



Jefferson County Health Department

Advancing the health and safety of Jefferson County



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Spring 2022



Mobile Homeless Outreach Events

A mobilized effort made possible by volunteers and community partners to bring much needed resources to the homeless population living in Jefferson County, Missouri. In the fall of 2021, Jefferson County Health Department's Vulnerable Population Team began planning a logistical and sustainable way to address one of the pressing needs in the community, homelessness.

The plan, locally allocate and deliver relevant resources to this population and provide means to help achieve equitable access to Jefferson County's numerous support opportunities.

For too long in our community, resources and partnerships were left isolated and distinct from one another. However, we were able to bridge gaps in the community to provide sufficient avenues to support this underserved community. Within a few short months, partnerships were connected, resources were made available, and vested community members were informed, leading to our first Mobile Homeless Outreach Event.

The first event was held near a known homeless camp in Festus in December of 2021. **In total, 15 adults and 5 children attended the event.** A major component of our outreach was having one on one time with everyone that came for assistance. With this approach, we have further strengthened relationships and held conversations to get to some of the root causes for these circumstances.

With our efforts and passionate community partners, we were able to bring forth invaluable resources for those in need including:

- Distribution of warm clothing, tents, sleeping bags, blankets, etc.
- Narcan and opioid overdose education.
- Helping individuals fill out coordinated entry applications for housing
- Blood pressure screenings and general acute care
- Other general homelessness services/resources

We have continued to see success with more individuals attending and new partners joining the cause. As this mobile outreach becomes more consistent, word-of-mouth advertising from within the community will help reach more individuals in serious need. The success of our events has led to the hiring of two homeless outreach officers in the Hillsboro Police Department to address the root causes of homelessness in our communities.

As we continue to participate in the Mobile Homeless Outreach events, we hope to positively impact more individuals experiencing homelessness within our county.



Meet our Team Behind these Events



From left: Jillian Bissell, Anne-Marie Denny, and Tara Halter

At Jefferson County Health Department, we determined our vulnerable populations needed a dedicated team to work on meeting their unique and changing needs. In Spring of 2020, we hired our very first Vulnerable Populations Specialist, Anne-Marie Denny.

Anne-Marie Denny is the Vulnerable Populations Specialist for JCHD who works to identify and address the needs of our county's vulnerable residents. She has worked in public health for two years and prior experience includes working with individuals with disabilities and helping seniors age in place. Anne-Marie is passionate about ensuring public health is accessible to everyone in the community.

Jillian Bissell is a Prevention Specialist for JCHD who helps to manage the Jefferson County Drug Prevention Coalition (JCDPC) and Jefferson County's Opioid Task Force. She has been managing JCDPC since 2013 and has been working under the Jefferson County Health Department since 2018. Jillian is passionate about building community partnerships and increasing the awareness of programs that provide resources, education and services to Jefferson County's most vulnerable populations.

Tara Halter is a Prevention Specialist for JCHD who oversees the Jefferson County Teen Coalition. She has been in public health for 2 years with past experience in social work and juvenile justice. Tara was a former Deputy Juvenile Officer for 14 years. She has worked with youth and their families her entire professional career and is excited to continue this for JCHD.

The Future of Advocacy: Jefferson County Teen Coalition



At Jefferson County Health Department, we have created an exciting opportunity for passionate teenagers to get involved in public health, Jefferson County Teen Coalition. The goal of the coalition is to help facilitate opportunities for teens to advocate about community wellness to their peers and community stakeholders. In our coalition meetings, we reviewed a number of various youth concerns and needs within the community, and our teens have chosen vaping, mental health, and general wellness to be their top priorities.



JC Teen Coalition Members from left: Katelynn Ochterbeck, Elizabeth Price, and Marshall Bedell

With their interest in general wellness, they have proposed ways to address this in the schools, primarily by educating and certifying nurses to perform scoliosis checks at appropriate grade levels in school. Additionally, they are committed to promoting better coping skills to increase mental, physical, and social health.

Our teen coalition is full of future leaders, standing up for the betterment of their schools, their peers, and their own lives. They are self-described as a concerned group of teens that want to make a positive change for their peers. The teen coalition continues to actively pursue implementation of their wellness platforms through workshops, conferences, and meetings with community stakeholders.



From left: Representative Tracy McCreery, Elizabeth Price, Katelynn Ochterbeck, and Marshall Bedell

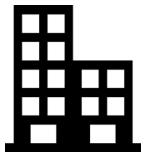
The Jefferson County Teen Coalition joined the Speak Hard conference in Jefferson City on April 14th. This conference was an excellent opportunity for our teens to learn more about advocacy and further develop their platforms. Additionally, our teens were able to meet with a few local representatives to introduce themselves and their platform.

The next step for our teens will be to bring their proposals to local school boards in May. We are excited to see their continued growth as they take their ideas towards an actionable plan to local school boards.

“These youth are amazing! They come to the meetings ready to engage, have a good time, and give open and honest feedback.”
- Tara Halter, JCHD Prevention Specialist



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Hours of Operation
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