



AVOYELLES COMMUNITY & YOUTH COALITION

Fall 2019

IT STARTS HERE

Avoyelles Parish



FROM THE COORDINATOR

Welcome Avoyelles!! The Avoyelles Community and Youth Coalition is very happy to present the first edition of a youth magazine, "It Starts Here-----Avoyelles Parish." The coalition is thrilled to present to Avoyelles Parish a magazine that will highlight positive events that our youth are participating in. We are so proud of the wonderful things that our youth are involved in and want to ensure that the local communities can share in their excitement.

First, I would like to give everyone a little bit of history regarding the Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition. In 2003, Act 1225 of the 2003 Louisiana Legislative Session and the Louisiana Children's Cabinet, enacted law that each parish would be responsible in developing youth planning boards. These boards had the responsibility to address many issues and needs of local youth and help coordinate services and programs to help address these needs. The role for the youth planning boards was to encourage positive development. Members included stakeholders from education, behavioral health, social services, faith community, business community, judges, early childhood development, prosecutors, parent organizations, law enforcement, youth serving organizations, as well as community volunteers and youth. After 2003, the coalition was established and began helping with issues concerning our local youth. The two organizations merged for the betterment of services to our youth.

For the last three years, the platform for the coalition was suicide prevention. In January 2019, the coalition was afforded the opportunity to change the platform to Reducing Underage Drinking Ages 9-20. Avoyelles Parish ranked in the top ten parishes in the state for underage drinking beginning age of 9. These statistics were obtained through the Community Caring Youth Survey's, which are conducted in the Avoyelles Parish School System grades 6th-12th. These surveys are conducted every two years. The results of the survey did reveal Avoyelles Parish ranked higher than the State average in 5 categories. These categories included 1) 30 Day Use of Alcohol, (consuming more than 5 alcoholic drinks within 30 days); 2) Binge Drinking; 3) Parental Permission; 4) Relative Permission and 5) 21 or Older Purchasing the alcohol for the youth.

The Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition's goal is to spread awareness. Our goal is to get community members and families to think about helping our youth make healthy choices and to think about cultures. We look to prevent our youth from being involved in a fatality, due to consumption of alcohol and getting behind the wheel of a vehicle and driving. The coalition is comprised of such a wonderful diverse group of individuals and I'm honored to have each-and-every one of them working together to help spread the awareness here in Avoyelles Parish.

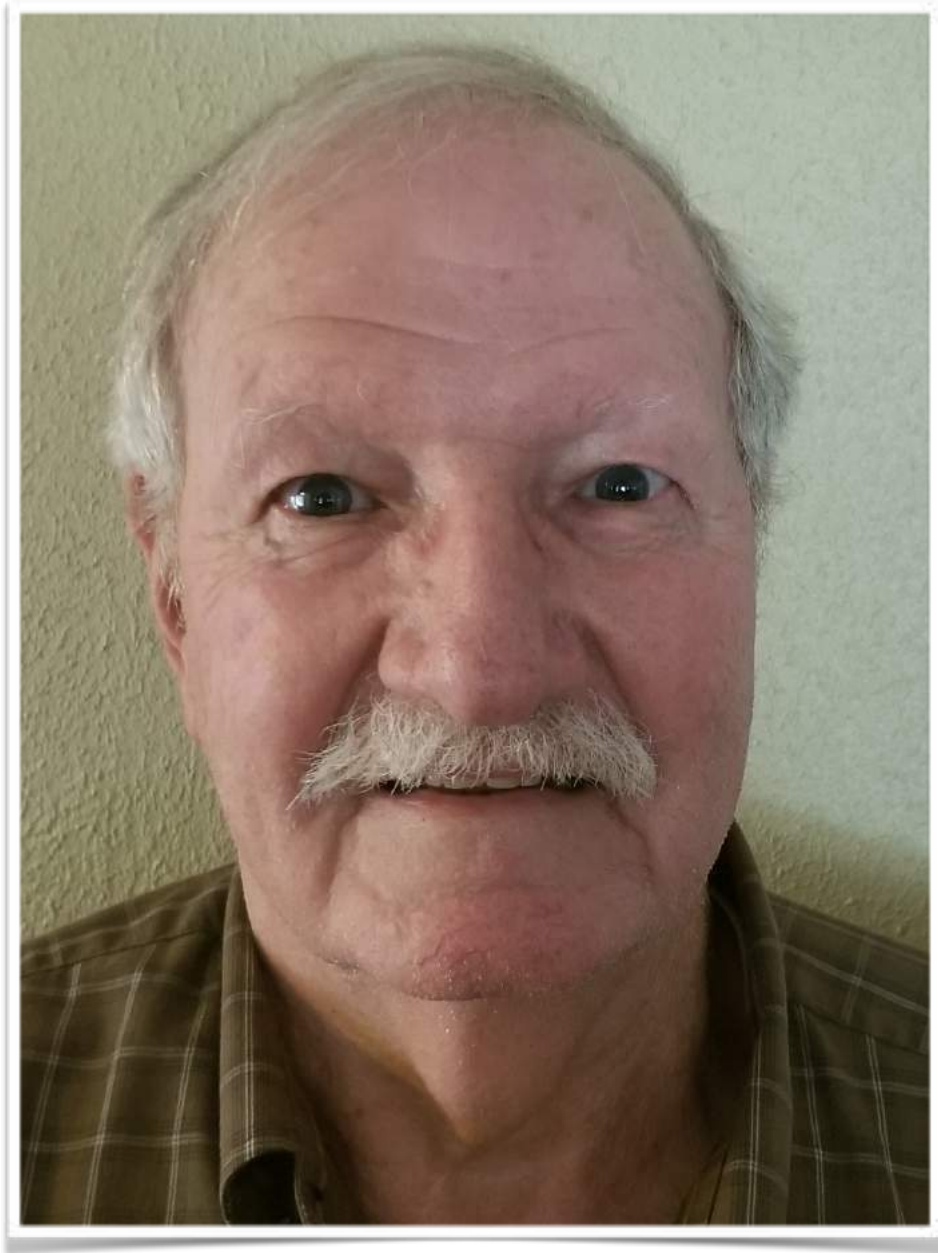
I'm pleased to share with you that our magazine is through the efforts of the youth members of this coalition. The name of the magazine was also decided by our youth and I'm proud of the effort that they have made to help make this first edition successful. I would like to extend to all of Avoyelles Parish to consider volunteering a little time to help our coalition help our youth. Remember, they are our future. The coalition looks forward to working with the high schools this coming school year. I invite you to check out our webpage at www.avoyellescyc.org. I hope that everyone enjoys the first edition.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Donna".



Donna Desoto

Mrs. Donna Desoto was named Coordinator of the Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition in 2019 and has served as chairman for the past three years. Mrs. Desoto is a retired Probation/ Parole Supervisor with Office of Juvenile Justice. She has served as the Director of Teen Court of Avoyelles, Inc., for the past 23 years and was a CASA Coordinator for four years, helping children and making a difference in children's lives. Mrs. Desoto is currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Marksville Chamber of Commerce, a Rotarian and President of the Spring Bayou Water Works District. Her passion is giving back to the community and helping children and helping them to be successful. In her spare time, she enjoys camping, gardening and fishing.



John Gagnard

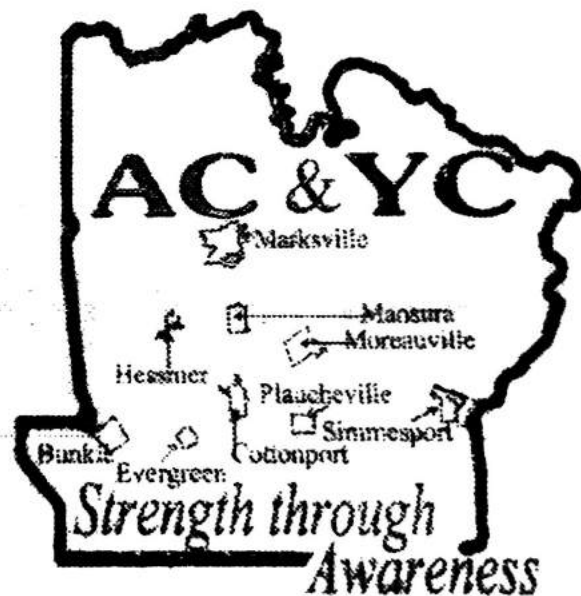
Mr. John Gagnard is married to Judy Guillot Gagnard and he has one daughter, Dr. Rhonda Gagnard Leopold. He is a proud grandfather of three children. John currently serves as Vice Chairman to the Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition. John is currently a CASA Advocate, a Rotarian, and Financial Secretary for the Marksville Knights of Columbus Council #1217. John serves as treasury for the Lions Club of Marksville and currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Marksville Chamber of Commerce, ASDD of Avoyelles Parish and serves as Intake Officer for Teen Court of Avoyelles, Inc.



Kitty Wynn

Mrs. Kitty Wynn was recently named Director of Prevention Services and has served the last ten years as a Regional Prevention Coordinator and Coalition Liaison and Technical Assistant to the eight Parish Coalitions that Central Louisiana Human Services District is part of. She has also served the community with Drug Prevention Outreach and Educational Services. Mrs. Wynn is licensed through the Addictive Disorders Regulatory Authority and achieved her license in 2013. She has also served the district in the Addictive Disorders Clinic as a Counselor in Training, wherein she performed assessments and referrals for those seeking addiction treatment. Mrs. Wynn served many years as a Paralegal and has more than 20 years in the field of accounting. Her passions lie in the service of her community through volunteerism for the underserved. In her spare time, she enjoys cooking, travel, golfing and reading.

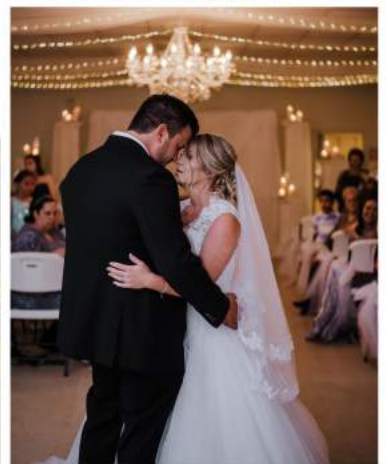
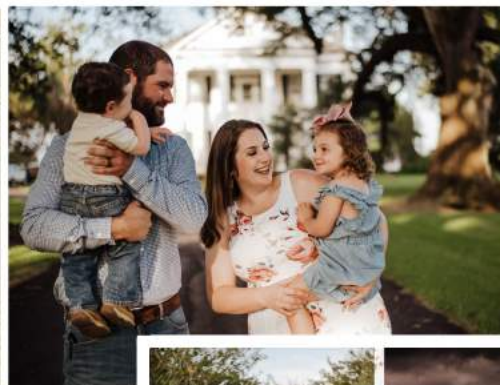
MEMBERS OF AVOYELLES COMMUNITY & YOUTH COALITION





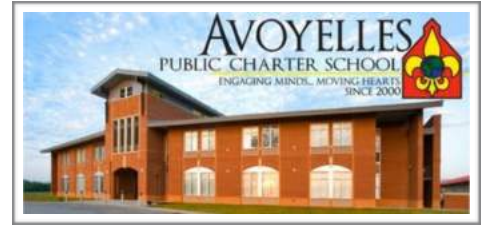
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Project Graduation 2019

Feelin' the V19E

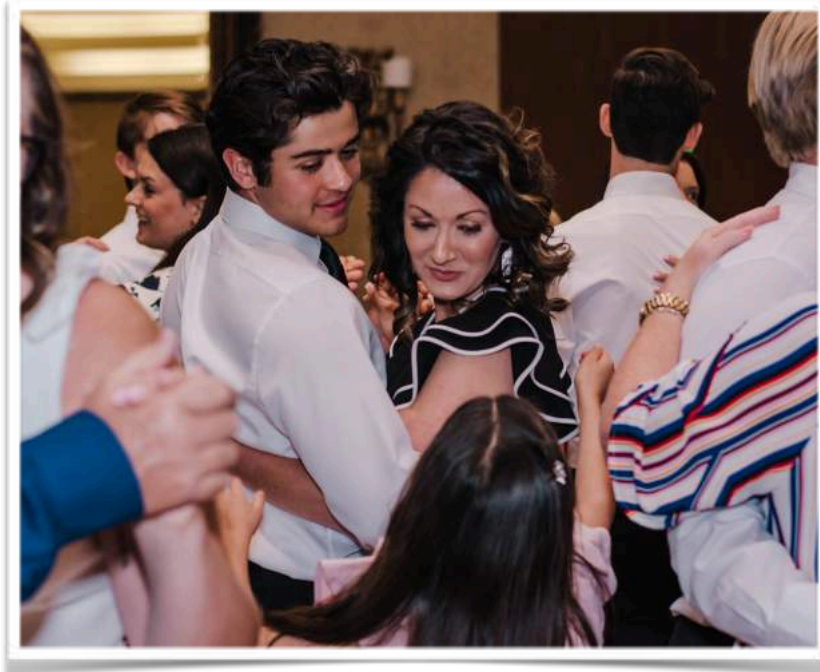


Graduation night, that once in a lifetime event. On this cold night, mother nature was not cooperating with the exciting plans for the seniors of Avoyelles Public Charter School for the "Project Graduation celebration." The theme this year was "2019 Feelin' the V19E". The seniors were headed to Gator Grounds RV Park in Bay Hills for a night filled with laughter, swimming, sliding and prizes. These seniors would be celebrating their graduation night with their classmates in a safe environment, one that would be alcohol free!!



This celebration took a great deal of planning and work for the project to be successful. This is an all-night retreat offered to the graduating seniors. With the support of Avoyelles Public Charter School Director, Julie C. Roy, Dean of Students Lori A. Thames, and the faculty, senior parents become organized and began to plan graduation night for their seniors. A committee was formed at the first meeting and the parents did discuss the date, location, theme, activities and the projected cost. The parents were able to approach local businesses, to gain support for Project Graduation through food, beverage or monetary donations. The result of their hard work and planning, the seniors received prize packages worth \$250 and everyone was able to enjoy their last night together as, "The APCS Class of 2019." Wendy McCann, a committee member said of the project, "the students enjoyed the hot tubs, water slides and the pools all during the night." The seniors also enjoyed a hypnotist, had great food and beverages and music the entire night. Wendy stated, "I was very happy to offer my time, in order to provide a safe and exciting event for our senior students."

Laurie Gauthier, fellow committee member also felt that Project Graduation was a success. Laurie shared that the committee received positive feedback from the senior parents and parents indicated how appreciative they were that their children had a safe, fun filled graduation night. "I am very pleased on how the night went and I would do it again," she said.



Committee member Lauri Knoll, whose son was a member of APCS graduating class, shared that as her son entered his senior year, she had no worries concerning post-graduation parties and the risk of drinking and driving for him as well as fellow students. Project Graduation had been in place with Avoyelles Public Charter School and was well organized. Laurie stated that she knew that students would be able to enjoy an alcohol free, parent supervised after party and lock in. Lauri shared knowing that no one was able to leave unsupervised or drive away and absolutely no drinking was comforting. "When I was asked to be on the 2019 Project Graduation Committee, I was extremely excited to be a part of a committee which I held in such high standard and admired." The organization was able to provide an after party of fun and safety from start to finish. The children were safely in their homes, the day after graduation. Lauri stated, "I hope this idea can be infectious throughout our surrounding community and throughout the state."



As for myself, Donna Desoto, I can describe the night as remarkable. The senior parents did give their blessings for Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition to attend the graduation and after party, in order to learn about Project Graduation and to experience the excitement. Photographer Brittney Juneau and I enjoyed the company of the seniors and committee members and shared their laughter and joy. It was simply priceless to observe the excitement when they received their prize packages. I could not help but reflect to my graduation night and reminiscing, as I knew this would be their last night together as, "The Class of 2019." I admired their bravery, as they slid down the water slides into the cold pool water, with night-time temperatures in the 50's and had to laugh watching them scurry to the hot tubs to warm up.



The opportunity to share this incredible night was pure joy. As a parent and a grandparent, I recognize the importance of providing safe activities for our children. It was so refreshing to see parents arriving at 5am the following morning to pick up their son or daughter. Stop and think how awesome it is to know these children had a fun filled night with their friends, with no alcohol and was able to return home safely and not become a statistic in Avoyelles Parish. No fatalities!! The Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition would like to thank Avoyelles Public Charter School for allowing us to be a part of the Viking Family.



YOU ARE THE FUTURE OF OUR PARISH!
HAVE A SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE SCHOOL YEAR!
LET'S BUILD A BETTER AVOYELLES TOGETHER!
GOD BLESS!



Daryl Deshotel for State Representative

#67



#76

ALISSA PIAZZA TASSIN



CLERK *of* COURT







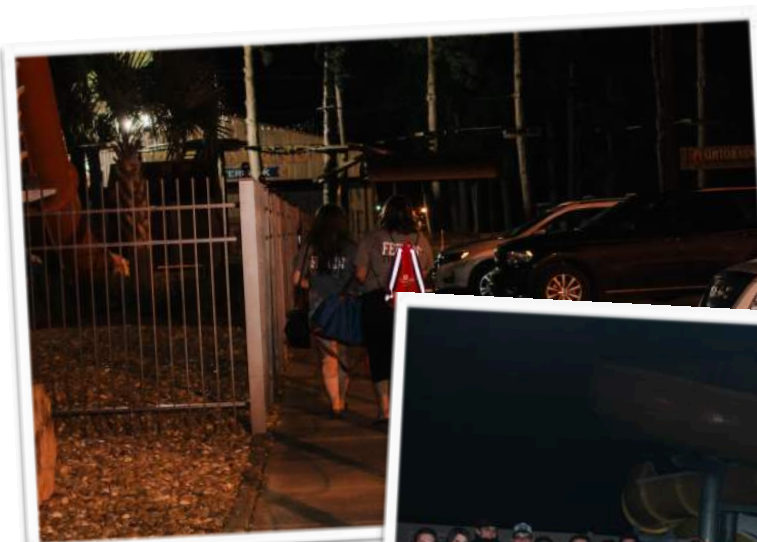
JOHNSON FOR Sheriff

New Sheriff ~ New Priorities

Central Louisiana Juvenile Detention Facility



CLJDF SUPPORTS THE MISSION OF REDUCING
UNDERAGE DRINKING AGES 9-20



For Robert Johnson, leadership comes naturally.
Prosecutor. Judge. Victims Rights advocate. State Representative.
A leader in his church and in our community. Robert Johnson is
a proven job creator, a champion for children and teachers
and he's 100% Pro-Gun and Pro-Life.

He gets things done and will represent our values in the State Senate.



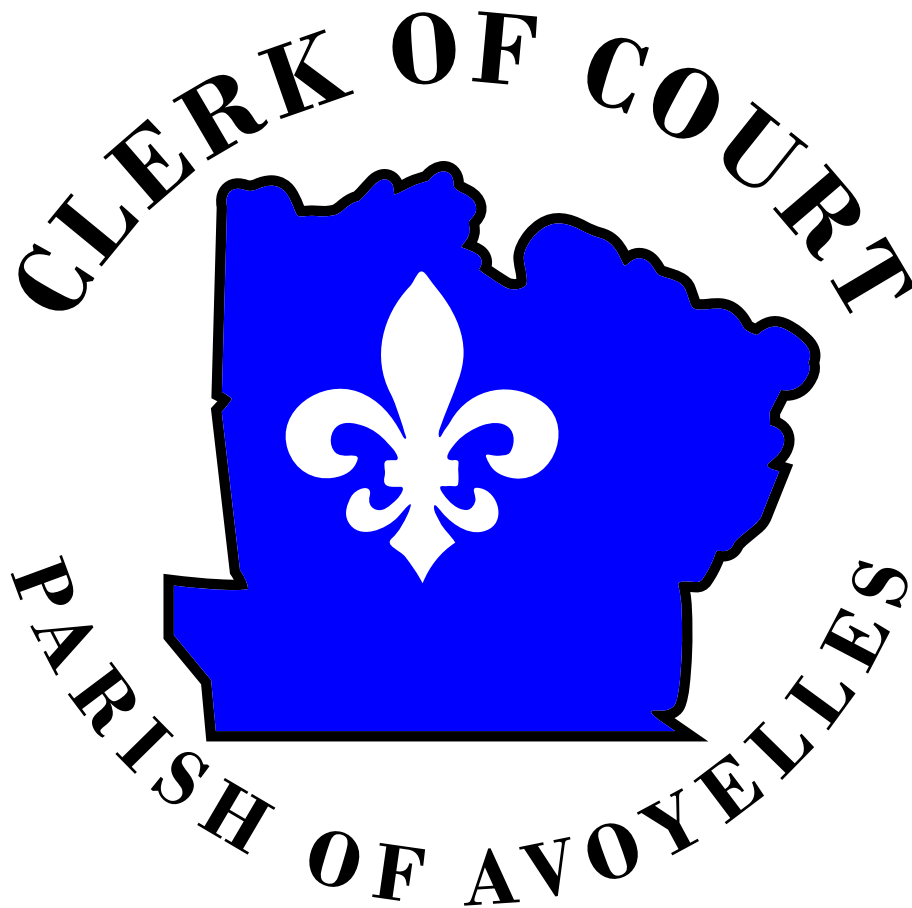
- 🦩 Secured funding for new Juvenile Justice Center, bringing 90 good paying jobs to our community
- 🦩 Led the charge to increase education funding by \$40 million, after years of cuts, including the first permanent teacher pay raise in almost a decade
- 🦩 Pro Gun, Proven Job Creator and 100% Pro Life, receiving the Legislative Pro-Life Award multiple times
- 🦩 Leadership to expand access to affordable health care to hundreds of thousands of Louisianans
- 🦩 Worked closely with Governor John Bel Edwards to reverse the bad budget policies of Bobby Jindal, erasing a \$2 billion deficit that threatened our hospitals, schools and economy
- 🦩 Stopped Bobby Jindal's plan to privatize our local prison, saving 400 jobs
- 🦩 Brought nearly \$85 million for roads, bridges, infrastructure, creating jobs in our region

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PAID FOR BY ROBERT JOHNSON FOR STATE SENATE

PLEASE ELECT

CONNIE F. DESSELLE



#74

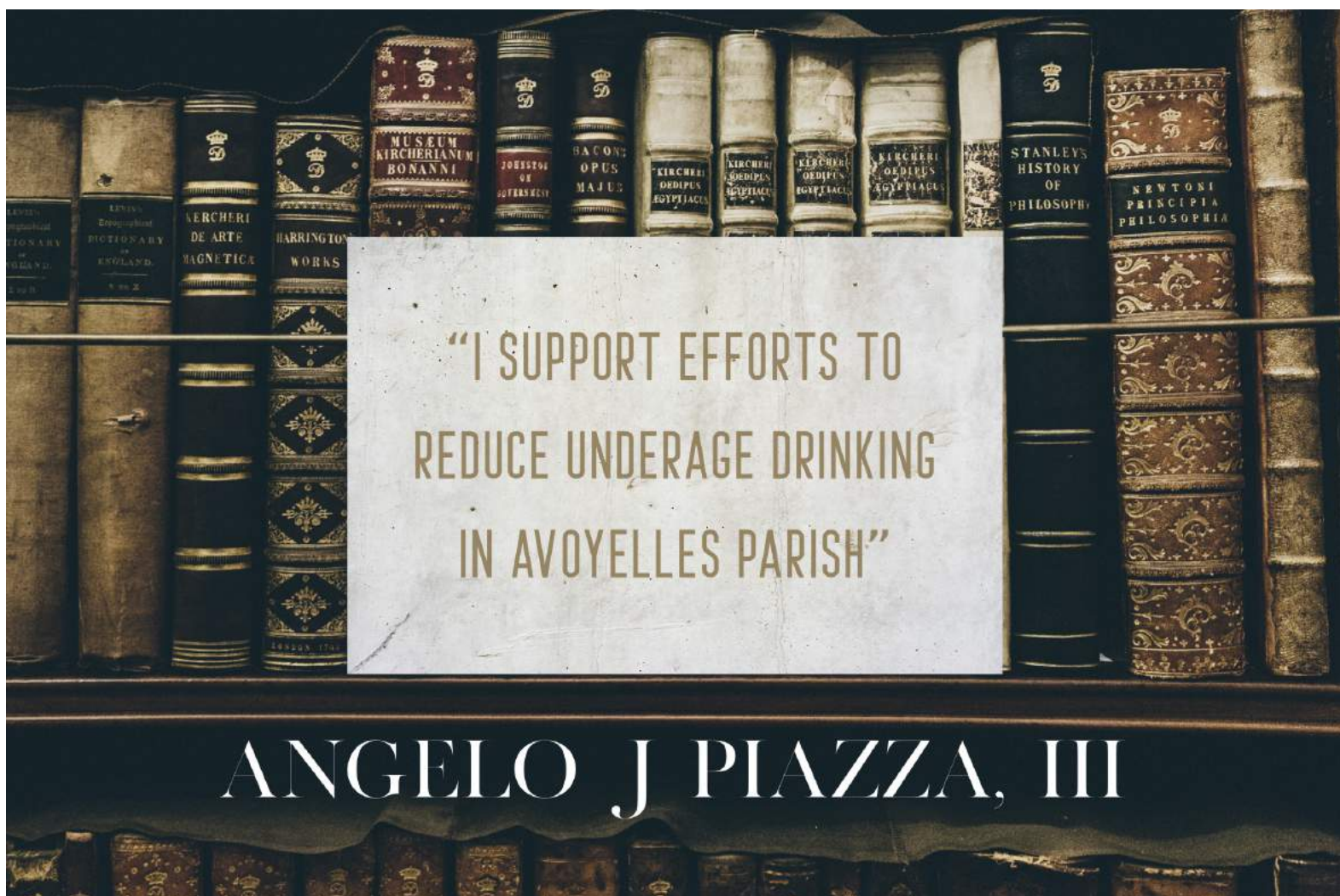
2019

YOUTH COALITION MEETING



Above picture: Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition Coordinator Donna Desoto and Vice Chairman John Gagnard speaking with the 2019 senior class members of the Avoyelles Public Charter School regarding making healthy choices and the dangers regarding underage drinking.

Pictured Right: District Attorney Charles Riddle spoke with the 2019 senior class of Avoyelles Public Charter School regarding the laws and penalties of consuming alcohol under the legal drinking age of 21.



“DID YOU KNOW?”

Every two years, the Community Caring Youth Surveys are conducted in the Avoyelles Parish Schools 6th grade through 12th grade. The following statistics are the results of the survey conducted in 2016. These statistics resulted in determining that Avoyelles Parish ranked in the top ten parishes for underage drinking beginning at age 9, thus resulting in an initiative of Reducing Underage Drinking Ages 9-20.

- 1.) 30-day Use- Percentage of youth indicating any alcohol use in the past 30 days. 25.7%
- 2.) Youth Binge Drinking-Percentage of youth indicating binge drinking (5 or more drinks in a row) in the past two weeks. 16.9%
- 3.) Age of First Use Ever-Average age of reported first alcohol use 12.90%
- 4.) Age at First Use Regularly- Average age of reported first drinking alcoholic beverages regularly one to two times per month 14.04%
- 5.) Perception of Risk-Percentage of youth indicating that people are at moderate or great risk of harming themselves physically or other ways if they drink 1 or 2 drinks nearly every day. 57.3%
- 6.) Perceived Use by Peers-The percentage of youth students in your grade who you think drank alcohol sometime in the past month. 60.6%
- 7.) Youth Obtain Alcohol w/fake ID-Percentage of youth who indicated that when they used alcohol in the past year they usually bought alcohol themselves using a fake ID. 5.3%
- 8.) Youth Obtain Alcohol at home w/Parent Permission 29.4%
- 9.) Youth Obtain Alcohol at home w/o Parent Permission 16.2%
- 10.) Youth Obtain Alcohol w/Relative (not a parent) 31.1%
- 11.) Youth Obtain Alcohol -Stranger 9.4%
- 12.) Youth Obtain Alcohol -Someone Over 21 (obtained or purchased alcohol) 35.6%
- 13.) Youth Obtain Alcohol -Someone Under 21 (obtained alcohol from someone under the age of 21) 17.4%
- 15.) Youth Obtain Alcohol bought w/o Fake ID 8.6%

The following categories indicate that Avoyelles Parish outranked the State average:

- 1) 30 Day Use - Avoyelles - 25.7% State - 18.1%
- 2) Binge Drinking - Avoyelles - 16.9% State - 10.4%
- 3) Youth Obtain Alcohol w/Parent's Permission Avoyelles - 29.4% State - 21.9%
- 4) Youth Obtain Alcohol w/Relative's Permission Avoyelles - 31.1% State - 23.9%
- 5) Youth Obtain Alcohol Someone Over Age 21 Avoyelles - 35.6% State - 30.4%





Nay's Child Care and Preschool & Nay's Infant Center

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Reyne Beridon, Director
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CONGRATULATIONS



The Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition would like to congratulate Kylie Callegari for creating the name of the magazine, "It Starts Here." Kylie is 16 years of age and is a junior at the Avoyelles Public Charter School. Kylie has attended APCS since 2008 and currently resides in Cottonport, La. She is a member of the APCS band and has played the clarinet since the 5th grade. Kylie has been a member of Club Soccer for two years and during this past summer, Kylie volunteered at the local animal shelter. She is a member of the Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition, as well Teen Court of Avoyelles, Inc. Kylie plans on attending McNeese University when she graduates and wants to become a Biological Engineer.



#71

Re Elect Sheriff Doug Anderson

Honesty, Integrity, Know-How.

"During my tenure as Sheriff, I have worked very hard to bring HONESTY, INTEGRITY and OPENNESS to this department. We have also made great strides in becoming a PROFESSIONAL, EFFICIENT and RESPECTED law enforcement agency. A Sheriff's office that has gained state wide respect, I enter this election year proud of what we have accomplished, aware that our work is not done, and other challenges lay ahead. I will remain committed and meet these challenges head on with the honesty and integrity the people of Avoyelles Parish deserve."

-Doug Anderson



Reducing Underage Drinking



*Everyone's
Responsibility!*

Project of Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition