resilience —

Our community depends on us to show up and continually give our best.

Teamwork —

Collaboration is key to providing exceptional care.

SCAN HERE TO
**LEARN
MORE**



“Backyard Giving”

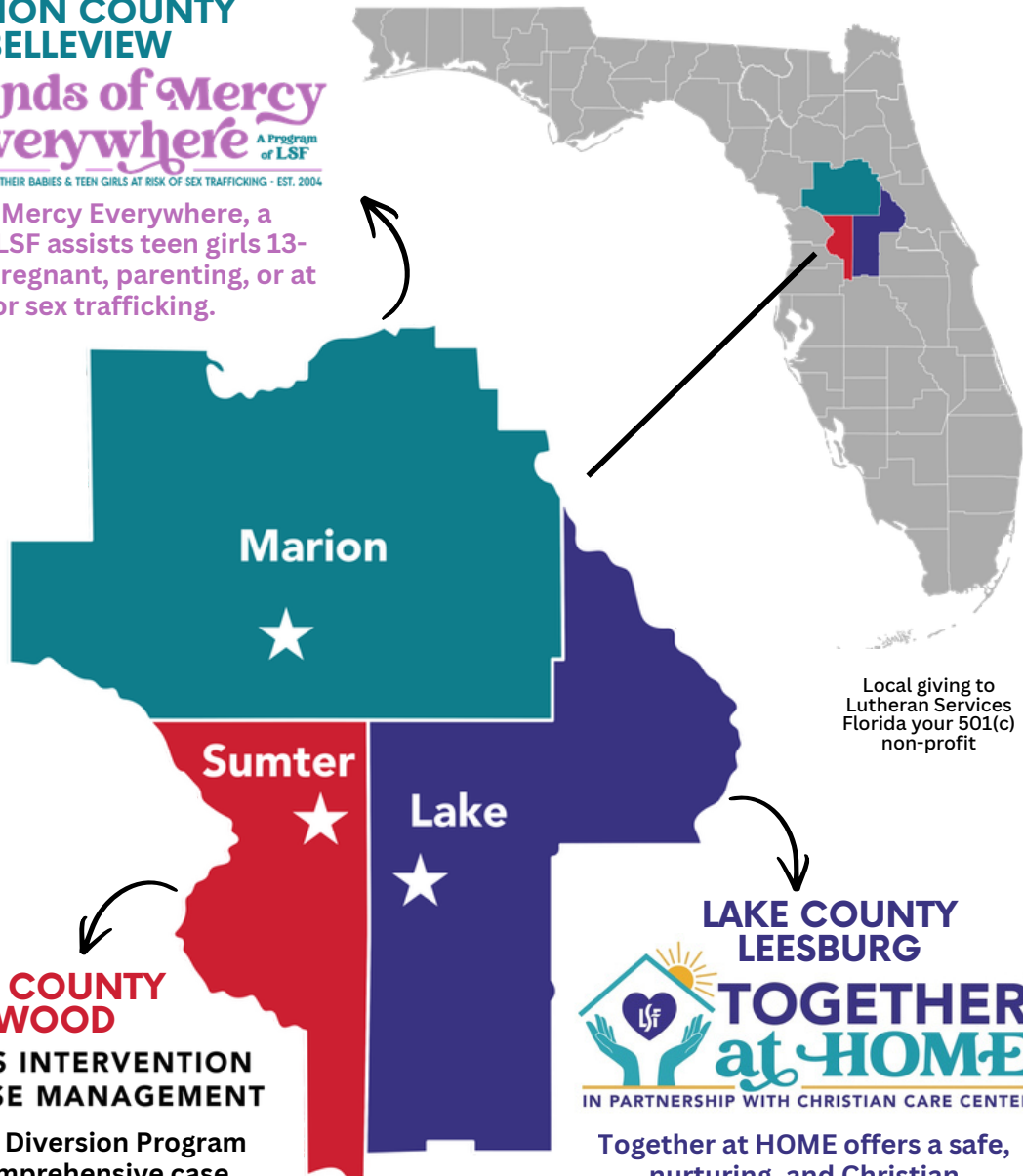


**SUPPORT OUR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE
MARION, LAKE AND
SUMTER COUNTIES**

**MARION COUNTY
BELLEVUE**



Hands of Mercy Everywhere, a program of LSF assists teen girls 13-17, who are pregnant, parenting, or at risk for sex trafficking.



**SUMTER COUNTY
WILDWOOD**



**CRISIS INTERVENTION
& CASE MANAGEMENT**

Our CMO and Diversion Program provides comprehensive case management services designed to create positive outcomes for those in need.

**LAKE COUNTY
LEESBURG**



Together at HOME offers a safe, nurturing, and Christian environment for at-risk youth, specifically sibling groups between the ages of 12 and 17.

PORTICO[®]

Benefit Services | A Ministry of the ELCA

Portico Benefit Services exists to provide employee benefits that **empower people to live well** so they can make a positive difference in the world **as they serve others.**

**Health
Benefits**

**Life &
Disability
Benefits**

Retirement



Learn more at:

PorticoBenefits.org

Zero Hour Life Center (ZHLC) is a Recovery Community Organization dedicated to its mission “to bridge the gap between professional treatment and long-term recovery from substance use disorders.” Founded in 2018 and based in Ocala, Florida, ZHLC has grown into a regional provider of peer-driven recovery services serving individuals and families across nine counties.

At the heart of ZHLC’s work is the belief that recovery does not end when treatment ends. People need connection, encouragement, resources, and ongoing support as they navigate life in recovery. ZHLC’s trained peer support specialists, individuals with their own lived experience of recovery, help bridge that gap by walking alongside people during some of the most challenging points in their recovery journey.

ZHLC provides a broad continuum of peer recovery services, including peer recovery coaching, peer recovery support groups, peer navigation, community outreach and engagement, recovery education, and professional development and training for peer support specialists. Programs serve adults, young people, individuals involved with the criminal justice system, and people seeking support following an overdose or behavioral health crisis.

Through its Hospital Bridge and Jail Bridge programs, ZHLC connects individuals with peer support, treatment options, recovery resources, and community services during critical transitions. ZHLC also provides teen recovery programming, creating opportunities for young people to develop recovery skills, build supportive connections, and strengthen their sense of hope and purpose.

ZHLC operates Erik’s Place, a 24/7 peer crisis respite house, providing short-term supportive housing for individuals following an overdose. Guests receive a safe, recovery-focused environment, peer support, connections to treatment and community resources, and assistance developing a plan for continued recovery.

Through partnerships with healthcare providers, behavioral health organizations, criminal justice systems, government agencies, and community organizations, ZHLC works to strengthen the recovery ecosystem and expand access to meaningful, long-term support.

The Time for Change is NOW.



Zero Hour Life Center

Recovery Community Organization

The time for change is..NOW!



RESPIRE HOUSE BY ZERO HOUR LIFE CENTER

HEALTH TECH CONSULTANTS

Every community faces complex challenges. Strengthening behavioral health, improving healthcare systems, preventing suicide, addressing substance use, and advancing public health require more than good intentions—they require thoughtful leadership, meaningful collaboration, and the ability to turn information into action.

For more than three decades, HealthTech Consultants has helped organizations do just that.

HealthTech partners with public health agencies, healthcare systems, behavioral health providers, educational institutions, and community organizations to design stronger programs, measure meaningful outcomes, and improve services that make a difference in people's lives. Rather than treating evaluation as the final step in a project, HealthTech sees it as an essential part of building programs that learn, adapt, and create lasting impact.

The firm's work spans every stage of program development—from strategic planning and evaluation design to data collection, analysis, reporting, and continuous quality improvement. HealthTech's value goes beyond technical expertise; it lies in connecting people, ideas, data, and systems to create a clear path forward.

HealthTech understands that successful programs are not built by reports alone. They are built through conversations, partnerships, and a deep understanding of the communities they serve. By listening first, asking thoughtful questions, and translating complex information into practical guidance, HealthTech helps organizations make confident decisions that strengthen programs and improve outcomes.

As organizations face growing expectations for accountability, measurable impact, and responsible use of resources, access to information has never been greater. Yet information alone does not solve complex problems. Progress requires experience, context, sound judgment, and trusted partners who help leaders navigate uncertainty while staying focused on what matters most.

HealthTech Consultants is proud to support the Zero Suicide Communities initiative and the organizations committed to creating systems of care that save lives, strengthen communities, and ensure every individual is seen, supported, and given hope. Together, we can build programs that do more than measure success—we can create it.



Building healthier communities across Florida. We believe the best results come when we work hand-in-hand with you.

Optum Behavioral Health is honored to serve individuals, families, children and adolescents throughout Florida. By partnering with providers, community organizations and public agencies, together we are transforming behavioral health care and supporting suicide prevention efforts.

Our core focus areas:

- **Whole person care:** Since co-morbid conditions can complicate treatment, enhanced care coordination allows behavioral, medical and ancillary providers to easily support members as one team. Clinical assessments, criteria and guidelines help care teams develop shared, equitable and evidence-based treatment plans.
- **High-quality treatment:** Our goal is to help all members become active participants in their health care. Network providers have access to behavioral health toolkits, assessments, complex case management and targeted programs to help deliver timely, high-quality care for better health outcomes.
- **Simplifying administrative tasks:** We're committed to delivering a best-in-class experience for both you and your members. One that eases administrative burdens and lessens authorization requirements. After all, your time is best spent doing what you do best – caring for members.
- **Building hope, healing and recovery:** Better behavioral care starts with listening, caring and acting. It means helping people find care and support – whether they're dealing with everyday life or something more complex – in a way that's easy to understand and access. And it's underscored by treatment plans built on evidence-based resources, tools and services.



- Mobile Crisis Services
- Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP)
- Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP)
- Community Wrap-Around Services
- Peer Support Solutions
- Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT)
- Homebuilders®
- Nurse-Family Partnership®
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- Multisystemic Therapy (MST)
- Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

Join us — Together, we can save lives.

We're looking for behavioral health providers like you in Florida – providers who share our commitment to expanding access to proven interventions and to creating pathways to resilience, recovery and long-term wellness.

Interested? Email us at care.coordination@optum.com to start a conversation. (Please include FL in the subject line.)



*Honored to support
LSF Health Systems
in its commitment
to fostering hope,
strengthening
connections, and
advancing advocacy
for individuals and
families impacted by
mental illness.*





EVERY LIFE MATTERS.
EVERY SECTOR HAS A ROLE.
JOIN THE MOVEMENT
FOR ZERO SUICIDE.

LSF Health Systems is launching Zero Suicide Communities, **an initiative to help prevent suicide.**

Zero Suicide is an aspirational, but essential goal.

By learning the warning signs, reaching out to those we see struggling and making a few changes in the workplace, **we can prevent suicide.**

WILL YOU TAKE THE
PLEDGE?

SCAN
HERE OR
VISIT



WWW.ZEROSUICIDECOMMUNITIES.ORG