

Joint Juvenile Justice Council of Iroquois County Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2025

I. WELCOME

The Juvenile Justice Council of Iroquois County held a meeting on Friday, December 12, 2025. The meeting commenced from 10:00 a.m. - Noon in the EMA room at the Iroquois County Courthouse in Watseka. Coalition members and potential members were invited by email, radio, social media, and website to attend this meeting either in person or via Zoom. The email invite included a Zoom link.

In-person guests were given a meeting agenda and reminded to sign-in. Barb King, JJC Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Verbal introductions were heard from both those present at the meeting and those attending virtually.

Members present at the meeting were:

- Barb King - Iroquois County Probation Department, Iroquois County Juvenile Justice Council Chairperson
- Jenni McTaggart - Iroquois County State's Attorney Office, JJC Prevention Coordinator/Educator
- Sarah Pree - Iroquois County State's Attorney Office, JJC Communication Campaign and YPE Coordinator
- Taylor - Harbor House Outreach Advocate
- Alexia - Harbor House Prevention Advocate
- Clint Perzee - Iroquois County Sheriff
- Liz Gibson - Birth to Five Illinois Regional Council Manager
- Suzanne Berrones - Birth to Five Administrative Support for Region 32
- Jed Whitlow - Iroquois County Opioid Coalition Co-Chair, Iroquois County Board Member, Retired Police Officer
- Mary Kay Lavicka - Iroquois Memorial Hospital Community Outreach Director
- Kira Ebert - State Representative Jason Bunting's Chief of Staff
- Barry Lee - Iroquois Mental Health Center Clinical Director
- Amy Zabel - Iroquois Mental Health Center Director
- Charles Cox - Illinois National Guard
- Jacob Mozingo - Illinois National Guard
- Scott Anderson - Emergency Management Agency Director
- Lori Mollema - Iroquois -Kankakee Regional Office of Education/Pledge for Life Partnership - Life Education Center Director
- Robin Allen - Iroquois County Public Health Department Director
- Taylor Roche - Iroquois County Public Health Department Health Educator
- Jamie Kozma - Nexus-Onarga Family Healing Executive Director

II. JJC INFORMATION/GRANT UPDATES

A. IL MAR Update

Sheriff Perzee reported that the Iroquois County Jail has 17 residents with 4 currently receiving the Medically Assisted Recovery shots given every 30 days each. He also reported receiving funds to work with a recovery reentry counselor from the Iroquois Mental Health Center.

B. 501c3 Application & Other Funding Opportunities

The JJC Chairperson, Barb King, reported that the Drug Free Communities grant application for Years 6-10 was postponed. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy has decided to recompetite the Awards for the 2025 DFC Support Program to ensure that applicants are in compliance with the President's Executive Orders. The new recompetite NOFO should be released on Monday, December 15th with a late January deadline. In the meantime, the Iroquois-Kankakee Regional Office of Education's Life Education Center programming funds assisted in keeping the JJC staff on until the awarded funds came in from the 708 Board. These 708 funds were 85% of the requested budget so King stated that changes to the budget were in the works and will be noticed in the JJC outputs, but that the staff is working hard to make the best use of the money allotted to make the most difference. King also stated that the JJC will now move ahead with the 501c3 application to see if the JJC can write for local grants to keep prevention efforts growing in Iroquois County.

McTaggart shared that Robinson Chiropractic of Watseka had once again chosen the TIP the Scale campaign as the local community organization that they support this month with the intent that these monies would enable the JJC to host alternative and educational activities and events for teens throughout the county and to disperse our T.I.P. the Scale messaging to parents and teens to help deter underage drug and alcohol use in Iroquois County. As Robinson's Chiropractic December special, new patients receive a consult, exam and X-rays for only \$65 with \$20 proceeds benefitting our campaign. Proceeds from last December's special (\$720) enabled the JJC to host their Teen Mental Health PSA Contest this past spring.

III. YOUTH PREVENTION EDUCATION UPDATES

A. Too Good for Drugs

Pre stated that the JJC's 7th grade, 8th grade, and high school Too Good for Drugs (TGFD) youth prevention education programming is being taught this school year in Milford. St. John's is teaching the 8th grade program and Cissna Park is implementing the 7th and 8th grade curriculum. Donovan is only teaching the high school programming. We have fewer schools this year, as St. Paul's Lutheran School and Christ Lutheran High School only do the program every other year, as they have smaller class sizes and fewer staff to implement the program. Both Donovan's 7th and 8th grades have opted out of using the program this year, as they purchased a new SEL program that will be taught in its place. She reminded members that I-KAN supplies this

same programming for the bigger schools in our county, including Central, Iroquois West and Watseka. Lori Mollema, the Life Education Center Director, stated that it is going well in those schools. She noted that one of these schools is having trouble with implementation. She will reach out after break to discuss this matter further. Pree reminded members that the TGF program is being implemented by trained teachers in each school. These educators will once again be given a \$30 Amazon gift card as a thank you for teaching this important curriculum.

B. Life Education Center programming

McTaggart reported that the JJC is continuing to partner with the Iroquois-Kankakee Regional Office of Education and the Pledge for Life Partnership to bring Life Education Center (LEC) youth prevention education to K-6th grade students throughout Iroquois County for the 2025-2026 school year. As shown in the slide, Iroquois West School District, Milford School District, Crescent City School District, Cissna Park School District and Donovan Junior High School have been taught so far. The rest of the schools will begin again in January starting with St. Paul Lutheran School.

IV. COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN UPDATES

A. Local LEC Billboard Design Winner

McTaggart reminded members that the JJC partners with I-KAN and the Pledge for Life Partnership to provide Life Education Center programming for schools in Iroquois County. McTaggart teaches these lessons and encourages the students to take part in the annual billboard design contest. She stated that the contest is open to hundreds of fifth and sixth graders in both Iroquois and Kankakee Counties. The contest provides a way to continue the prevention message after lesson implementation. High school students who serve on the Pfl's Advisory Council choose the winner each year. The chosen winner from this past school year is 7th grader Quinn Butzow from Crescent City who attends Watseka Junior High School. She was in Mrs. O'Brien's classroom last year. Her winning design had first been displayed on a billboard in Kankakee County. The JJC has funded the billboard here in Iroquois County for the month of October, although it is still up free of charge. It is located along the highway between Crescent City and Watseka, near the old Sea Sprite Factory. Congrats again to Quinn on her winning design and helping to spread an important prevention message to the community!

B. Meaningful Moments Campaign

McTaggart stated that the JJC has teamed up with I-KAN and the Pfl once again in a state-wide parent communication campaign focused on reducing underage alcohol use called Meaningful Moments. She showed them on the screen the October poster that was delivered to schools and public buildings throughout the county. Also shown were the September and November postcards and December newsletter. McTaggart explained that this year the stamps for the postcards are attached by persons on

probation seeking service hours through the Iroquois County Probation Department. She stated that the address labels are being attached by our Juvenile Justice Council Student Ambassador, Hudson. The postcards are mailed to all parents of 8th - high school students in Iroquois County. The JJC is delivering these campaign materials in Iroquois County.

C. Red Ribbon Week Coloring Contest

Lori Mollema, the Director of the Life Education Center programming through I-KAN and the Pfl Partnership informed members that the JJC collaborated with them once again in the execution of the Red Ribbon Week Coloring Contest which was held the month of October as a way to spread prevention messaging.. The area schools and libraries were instrumental in encouraging participation and serving as entry collection sites. She said that it went over very well with the 2 county's communities and they received numerous entries in each category. Again, the winners were chosen by the Kankakee County Pfl Advisory Council with all but one category of winners being from Iroquois County! Congrats to all of the winners! They each received an award certificate and a Monica's gift certificate.

D. Red Ribbon Week Door Decorating Contest

Pre stated that Red Ribbon Week (a drug prevention holiday) took place again this year October 23-31. This year's theme was *Life is a puzzle. Solve it drug free.* At the last JJC meeting, we had decided as a group to move forward with hosting a door decorating contest once again this year. Even though the contest had four categories: home, business, classroom and organization, all of the entries came from schools this year. A good thing was that some came in from organizations at the schools, some were classrooms, some were study halls, while others were the school office doors. Therefore, we decided to award winners from multiple categories as follows: Best Craftsmanship, Picture Perfect, Best Use of Puzzle Theme, Best Classic/Nostalgic Design, Student Involvement Award, Most Creative Award, and Most Impactful Message Award. All participants received a sweet treat while the winners received the same plus an Amazon gift card/class, awesome swag and a visit from the JJC's mascot, Ollie the Owl. Pre wrote a thank you for taking part which reads as follows:

This year's Red Ribbon Week theme was Life is a Puzzle, Solve it Drug Free.

Life is full of choices (who you hang around with, what you scroll or watch, what you say yes or no to, how you handle stress, etc).

Sometimes you can see the whole picture and sometimes you can't - like a puzzle.

When you stay drug free, your brain can think clearly.

Clear thinking helps you make good decisions, connect the pieces, and figure things out.

Drugs don't "solve" anything. They actually make assembling the puzzle harder - they take away focus, energy, and good judgement.

You have a future to figure out - protect your brain by making

informed, drug-free decisions so you can complete your life's puzzle

and achieve your goals. Your choices matter!

It's SWEET to be drug free.

Keep making wise choices and TREATing yourself to a healthy, happy future!

E. Harvest Daze Activity

Pree informed members that the JJConce again helped to sponsor the Kidz Zone during Harvest Daze in Watseka on October 4th and 5th. Pree had designed a coloring contest entry page for their annual coloring contest in which 6 winners were chosen afterwards as winners in their age categories. She mentioned that she, Taylor Roche and Scarlett (a JJC Student Ambassador) assisted with crazy paper hat-making, rock painting and Ollie the Owl appearances.

F. WACC Connections Newsletter Ad

Pree stated that the JJC's yearly membership in the Watseka Area Chamber of Commerce includes 4 free quarterly ads in their Connections Newsletter that is emailed out to all chamber members. Our October ad directed readers to our new Student Spotlight initiative and recognized the businesses and agencies who have partnered with us on this endeavor and the January ad will explain and promote the TIP the Scale Tuesday Celebrity Feature on the JJC's social media. It will also encourage people to nominate someone who they deem deserving of the local celebrity status. The premise of the initiative is to highlight adults making positive choices in Iroquois County communities regarding youth. These celebrities are asked to share a TIP for others to learn from of their choice.

G. Student Spotlight Feature

McTaggart reminded members that our Student Spotlight feature began back in September with each junior and senior high school principal being asked to nominate one student in the fall semester who was making good choices and having a positive impact on their school and community. Each Wednesday since, we have featured one junior or senior high school student on both the JJC's Facebook page and website. Principals have now been asked for a second nomination for the spring semester.

What is the premise behind the Student Spotlight initiative? Too often teens believe falsehoods about what will make them "cool" or have misconceptions about how many of their peers are using substances. Studies have shown highlighting youth for making good choices is an effective underage substance use prevention method. The JJC is hoping Student Spotlight will encourage and empower teens to make healthy choices and create a ripple effect. We are very excited to honor these students who have exceptional attitude, character and citizenship. These students will be celebrated as SHINING examples who LIGHT the way for others to follow.

Recognized students each receive an award certificate, as well as gift certificates donated by the following area businesses: Casey's, Cissna Park DQ, CJ's Boutique & Coffee Shop, Front Porch Cafe inside The Gathering, Luke's One Stop, Monical's Pizza, Onarga Theater, Pizza Palace, Steak 'n Shake and Woodby's. The JJC also awards JJC swag to each winner along with a painted rock with prevention messaging for the recipient to keep or rehide for someone else's enjoyment. A meeting reminder email had asked area agencies if they would like to join in this initiative and contribute items as well to show the students that we are all proud of them. Iroquois Memorial Hospital brought in clear stadium bags as a donation. IL State Representative Jason Bunting's office contributed drawstring bags to hold the prizes and whoopie cushions.. Harbor House donated pencil bags with keychains, chapstick, and stickers. Iroquois Mental Health Center donated bags with coping skills for stress/anxiety and pens. WGFA Radio donated pens. The Iroquois County Public Health Department donated pencils. The logos of these partnering agencies were added to the graphic accompanying each Student Spotlight post.

H. WGFA Bonus Spots

Pree gave a shoutout to Stacey Smith at WGFA/The Buckle Radio Station for donating air time on both WGFA and The Buckle Radio while the JJC was without grant funding. It truly meant a lot to the JJC and its members to know that we are all here to help one another out when times get tough and the future is in unrest.

I. TIP the Scale Tuesday Celebrities on Facebook and WGFA/The Buckle

Pree reminded members how successful our TIP the Scale Tuesday Celebrity Facebook posts have been in reaching more of the county's population and spreading our prevention messaging. To date, we have featured over 250 celebrities for their efforts in our community. These local celebrities share a TIP (or advice) with area families. Some of the individuals that we have recently featured/are scheduled to feature include: Clint and Brittni Hoaks (Iroquois County State's Attorney Office/Iroquois County Sheriff's Police), Rachel Zick (Iroquois West Upper Elementary School teacher), Jennifer Dixon (Watseka High School Secretary and Golf Coach), Iroquois County Fair Queen - Rae Stucki, Scott and Nancy Schunke (Knapp Funeral Home and KCC), Kayla Thomas (Watseka School District 1st Grade Teacher - JJC's adopted classroom through the WACC Business Education Partnership and You Program), and Amy Smith (Central School District).

We also post these celebrity TIPs on our TIPtheScale.org website. Many of our featured celebrities have recorded their TIPs to be played as PSA's on WGFA/The Buckle in the past. As funding becomes available, we hope to continue this initiative. Pree reminded those in attendance that we welcome name suggestions for potential future celebrities. She shared that our celebrity posts are currently scheduled through the end of January.

J. Website

McTaggart informed members that the JJC's TIPtheScale.org website has now been upgraded and moved to the Weebly platform. She thanked members for their suggestions from the last JJC meeting. In looking through the different platforms and in talking with Adam, the county's IT professional, she told members that the JJC decided that Weebly would be the most user-friendly, secure, and cost-effective path. She stated that her son, Max - a recent graduate in computer science from ISU, did all of the work for the JJC and even did a tutorial for them. He remains vigilant in answering our many questions as we navigate the new website and the updating process. He has been a true godsend to the JJC. McTaggart reminded members that the TIPtheScale.org website that was created years ago was not secure and was being charged more money for hosting due to the website being outdated. She noted that the previous Mavidea website required quite a bit of knowledge and coding compared to the Weebly platform as well, which ultimately steered them toward the Weebly platform. The JJC is very happy with its move.

K. Family Reading Night

Pree told members that the JJC was invited to take part in the Iroquois West School District's Family Reading Night which was held in November. Since their theme this year was "LEVEL UP", the JJC played on that theme with the phrase "What wise choices can you make to Level Up?" Our JJC Student Ambassador, Hudson, read the book *Knight Owl* to 4 different groups of youth and parents with McTaggart running the slideshow. This is a story of a small owl who dreams of becoming a knight. Through determination, kindness and creativity, the little owl LEVELS UP and proves he can help and protect others in the kingdom as a true knight in his own special way. She said the JJC's mascot, Ollie the Owl, tied in perfectly with the chosen book. Afterwards, Pree discussed with the groups everyday ways that they can LEVEL UP and improve themselves, such as learning a new skill, trying their best, and making positive, healthy choices (eating nutritious foods, drinking water, getting plenty of sleep, exercising, reading, being kind, practicing medication safety, etc.) At the end, some fun owl facts were shared to LEVEL UP the students' knowledge about owls. Upon departure, students were given Ollie the Owl stickers reminding them to continue to make wise choices. What a great (k)night she said!

L. Toilet Times

Pree informed members that the winter edition of the Toilet Times focuses on the upcoming Winter Olympics making it a theme with challenges for teens to start LEVELING UP now to build foundations for future wins they hope to achieve. This proposed edition will offer TIPS for how to LEVEL UP like an Olympian - avoid drugs and alcohol that slow your thinking and reaction time and can cause you to feel unmotivated, - protect your most important piece of equipment (brain), - make Gold Medal-Worthy decisions because every choice you make is practice for who you will become, states risks of teen marijuana use and shares Olympic-related jokes. As usual, the Recovery Resource QR code link is printed at the bottom of each issue. Pree noted that the JJC's Communication Campaign Committee had been emailed a copy of

the draft for their input. A printed copy was shared with all in attendance for feedback as well. This publication hangs in all junior/senior high school bathrooms and youth centers across the county, as well as at the Iroquois County Courthouse, Iroquois Mental Health Center, etc. and will be released in January.

The Spring Issue of the Toilet Times was discussed. At the last meeting, members had discussed the idea to aim the spotlight on continuing research findings on vaping harms (affects brain function leading to depression/mood disorders). A suggestion was made to also draw attention to the fact that, unlike smoking, people can often vape indoors. Thus, people are able to constantly vape and harm their health even more. Members present also asked for it to focus on vaping risks for persons in proximity to those vaping indoors.

M. Harbor House Anti-Bullying Event Collaboration

Pre directed the attention to Taylor at Harbor House for this discussion. Taylor told members that Harbor House is collaborating once again with the JJC and the Iroquois County Sheriff's Department to bring an anti-bullying event to Iroquois County youth in the 6th-12th grades for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and Bullying Prevention. This event is going to replace the former "Bowling Against Bullying" initiative as Lucky Lanes in Iroquois is no longer open for business. Taylor said that the 3 agencies decided to host a Movie Night at the Onarga Theater on February 15 (Sunday) with free admission, pop and popcorn for each participant. The plan is to show an anti-bullying movie, hold trivia/games during intermission, and host a raffle with prizes throughout the evening. Taylor said that she had thought the movie "Inside Out 2" might be a good fit for the event, but asked for suggestions. Chas Cox suggested that the movie "KPop Demon Hunters" on Netflix might be a good fit for this event as it is very popular with teens currently. The committee agreed to watch it first and decide after. Jamie Kozma from Nexus - Onarga Family Healing volunteered to help with prizes. We will keep you updated!

V. YOUTH GROUPS/ACTIVITIES

A. WACC Business Education Partnership and You Program

McTaggart explained to members present that the JJC had been partnered with Mrs. Thomas' 1st Grade Class at Glenn Raymond School for the Watseka Area Chamber of Commerce's Business Education Partnership and You Program this year. She said that the JJC staff had been going into this classroom the 2nd Thursday of every month from 1:20-2:00 p.m. and will continue to do so until the end of this school year. She said that before the activities began, the JJC asked the teacher what she would like them to focus on in her classroom and she had chosen Social Emotional Learning. This pairs very well with JJC's initiatives of helping youth learn to make healthy choices and choose good coping strategies while staying away from those that can hurt them.

McTaggart stated that the first time the JJC went into the classroom in October, we introduced what a coalition was and how the JJC works together to encourage youth to

make healthy choices. The students then worked collaboratively to accomplish a couple different activities showing how teamwork makes a difference... just like in the JJC. The second time the JJC went into the classroom in November, we focused on recognizing emotions/feelings. We read a book together called *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* which evoked conversations about different feelings, the colors we feel associated with each feeling, and what makes us feel each emotion. We then colored a heart portraying what each of our hearts were feeling at the time by using the colors associated with each color. We ended by rolling emotion dice and practicing recognizing facial expressions for each emotion.

The third time the JJC went into the classroom in December, we focused on how kindness can affect our emotions. We read the book *Are You Grumpy, Santa?* which is a story about Santa having a tough day until a few acts of kindness (cookies and a thank-you note) help turn his mood around and remind him of the joy of giving. We learned that emotions change, everyone (even Santa) has rough days, and kindness can truly brighten someone's day. The class brainstormed ways to sprinkle kindness and then utilized these ideas to decorate their own paper Christmas "kindness cookies" by drawing colorful pictures of kind things they can do for others. They proudly shared their ideas and accepted the challenge to sprinkle kindness wherever they go. McTaggart shared that the plan moving forward will be to focus on healthy coping skills.

B. Table Toppers for Red Ribbon Week at Junior High Schools

Pree told the members that in lieu of Lunchtime Trivia this year, the JJC staff decided to create table topper activities for each school to place one activity per day on the lunchroom tables during Red Ribbon Week. The table toppers included trivia flap pages, This or That games, Choose Your Own Adventure-style Stories, word scrambles and mazes. The idea was for the students to peruse these activities while or after eating lunch and discuss with friends nearby. These were distributed to all Junior High Schools in Iroquois County.

C. Prom/Alcohol Awareness Month Ideas to Carry Out at High Schools

Pree explained to the coalition that in the past, the JJC has implemented the following activities in April in high schools in Iroquois County for Prom/Alcohol Awareness Month/Distracted Driving Awareness Month: Lunchtime Trivia Games and Prizes, Postcard & Promotional Item, and Table Toppers (which were tried during RRW in junior high schools this fall). She asked if anyone had any cost-effective suggestions on what the JJC could implement this year without spending money. Members can email Barb King with your ideas or Sarah directly at spree@co.iroquois.il.us.

VI. OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

A. 2026 Illinois Youth Survey

McTaggart directed members to the attention of I-KAN's Lori Mollema for an update. Mollema reminded members that the Illinois Youth Survey (through the U of I's CPRD) takes place every other year so that mainly schools can compare apples to apples to other states. 8th, 10th, and 12th graders will be completing this survey in February and

March of 2026. (This is a self-report survey designed to gather information about a variety of health and social indicators including substance use and perceptions, bullying, school climate, nutrition and physical activity. The results of this survey help to identify needs and promote student health by providing school, county-wide and state data.) Mollema stated that she knows that many may use the results as an instrument in securing grants. She explained that I-KAN helps the schools to get signed up for the survey and helps to facilitate if needed. She said that since the survey is completely done online now, her job is mainly to encourage schools to sign up in a timely fashion and assist with any questions or communication. McTaggart reiterated that the survey is vastly utilized in Iroquois County agencies so if Mollema needed any assistance to just ask for it.

B. School Policy Changes Regarding Vaping Follow-Up

McTaggart referred to the Iroquois County Public Health Department's Director, Robin Allen who then referred to her associate, Taylor Roche. Taylor informed members that Pree, McTaggart and Taylor had met with Mr. Nevills, principal at Watseka Community High School, and discussed the viability of the program and the possibility of using it in schools. Mr. Nevills was meeting with other principals that week and said he would gather their insight for the programming partnership. He was also having a board meeting for Watseka School District and said he would let us know what they said. Communication has stalled, but Taylor will reach out after the new year to discuss further.

McTaggart had informed members at the last JJC meeting that the JJC had encouraged Iroquois County schools to offer an alternative to school suspension for students being caught vaping/smoking. She noted that vaping is extremely addictive and teens are being targeted by vape companies. When these students are suspended, they are often unsupervised at home (which for some is an unsafe environment) and have the opportunity to vape more. Teens may need help to quit and a safe environment to do so.

Barb King had sent an email to school officials and counselors encouraging them to consider changing their school policies to educate and support teens who have been caught vaping in addition to punitive measures. This email contained links to such programs that schools can research and hopefully choose an option that will work best for their students based on cost, staff time constraints, etc.

Taylor Roche from the Iroquois County Public Health Department had recently reached out to the JJC regarding this matter. ICPHD has funds to purchase the N.O.T. cessation program that is part of the American Lung Association's INDEPTH program. Roche is willing and able to implement this alternative program at schools in Iroquois County.)

C. Escape the Vape Kits

McTaggart explained that the JJC had purchased 7 Vape Escape Room Kits a few years back which are everything a person would need to facilitate an Escape Room utilizing

vaping prevention throughout. She explained that these 7 kits were utilized in Donovan and Watseka Schools so far, and through feedback, have now been completely upgraded. She showed pictures of a group of boys whom she had tried the newly updated kit with and stated that it was a huge success. She said that just recently, Donovan Jr. High School is borrowing one for their 6th grade class. She stated that Pree has created a social media post to go out soon letting the public, educators, youth group leaders, etc., know about these kits to borrow free of charge. She reminded members that the kits have all of the necessary items and educational materials needed for easy facilitation, but reassured the members that she and Pree are very willing to facilitate sessions as well. The group discussed where these would be most helpful and mentioned library youth programs, 4-H groups, SADD groups, health classes, youth programs such as The Garage, Milford's Crossroads Youth Center and Watseka's HUB. She told members to spread the word and have interested parties contact her at jmctaggart@co.iroquois.il.us.

D. New Ideas?

King began the New Ideas section with a message concerning the Statewide Region 6 Planning Committee she is on for Iroquois County. She stated that Dave King from Carle Hospital is also on this committee as well as Rosecrance from our area with most people being more in the treatment field. She said the recent conversations have been about challenging legislature to fund the collection of Sharps in our area. They are also looking into Sober Living (no facility) and have it be more of a community-based thing. She asked if anyone would like to be added to this committee or if they know of anyone who should be added to help make decisions for our area to please contact her at bking@co.iroquois.il.us. Barry Lee from IMHC and Robin Allen from ICPHD were added.

Amy Zabel with IMHC stated that their agency has upcoming Hotline Interviews on Fridays if the JJC would like to utilize them knowing that funding is short for the JJC.

VII. AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Iroquois County Sheriff's Department** (Sheriff Clint Perzee) - Sheriff Perzee gave an update on the Roth ID tag contest that was held and reported that his office received 4th place in the competition which allowed him to purchase 250 carseat tags and 150 seatbelt tags. He thanked members for sharing the competition far and wide and for voting multiple times to assist in the competition.

- B. Iroquois Mental Health Center** (Amy Zabel) - Zabel reported that they now have two certified therapy dogs - Moe travels with Valerie working with the 1st Responder Wellness Grant and Tank who is the Watseka office therapy dog travels to schools and the jail (Fridays) with Jill. She informed the group that these dogs are both available for crises and the IMHC is looking for ways to utilize them in the community. They are certified for both comfort and therapy dog services. A suggestion was made to possibly have one of the dogs accompany the JJC in a WACC Business Education Partnership and You classroom visit as part of a coping strategies lesson.

Zabel also reported that IMHC now has a therapist for children/adolescents in the evenings. They've recently hired a new gentleman, Brant Partain, who will see patients three evenings per week and until 9:00 p.m. two nights per week.

IMHC is also now holding Risk Ed classes for youth caught drinking alcohol underage. The Change curriculum is an early-intervention program which is a 10 hour commitment over 5 weeks and can be held in person or virtual. She said currently it is being held as an as-needed basis with another class beginning in January.

- C. Jed Whitlow** - Whitlow reported that he'd been recently asked about the Juvenile Justice Council of Iroquois County and their programming! He noted that it is more difficult to get the word out about our efforts with fewer newspapers and the trend away from printed news. .
- D. National Guard** (Chas Cox and Jacob Mozingo) - Cox reported that the Illinois National Guard Task Force now has a "Hidden Threat" program with a trailer and an enormous inflatable obstacle course spanning 75 feet at no cost to coalitions. This obstacle course is to engage youth while the parents are exploring the "Hidden Threat" program. This program is intended for parents and other adults who care for youth, including school professionals, coaches, nurses, physicians and scout leaders. This exhibit provides participants an opportunity to explore a mock teen's bedroom to explain various trends of teen substance use, signs, symptoms and lingo in an effort to raise awareness about substance use disorders. The event also provides resources and tools for parents and community members to identify further prevention tips, treatment options and recovery services. Cox showed pictures of the program and the obstacle course. He said that when scheduled, the National Guard would facilitate the entire event with soldiers so manpower would be covered. The JJC members present discussed areas where this would be beneficial and immediately thought of the Iroquois County Fair (July 14-19). Cox and Mozingo will send King more information about the program so we can check with the fair to see if/when/where this program could work.
- E. State Representative Jason Bunting's Office** (Kira Ebert) - State Representative Bunting's Office is excited to announce that they are collaborating with the Iroquois County Public Health Department on an upcoming Resource Fair which will be advertised soon. Ebert also stated that she is on the Iroquois Memorial Hospital board and the United Way board and would be happy to share any information with them that we'd like.
- F. Iroquois County Public Health Department** (Robin Allen) - Allen announced that the Health Department is now offering STI testing and treatment to persons 12 on up. She stated that a rise in flu cases is to be expected per the Center for Disease Control (CDC) so her department is hosting weekend and evening vaccine clinics with the nasal flu mist as an option.

(Taylor Roche) - Roche announced a class called "Safe Sitter Grandparents" specifically covering CPR, rescue and first aid and childcare to help to build grandparents' confidence as responsible sitters. This class will be held on Saturday, January 10th from 9:00-12:00 p.m. with a \$25 charge. She also stated that ICPHD now offers "Courage to Quit". She explained that this is a smoking cessation program which is 6 one-hour sessions taught over a 7-week time period and will be held every Wednesday from 5:00-6:00 p.m. from January 7th - February 18th, 2026. The cost will be \$25. They encourage interested parties to call at 815-432-2483 for details and to register.

G. Harbor House (Taylor) - Taylor introduced her new associate, Alexia, who will be the new educator for Harbor House for students in grades up to 8th grade. Taylor also announced that numerous exciting events are in the planning stages for Teen Dating Awareness Month in February so encouraged members to watch for their announcements on social media.

She mentioned that the Harbor House Holiday Market closes in just a few short days on December 23rd. This program gives survivors a safe, festive space to pick gifts for themselves and their families - helping them to reclaim joy, autonomy, and hope.

You can sign up to spread some holiday cheer at <https://loom.ly/kC93kyY>.

To schedule a drop-off at Harbor House, please contact Jayden at jayden@harborhousedv.org.

If you'd like to shop online, you can send gifts directly through Harbor House's Amazon Wishlist: <https://loom.ly/j-JPWIA>

Harbor House is hiring for the following open positions: Development Specialist, Client Advocate, and Client Advocate. If anyone is interested, visit

harborhousedv.org/about/join-our-team/

This season, Harbor House is honored to share two Christmas trees with our communities—one in Watseka and one in Manteno. These aren't just decorations... they're reflections of where we've been, who we've served, and the incredible community that has carried us for 45 years. Each tree is lit with purple lights, adorned with tiny houses, and wrapped in newspaper clippings from our history. These pieces symbolize something deeply meaningful to us. Harbor House began with safe houses—community members opening their doors to survivors fleeing dangerous situations. Before shelters, before offices, before staff... there were neighbors who chose compassion, protection, and hope. Today, the houses on our trees honor the brave survivors who walked through those doors, and the courageous community members who offered safety when it was needed most.

🌲 Watseka: Visit Iroquois County Historical Society's Christmas Tree Lane

🌲 Manteno: Visit Manteno Chamber of Commerce Christmas Tree Lane

If you stop by either display, we'd love for you to snap a photo of you and our tree and tag us. Thank you for being part of a community that has always opened its hearts to survivors. 💜

H. Birth to Five Illinois (Liz Gibson) - Our Region is working on an Action Step where our councils are increasing awareness for Mental and Behavioral Health supports for children ages 8 and younger. We are working to create flyers, videos, and social media efforts focused on these resources. If there are any entities or agencies in Iroquois County that would like to be a part of these steps or attend one of our Council meetings, we would love to connect with them. I can be reached at lgibson@birthtofiveil.com or at 309-393-2539.

I. Iroquois Memorial Hospital (Mary Kay Lavicka) - IMH's growing to serve you better!

New staff announcements include the following:

- Cassandra Chaplinski, RN, MSN, APRN, FNP - IMH Medical Group in Watseka
- Diana Kaufman, CNP, FNP - IMH Medical Group in Watseka and St. Anne
- James J. Murphy, MD - Full-time Orthopedic Surgeon at the IMH Specialty Clinic, 2nd Floor, Watseka. He comes with 20+ years of experience. His services include joint pain, sports injuries, fractures, and advanced procedures like total hip, knee replacements, and shoulder surgeries.
- Mohannad Rajjoub, MD, FACOG - Gynecology in the IMH Specialty Clinic, 2nd Floor, Watseka
- Roger L. Taylor, MD - Gynecology in the IMH Specialty Clinic, 2nd, Floor, Watseka
- Dr. Bautista - Family Practice, Watseka Clinic and 1 day at the Milford Clinic

Other noteworthy happenings at IMH include:

- IMH has a program called "Swing Bed" which is ideal for patients recovering from surgery or illness who need rehab or transitional care, all in the comfort of a private room inside the hospital.
- IMH has a State-of-the-Art Rehabilitation Therapy Center coming soon across from the hospital. Services we provide include physical, occupational and speech therapy.
- Women's Health Services recently welcomed Dr. Roger Taylor from Westwood OB/GYN. This department is offering 3D Mammography and gynecology services with Dr. Rajjoub and Dr. Taylor ranging from routine care to minimally invasive surgeries.
- 24/7 Emergency Care & Prompt Care is offered by seasoned experienced ER physicians, around the clock radiologist, imaging, laboratory and a dedicated team of nurses. IMH now treats 90% of ER visits without transfer. If a transfer is necessary, IMH can quickly coordinate to top-level centers.
- IMH's Pharmacy offers affordable meds and FREE DELIVERY. You do not have to be a current patient of IMH to use the IMH Pharmacy. Our pharmacy team strives to be the lowest cost in the area! We always have time to help you and your family to lower your prescription and over-the-counter drug costs or obtain those hard-to-find medications. The pharmacy is open every day of the year for

our patients and their families! For more information on Pharmacy Services call 815-432-7746.

- J. Nexus-Onarga Family Healing** (Jamie Kozma) - Kozma announced that the students who attended Nexus when it was a military academy are wanting to find a way to make it a legacy. Therefore, they have donated three flight simulators to the Academy for use at their discretion. Kozma noted that the Academy is in partnership talks with the Iroquois West School District for their use as well to help build healthy futures with solid career choices for these students.

IX. MEETING ADJOURNED

Barb King thanked all for taking part this morning. **Note:** the next meeting date will be **March 6th, 2026 from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. in the EMA Room** in the basement of the Iroquois County Courthouse. This is a different date than what was discussed at the conclusion of the meeting due to scheduling conflicts that were realized after the meeting adjourned. She reminded members that both full JJC and committee meeting minutes will continue to be shared via email. Full JJC meeting minutes are also posted on the TIPtheScale.org website.

Meeting adjourned.