

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RAY COUNTY COALITION MEMBERS ATTEND CADCA'S NATIONAL LEADERSHIP FORUM TO LEARN NEW SKILLS TO INCREASE PREVENTION EFFORTS FOR YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE

Richmond, MO – Representatives from Ray County Coalition recently returned from the Washington, D.C., area where they joined approximately 3,000 substance use prevention specialists and advocates from throughout the country for CADCA's (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America's) 28th Annual National Leadership Forum (Feb. 5-8). Justin Meier, Laura Beth Meier and Heather Lewis represented Ray County Coalition at the conference.

"It was great to spend several days with other similar organizations from across the country, learning and honing our prevention skills so our community can be a better place, one that doesn't suffer from the harms of drug and alcohol abuse," said Justin Meier, president of Ray County Coalition. "We came back reenergized with new strategies under our belt to tackle drug use throughout our county."

CADCA's Forum covered a wide range of topics – everything from how to prevent prescription drug misuse and the use of synthetic drugs and marijuana to how to create tobacco-free environments and develop policies to reduce underage drinking.

Ray County Coalition recently received the Drug-Free Communities grant and is using those resources to reduce youth use of drugs, primarily tobacco, alcohol and marijuana, throughout Ray County.

They heard from several leaders including Acting Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Richard Baum and Dr. Bertha Madras, Harvard Medical School, who both brought their expertise and insights to share. The coalition also met with staff members from the offices of U.S. Congressman Emmanuel Cleaver, II, Senator Claire McCaskill and Senator Roy Blunt at the Forum's Capitol Hill Day event on Wednesday, Feb. 7.

"We appreciate our elected officials' support of the Drug-Free Community grants," said Meier. "It was a pleasure to spend time with members of their staff, sharing with them how we are working in our community to reduce drug use among your youth and instead help them thrive."

CADCA's National Leadership Forum, the nation's largest training event for community prevention leaders, treatment professionals and researchers, took place at the Gaylord National Hotel and Convention Center Feb. 5-8. Visit the Forum website for details about training sessions, speakers, and special events at cadca.org/events/forum2018.

About Ray County Coalition

The vision of Ray County Coalition is that all Ray County youth will reach their full potential in safe, healthy and drug-free communities.

About CADCA

The mission of CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) is to strengthen the capacity of community coalitions to create and maintain safe, healthy and drug-free communities globally. This is accomplished by providing technical assistance and training, public policy advocacy, media strategies and marketing programs, training and special events.

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