



# THE THE POWER BEHIND THE STORIES WE SHARE



HANNAH VOGT WITH PARENTS TAMARA AND PAUL VOGT



DR. KAMELA PATTON WITH PALMETTO RIDGE CORE STUDENTS



ASHLEY CARRASCO, PINE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL CORE STUDENT AND MELANIE BLACK PRESENT AWARD TO SHAWN MCGRAIL

**H**annah Vogt struggled with one question while recently filling out an application to participate in the Youth Leadership Collier Program this summer. She was asked to give an example of a tough decision and describe how she arrived at that choice. But before she could submit her final application, she knew she needed to have a candid conversation with her parents about underage drinking.

“I wanted nothing more than to tell her...I’m sorry for not having the power to get them to not drink,” said Hannah, a Palmetto Ridge High School junior. As she described the outing with friends, she explained the tough choices she faced. “Although I didn’t have the courage to talk them out of drinking, I took responsibility for them that day at the beach and made sure they got home safely,” said Hannah.

Speaking to hundreds of guests at Drug Free Collier’s 8th Annual Fundraising Luncheon, Hannah shared her personal story to help everyone understand the challenges that today’s teens face. “I would like to thank the community and all of you here today for supporting me and making the CORE program available at our school,” she added.

Hannah’s story is important because it allows Drug Free Collier to communicate an important message about the prevention of teen substance abuse. Dr. Jonah Berger, a professor at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania and leading authority on decision making and social influence served as keynote speaker for this year’s event. “Stories are the way we communicate. They are the currency of conversation,” said Berger.

Her story helps us see the positive behavior that often goes unnoticed. “People can see all the people drinking, but they can’t see all the people not drinking,” Berger said. “In colleges, it’s one reason binge drinking happens. People tend to imitate what they can see,” he added.

For Hannah, the CORE Society helps her see that she is not alone in her decision to remain drug and alcohol free.

Hundreds of local supporters and distinguished guests attended this year’s event and pledged their commitment to protecting local children from substance abuse. Their generous support allows Drug Free Collier to continue programs that allow Collier County youth to grow up healthy and reach their full potential. “It’s encouraging to see that so many people in Collier County are willing to make a difference in the lives of our youth,” said Melanie Black, Executive Director of Drug Free Collier.

This year Drug Free Collier also honored Shawn McGrail, Vice President and Partner of Coastal Beverage for his role in preventing underage drinking. McGrail has been an active partner of Drug Free Collier since 2005 first as a volunteer and later as a member of the Board of Directors. He oversees the Operations Division of Coastal Beverage and also coordinates Alcohol Awareness Programs in Collier and South Lee County.

“Nowadays, parents find themselves engaging in some pretty intense conversations with their children – perhaps while their children are still surprisingly young. The more knowledge we can provide parents, the more power they will have when it comes to raising their children,” said McGrail.

“Thanks to our work with key stakeholders, like Coastal Beverage, alcohol consumption by teens in Collier County has dropped from 43% in 2005 to 29% in 2014,” said Black. “We couldn’t have done this without the strong support of community partners.”

Drug Free Collier’s Annual Fundraising Luncheon also included special appearances by City of Naples Mayor John Sorey as celebrity auctioneer and Fox 4 News Anchor Patrick Nolan as Master of Ceremonies.

To learn more about Drug Free Collier visit [www.DrugFreeCollier.org](http://www.DrugFreeCollier.org)