

2018 Yearend Review

Fighting For Alyssa (FFA)
An Overview of Financial Performance



Fundraisers

Event Name	Date	Gross	Net
FFA Social (Santosuossos)	2/13/18	\$305	\$305
Estate Sale	4/8 & 11/5	\$2,332	\$2,332
Golfing For Alyssa	5/14/18	\$84,070	\$49,871
Kitefest 2018 (5K Walk/Run)	9/8/18	\$11,539	\$9,901
Santa Stroll	11/23/18	\$8,801	\$8,163
Alyssa's Promise Shirt (Batch 1&2)	12/3 & 12/24	\$495	\$495
		\$107,542	\$71,066



Grants

Non-Profit Organization Name	Date	Amount
Running2BeWell	04/24/2018	\$150
The LCADA Way	05/14/2018	\$4,000
Bianco Accomodations	05/14/2018	\$4,000
Hope United	05/14/2018	\$2,000
Restore Addiction Recovery	05/14/2018	\$2,000
Community Health Center	05/14/2018	\$4,000
Cover 2 Resources	05/14/2018	\$4,000
Summit County Community Partnership	05/14/2018	\$4,000
Recovery Center of Medina County	05/14/2018	\$4,000



Grants - *continued*

Non-Profit Organization Name	Date	Amount
Robby's Voice	05/14/2018	\$4,000
The Lantern	09/08/2018	\$2,000
LCADA	09/08/2018	\$2,000
Robby's Voice	09/08/2018	\$2,000
Bianco Accomodations	09/08/2018	\$2,000
Community Assessment & Treatment Services (C.A.T.S.)	09/08/2018	\$2,000
Running2BWell	09/08/2018	\$2,000
Recovery Center of Medina County	09/08/2018	\$2,000
Hidden In Plain Site	09/08/2018	\$2,000



Grants - *continued*

Non-Profit Organization Name	Date	Amount
Kathy's House	09/08/2018	\$2,000
MCPAL	09/08/2018	\$5,000
Recovery Center of Medina County	07/13/2018	\$2,000
Improbable Players	10/05/2018	\$1,000
Alyssa's Promise	05/14/2018	\$20,000

 **136%**

\$78,150



Profit/Loss Summary

Opening Balance **\$67,777.66**

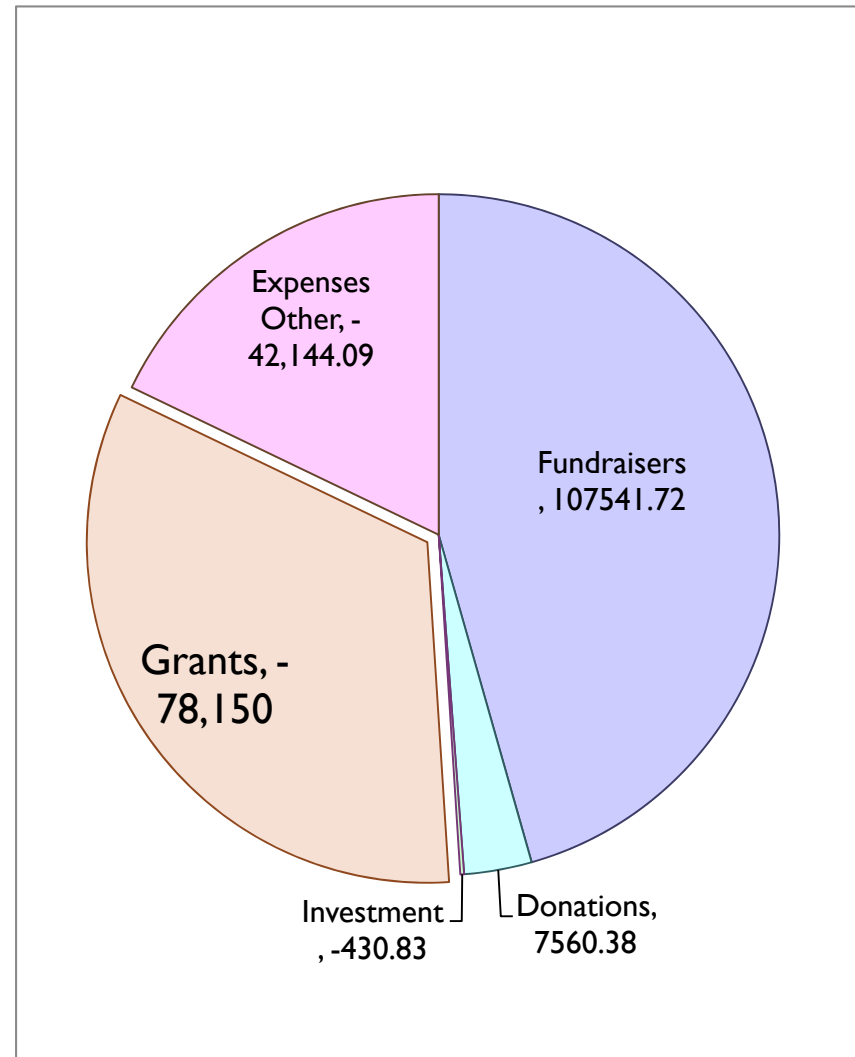
▶ Income

- Fundraisers \$107,541.72
- Donations \$7,560.38
- Investment Activity **(\$430.83)**

▶ Expense

- Grants **(\$78,150.00)**
- Merchant Fees **(\$665.52)**
- Misc. Expense **(\$5,022.14)**
- Fundraiser Expense **(\$36,475.23)**

Closing Balance **\$62,136.04**



Golf Tournament 5/14/18

A special thank you and recognition for your support of this event. The 1st annual golf tournament was a great success netting approximately \$50,000!! We granted out \$52,000 at the event to the following charities:

- ▶ The LCADA Way
- ▶ Bianco Accommodations
- ▶ Hope United
- ▶ Restore Addiction Recovery
- ▶ Community Health Center
- ▶ Cover2 Resources
- ▶ Summit County Community Partnership
- ▶ Recovery Center of Medina
- ▶ Robby's Voice
- ▶ Akron Children's Hospital



Kitefest (5k Walk/Run) 9/8/18

Kitefest kicked off with 100 people competing in the 5k Walk/Run!!

We doubled our audience and revenue! We raised over \$9,000!! Thank you all for making Kitefest such a wonderful event! We granted out \$25,000 at the event to the following charities:

- ▶ The Lantern
- ▶ LCADA
- ▶ Robby's Voice
- ▶ Bianco Accomodations
- ▶ Community Assessment & Treatment Services (C.A.T.S.)
- ▶ Running2BWell
- ▶ Recovery Center of Medina County
- ▶ Hidden In Plain Site
- ▶ Kathy's House
- ▶ MCPAL



MCPAL 9/8/18

Medina Community Police Athletic League (MCPAL) is a youth crime prevention program that utilizes educational, athletic and recreational activities to create trust and understanding between police officers and youth. Medina Police Activities League currently has five after school programs in Medina, Lodi, Spencer and Brunswick serving over 150 children. The officers and volunteers play basketball, dodge ball, kickball, interactive video games and board games with the children ranging in age from 8 to 15. The program also offers a tutoring component to help students complete homework assignments.

FFA donated \$5,000 to MCPAL to help them continue their mission!



The Medina Police Activities League received a check for \$5,000 from Fighting for Alyssa recently at H.G. Blake Elementary School. MCPAL is awarded a donation from the Kite Fest last fall.

MCPAL receives \$5,000 in donations

The Medina County Police Activities League recently received two separate donations worth a total of \$5,000.

More than 25 members of the Medina Police Activities League were invited to participate in the Fighting for Alyssa Kite Fest on Sept. 7 at Buckeye Woods Park.

That included representatives from Montville Township, Medina and Brunswick police departments. There was also a 5K run/walk as well as a one-mile fun run. MCPAL organizers said they wanted to help raise awareness for Fighting for Alyssa. The Medina County Drug Use Commission is also a sponsor. The kites symbolize freedom and redemption from darkness to light, which symbolizes recovery, according to the Fighting for Alyssa's website.

Medina nonprofit organization is dedicated to awareness, prevention (treatment of substance abuse and addiction) in the community.

Heidman and Malone, partners of Alyssa Apostolakis who died of an overdose, are members of Fighting for Alyssa. They visit H.G. Blake Elementary in Montville Township and presented MCPAL with a check for \$5,000.



Alyssia Apostolakis

"I am happy to be able to help such a worthwhile program," Heidman said. "It is evident that the kids are benefiting from their participation in MCPAL."

The good news didn't stop there for MCPAL. It was also chosen as the recipient of the raffle proceeds and sporting event ticket donations at the Community Energy Advisors event at Hill 'n Dale Club. It received a check for \$2,000 from the event at Garfield Elementary in Medina.

"Programs like MCPAL strengthen our community and help shape our youth," said Rick Davidson, event organizer and principal of Community Energy Advisors. "We are happy to be able to support their endeavors." MCPAL, a registered 501(c)(3) organization, serves as a community youth crime prevention program by building trust, understanding and respect between police officers and youth through educational, athletic and recreational activities. It meets biweekly at 10 schools throughout Medina County, operates a food pantry and the Medina County Law Enforcement Explorers.

"We are very appreciative to be recognized by these organizations," Montville police Chief Terry Grice said. "Having community partnerships and support, like this, is imperative to MCPAL."



Santa Stroll 11/23/18

This year's Santa Stroll was a huge success! We had **92** walkers and raised **\$8,000**... with \$3,929 more than last year! **SPECIAL THANKS TO...**

- ▶ Entire FLB staff for all your help before, during and after our event! We cannot thank you enough!
- ▶ James (AKA "The Original Snowman") (Santa) and Dan from Peace Racing for donating your time and equipment – both a big hit!
- ▶ All donors for the generous raffle items!
- ▶ Joe for the flyers, yard signs, giveaways, setup and putting up with me!
- ▶ Moennich family for your help with setup, registration and participation – could not have done it without you!



Shout Out!



- ▶ Thank you to **George Santosuosso** for so graciously allowing us to use his establishment for our yearly Social gatherings and for donating 20% of the proceeds to FFA!
- ▶ Thank you to the entire **Golfing For Alyssa Committee** for making Golfing For Alyssa event fun and successful!!
- ▶ Thank you to **J&K Liquidations** for organizing and overseeing the estate sale!
- ▶ Thank you to the Medina County Drug Abuse Commission Anti-Drug Levy represented by, **Brian Nowak**, for choosing Fighting For Alyssa to be the recipient of all proceeds raised at the annual Medina County Kitefest (5K Walk/Run)!!
- ▶ Thank you to the owners of **Fat Little Buddies, Dan Weaver** and **Joe O'Malley**, for hosting the Santa Stroll fundraiser!! A special THANK YOU to **Deb Moennich** and **Lisa Geiger** and the Santa Stroll team for making the event a huge success and for doubling the profit!
- ▶ Thank you **Jessica Malone & Megan Malone** for overseeing the FFA Facebook page and keeping everyone informed of current affairs and highlighting all of FFA achievements to the community and followers!
- ▶ Thank you **Polly Reynolds** for overseeing the FFA website! Thank you for showcasing all of the fundraisers, photos and events! Your creative design skills are astounding!

Fighting For Alyssa (FFA) would like to thank all of their committee members, donors, sponsors and volunteers for their continual support, dedication and determination in making FFA a pivotal source. Together we can obtain our shared goal; educate, fight and prevent substance use in our communities!



2019 Upcoming Events

Golfing For Alyssa May 13th

Firestone Country Club 11a-4p

Kitefest Sept 7th

Buckeye Woods Park 11a-3p

**Social
2/13/20**

**Santa Stroll
11/29/19**

**Kitefest
9/7/19**

**Golfing For
Alyssa
5/13/19**

Santa Stroll Nov 29th

Fat Little Buddies 4p-11p

FFA Social Feb 13th

Santosuosso' 6:30p



VOLUNTEER

Fighting For Alyssa (FFA) is looking for dynamic volunteers to help leverage community support, plan activities and help raise funds for our great cause!

Got a half hour to spare? Want to be on a fundraising committee? With the help of www.volunteersignuporg.com , volunteering just got **EASIER!** Online sign-up is quick, convenient and saves time. Each FFA fundraiser will have a unique link, so you can choose what event, what role and what timeframe best suits your needs! Because **HELPING** should be easy!

Want to join our mailing list or need to update your contact info? Help keep our records current...



Full Name

Email Address

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"I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back." Maya Angelou



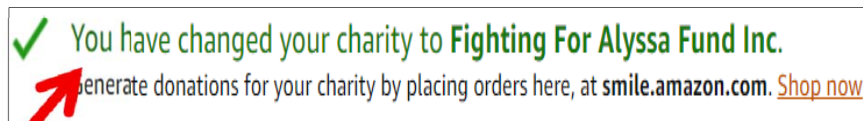
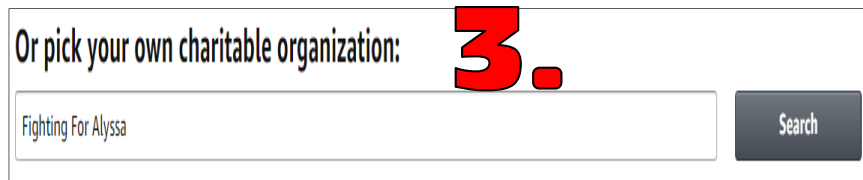
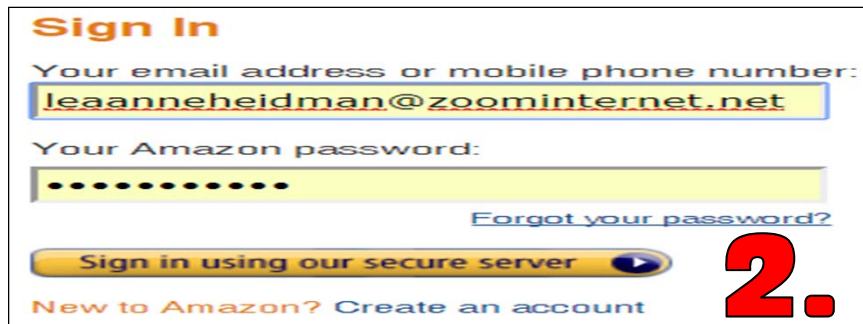
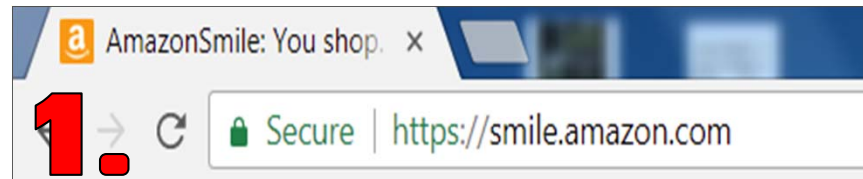


- ▶ Go to smile.amazon.com
- ▶ **“Sign In”** using your Amazon login credentials
- ▶ Under **“Pick your own charitable organization”** type in **Fighting For Alyssa** and then hit the search button
- ▶ Hit the **“Select”** button under result
- ▶ Click on **“Shop Now”** button

WANT TO SKIP ALL THESE STEPS?

The link below will take you directly to smile.amazon.com in support of the **FFA** organization so you won't have to search for your charity. It's the easiest way!

- ▶ <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/81-4029124>



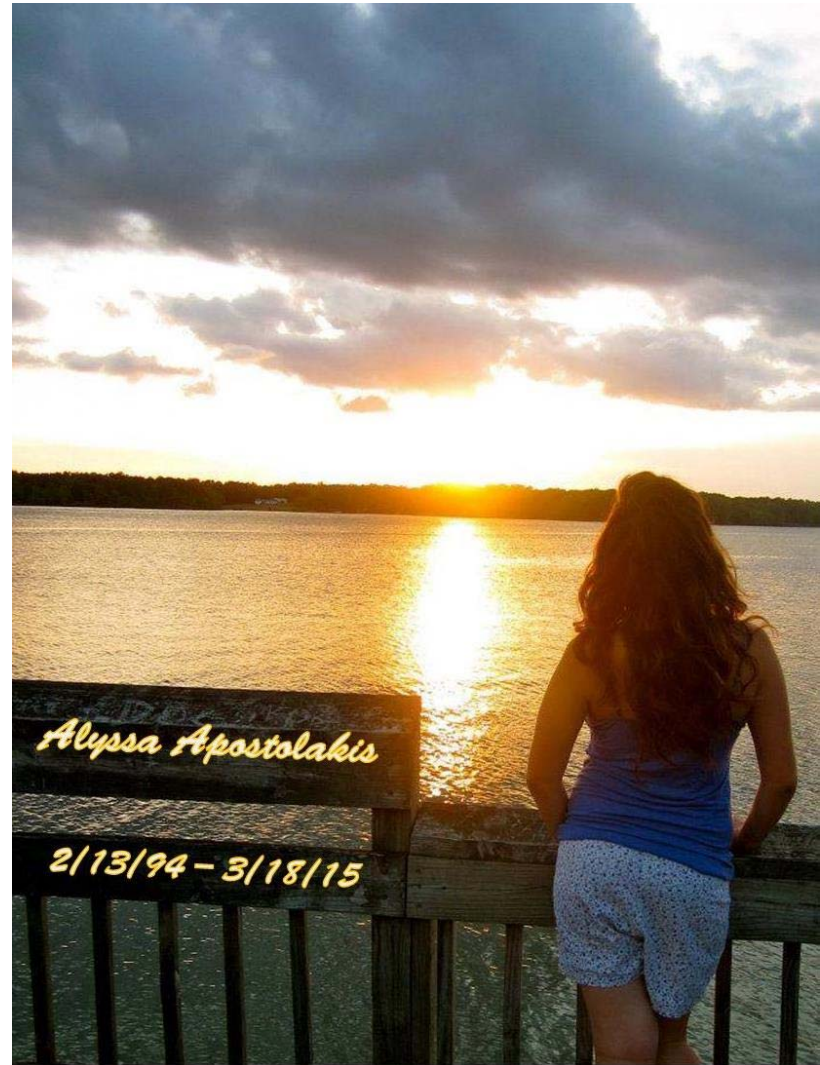
#lovespeaks on Facebook

On March 18, 2019 we are inviting our FFA committee members, family, friends and our Facebook followers to display their support of *Fighting For Alyssa's* mission by changing their Facebook profile pic to Alyssa's commemorative picture (as shown here).

If you would like to participate, here are the instructions on how to temporarily change your profile pic...

- ▶ Hover over your profile picture and click Update Profile Picture.
- ▶ Select, Upload Photos or Add Frame.
- ▶ Click Make Temporary.
- ▶ Select when to switch back to your previous profile picture.
- ▶ Click Save.

We will be emailing out the profile pic and uploading it to the FFA website and FFA Facebook page for easy accessibility.



Media Articles





Fighting For Alyssa

April 21, 2018 · 🌐



<https://www.ohio.com/.../new-ronald-mcdonald-house-akron-is-r...>

Lea Heidman, founder of Fighting For Alyssa (FFA), is a dedicated member of the board of the Akron Ronald McDonald House serving on the Strategic Planning Committee, as well as a member of the board of the Northeast Ohio Ronald McDonald Children's Charities.

Lea and her husband, Brian Malone, have generously donated a Don Drum Sunflower plaque to the Akron Ronald McDonald House in memory of their daughter, Alyssa Apostolakis. They have also dedicated a room to Alyssa and her late grandfather, Richard Heidman, at this facility. We applaud Lea and Brian for their generous contributions and their dedication to the mission of Fighting For Alyssa (FFA).

Alyssa

Forever in our Memories

Always in our Hearts



OHIO.COM



New Ronald McDonald House Akron is ready to welcome more families

Ronald McDonald House Akron, which serves as a home away from home for patients and their families at Akron Children's Hospital, had to turn...



Alyssa Apostolakis
Always in our memories
Forever in our hearts

A beautiful sunflower sculpture crafted by **Don Drumm** adorns the **Ronald McDonald House of Akron** in memory of **Alyssa**

Fighting for Alyssa to donate \$52,000

Fighting for Alyssa, a local non-profit charity founded in 2015 and dedicated to raising funds to assist local agencies in promoting the awareness, prevention and treatment of substance abuse, will host a charity golf tournament at Firestone Country Club in Akron.

At the event, Fighting for Alyssa will award \$52,000 in grants to the following agencies: Akron Children's Hospital, The LCADA Way, Bianco Accommodations, Robby's Voice, The Recovery Center of Medina County, Summit County Community Health Center, Hope United, Restore Addiction Recovery, Cover 2 Resources and Summit County Community Partnership.

Collectively, these organizations provide a combination of awareness, treatment and prevention to individuals and their families battling substance abuse across 26 counties in Ohio. If interested in participating or supporting the event, register or donate at <https://fightingforalyssa.regfox.com/ffagolfing> or call (330) 715-7738.

Students switch roles

At the recent annual Medina Christian Academy auction, parents won bids for their children to serve as principal for the day and gym teacher for the day.

The auction raised around \$80,000 for the school.

On April 25, kindergartner Peighton Scandlon served as princi-

Medina Gazette May 9, 2018

Medina Gazette May 12, 2018

Transportation barriers for county residents examined

Members of the Leadership Medina County Class of 2018... complete June 2018.

daughter Alyssa Apostolakis died of a heroin overdose at age 21. Call (330) 715-7738 for more information about the event or how to help.

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Bicy
turn

Golf outing for drug awareness

The Medina-based non-profit Fighting for Alyssa will be holding a fundraiser Monday.



Alyssa Apostolakis

Golfing for Alyssa will be from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Firestone Country Club, 452 East Warner Road in Akron.

Co-founder Lea Heidman said registration is closed but people are welcome to come and participate in the live auctions.

Fighting for Alyssa will be awarding \$52,000 in grants to area agencies, like Robby's Voice and the Recovery Center of Medina County, that collectively provide awareness, treatment and prevention of substance abuse and drug addiction to individuals and their families.

Medina residents Lea Heidman and Brian Malone founded the nonprofit after



Available at:

- Main Street Medina booth at
- Miss Molly's Tea Room
- The Book Store at 109 West W
- Funtastic Toyz
- Medina County Convention ar
- Medina School Board office
- Medina Town Hall and Engine
- The online store of the Chamb

www.medinacountychamber.com

Proceeds used to produce events t

Grants supporting Recovery Center of Medina County

Robert Finnan | The Gazette

Published on June 5, 2018 | Updated 12:36 a. m.

MEDINA — Grant funding is pouring into the Recovery Center of Medina County.

Jessica Hazeltine, administrative manager for the center, said the recovery center and Serenite Restaurant & Culinary Institute recently received four grants from different organizations in Medina County:

- Fighting for Alyssa, \$4,000;
- Medina County Women's Endowment Fund, undisclosed amount;
- Medina County Community Fund, undisclosed amount;
- Medina County Drug Abuse Commission, \$12,500.

Hazeltine said each grant has specific stipulations attached to them, but mostly they were for general funding for the recovery center and restaurant.

She said the center at 538 W. Liberty St., which also houses Serenite, is "very excited to put these funds to good use" serving the recovery community.

Hazeltine said the grants are a testament to the work they are doing at the recovery center.

"People believe in the cause," she said. "It's a good cause. All it takes is an open mind and an open heart."

A \$300,000 state grant was used to open the recovery center in July last year, and all of the center's classes have been held at the West Liberty site.

She noted the center does have space available for classes at United Church of Christ, Congregational, off Public Square, but hasn't used it.

After a year of preparations, Serenite opened in March. The culinary program teaches members in the recovery community about working in a fine-dining restaurant.

Contact reporter Bob Finnan at (330) 721-4049 or rfinnan@medina-gazette.com.

New substance abuse center at Akron Children's Hospital gets major funding from grieving family to fulfill "Alyssa's Promise"



By Betty Lin-Fisher

Published June 6, 2018

Alyssa Apostolakis wanted to be a counselor to help children and young adults struggling with drug addictions. Alyssa's own battle with drug addiction started at age 12, when she was prescribed opiates after surgery to repair a leg she broke on a trampoline. She then underwent a series of oral surgeries after she hit her head coming down a water slide at Disney World.

Her drug use escalated. She had many ups and downs, often staying clean for long lengths of time, said her parents, Lea Heidman and Brian Malone.

But even access to some of the best treatment programs in the country couldn't save her.

Now her parents are fulfilling her desire to help others by donating a total of \$300,000 in her memory toward an effort to launch an Addiction Services Program at Akron Children's Hospital.

The program — announced Wednesday afternoon — is focusing its first phase on education, prevention, screening care coordination, community outreach and referrals at Children's locations throughout Ohio. It also will offer medically assisted treatment for opiate addiction and an outpatient clinic as the program grows.

Akron Beacon Journal/Ohio.com

Ohio has the second-highest rate of overdose deaths in the country and is at the epicenter of the opioid epidemic, said Children's Hospital President Grace Wakulchik.

"As a leader in pediatric care, we felt the need to be more strategic in our services — with the ultimate goal of preventing today's children and teens from becoming the next generation of adults struggling with lifelong addiction," she said.

For Alyssa, her drug use became worse in high school. The Montville Township native overdosed when she was 16 and spent time in Akron Children's Hospital's partial hospitalization program. She left that program and went directly to a residential program in Utah, where she stayed for 11 months. She then transitioned to a behavioral boarding school in North Carolina, where she graduated and went to college in North Carolina.

Her parents tried to be strict with her, limiting her access to money and requiring her to take a drug test every other week and meet with a psychologist.

Still, Alyssa struggled and hid her addictions from those closest to her, said Heidman, president and CEO of Golden Alliance Inc, which owns five McDonald's locations in the Akron area in Montrose, Norton, Wadsworth, Macedonia and Medina.

In March 2015, Alyssa seemed to be doing well, said Malone, Alyssa's stepdad who raised her and two siblings since they were young.

Her family thought she was clean. "We knew that she had a couple of lapses, but we did not know that the addiction had taken her so severely as it did. She was so stealth in hiding her addiction, even from her closest friends," her mother said.

On St. Patrick's Day that year, Alyssa stayed in her dorm room in North Carolina and studied instead of going out drinking, even though she had turned 21 the month before.

The next day, on March 18, Heidman and Malone received a phone call from the sheriff. Alyssa was dead from a heroin overdose.

Her family is unsure what happened. They only know that she overdosed on straight heroin. She was supposed to see the family for vacation in five days.

"What was ironic about Alyssa," said Malone, "was she wanted to help others rather than help herself. Even when she was going through all of this addiction, she'd be helping others through addiction, helping homeless people, but not looking at herself in the mirror and saying 'I need help myself.' "

The family quickly turned their grief into action. They established a non-profit organization, Fighting for Alyssa, (<http://www.fightingforalyssa.org>) which is dedicated to the awareness, prevention, and treatment of substance abuse and addiction.

The foundation is issuing its largest gift — \$100,000 — to support the new addiction services at Children's. Heidman and Malone also are personally giving \$200,000 to the effort, to total \$300,000 from their family and foundation over a five-year-period.

Akron Beacon Journal/Ohio.com

A total of \$800,000 has been donated to the hospital to start the program, including a \$250,000 donation from FedEx Custom Critical and contributions from Marci Matthews, Harvey and Kim Nelson, Friends of Akron Children's Hospital, Bob and Regina Cooper and Don Sitts.

The opioid crisis "is having a major effect on our community and we must address it with the highest sense of urgency," said Virginia Addicott, president and CEO of FedEx Custom Critical. The funds will be enough to support a new case manager, Stephanie Strader, who will connect patients with resources and services at the hospital and in the community.

Younger children and teens tend to experiment with other substance and move to opioids as young adults, said Dr. Sarah Friebert, founder and medical director of the hospital's Haslinger Center Palliative Care Center.

But hospital staff are seeing the effects of the opioid epidemic, from addicted pregnant moms and their babies to toddlers accidentally ingesting drugs and school-age children "who live in homes where drug use is rampant and they're not getting their basic needs met," Friebert said.

The new program will centralize some of the hospital's inpatient and outpatient efforts and services at its pediatric offices to screen for substance abuse and offer assistance, she said.

The program can be reached at 330-543-3343

"There have been pockets of things we've offered throughout the organization, but there hasn't been any way to pull all of that together, to try to come together with a comprehensive strategy and one number to call," Friebert said. "If we're getting in early enough with these kids, if they never pick it up in the first place, if we are able to get in and get kids hooked up with appropriate counseling, they may not progress to addiction."

The educational materials handed out as part of the new center will be branded "Alyssa's Promise," in honor of her nickname, AP, and "the promise that she always wanted to help other people," said her mom. "She's doing that."

Heidman said she hopes the efforts can spare other parents from the pain of losing a child to an overdose death.

Alyssa wanted to beat her addiction and was ashamed by it, her stepfather said. She also lost two boyfriends to heroin overdoses and still couldn't get out of the addiction cycle. Heidman and Malone said they understand there was a mental health element, too, and their daughter may have been predisposed to addiction.

"She was tormented by this," said Malone. "We provided her with every opportunity we could and we would have continued to have done that but she just couldn't get out of that cycle. It's tragic."

Heidman said she had to fulfill her daughter's wishes by starting the foundation to help stop the opioid epidemic.

"How do you breathe in the last breath of your daughter? You do it through other people. So we chose to take her mission to help others."

Akron Children's Hospital creates addiction services program

LYDIA COUTRÉ  



FILE PHOTO

The Kay Jewelers Pavilion of Akron Children's Hospital

With philanthropic support and in partnership with other efforts in the community, Akron Children's wants to do its part to combat the raging opioid epidemic and address the devastating toll of addiction.

Akron Children's Hospital is unveiling a program to tackle substance abuse disorders and their impact on children.

With philanthropic support and in partnership with other efforts in the community, Akron Children's wants to do its part to combat the raging opioid epidemic and address the devastating toll of addiction.

"We realized that there was not one facet, not one demographic of our enterprise that's not been affected by the epidemic," said Dr. Sarah Friebert, founder and medical director of Akron Children's Haslinger Center Pediatric Palliative Care Center.

"We have from pregnant moms coming to our maternal fetal medicine clinic, to newborns in our neonatal intensive care unit who have neonatal abstinence syndrome, to toddlers in our intensive care unit who are wandering into substances and ingesting them, to school-aged kids who live in homes where drug addiction is rampant and they don't have enough food and clothes, to school-aged and adolescent kids who are using substances themselves, to our own employees whose families are ravaged by this epidemic, to our home care nurses who are in homes where addiction is prevalent, and our school health nurses who are dealing with this on a daily basis for kids in the school system," she said. "There's not one place that the Akron Children's enterprise touches that is not being affected."

Akron Children's Addiction Services Program will, as phase one, initially focus on education, prevention, screening, care coordination, community outreach and referral, according to a news release. As the program grows, Akron Children's will add medically assisted treatment and outpatient care, hopefully in 2019, said Friebert, who is serving as director of the program.

"With the second highest rate of overdose deaths in the country, Ohio is at the epicenter of the nation's opioid epidemic," Akron Children's president Grace Wakulchik said in a prepared statement. "Solving this problem will not be easy and will require a multi-disciplinary effort. As a leader in pediatric care, we felt the need to be more strategic in our services — with the ultimate goal of preventing today's children and teens from becoming the next generation of adults struggling with lifelong addiction."

Drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana and other risky behavior in teens can have long-term consequences as lower drug initiation age strongly correlates with later drug use and alcohol abuse and dependence, according to the release. While heroin use is not common among high school students, the rate of use increases significantly among those 18-25 years old.

Some have questioned why a children's hospital would get involved in this work when overdoses typically occur among older people, such as young adults in their 20s, Friebert said.

"People don't just wake up on the morning of their 18th birthday and put a needle in their arm," she said. "Something happens that starts very early and youth is the time when we have an opportunity to educate and prevent what can become a very disabling, lifelong disease by really trying to get in early and make sure that that's not the path that happens."

So far, the program has been funded by philanthropic gifts. Brian Malone and Lea Heidman – who lost their daughter, Alyssa, to a drug overdose in 2015 – gave the first major gift of \$300,000 to create the program. The gift came from the family's personal funds as well as "[Fighting for Alyssa](#)," the foundation they created in memory of their daughter, who succumbed to her addiction at the age of 21.

The program's first hire – Stephanie Strader, who will serve as a case manager for the program – was funded by a \$250,000 donation from FedEx Custom Critical. Other significant contributions have come from Marci Matthews, Harvey and Kim Nelson, Friends of Akron Children's Hospital, Bob and Regina Cooper and Don Sitts.

"We've seen the impact of it from many different vantage points," said Virginia Addicott, president and CEO of FedEx Custom Critical. "And knowing that our region is really among the most at risk across the country for drug overdoses, that Ohio has the second highest rate of drug overdose in the country. The thing we understand with those type of statistics is that this crisis is impacting people who work for us or we all know somebody who has been impacted by it. And we just felt that this was something we needed to step up and help."

Friebert said she hopes that people will realize this is a program that needs support. It's not going to be a big money-maker for the hospital, but she hopes that the eventual development of an actual treatment program will bring in some revenue. It will also put them in a better position to qualify for state, local and federal grant money. All of this will help support sustainability of the program.

"It's not as simple to just say no to drugs," Friebert said. "There's a lot we can do to prevent an entrenched disease from taking hold if we are able to really work in this time and space that we have with young developing brains."

Source URL: <https://www.crainscleveland.com/article/20180606/news/164171/akron-childrens-hospital-creates-addiction-services-program>

Akron Children's Hospital's new Addiction Services Program to focus on prevention

Updated June 7, 2018 at 9:26 AM;

Posted June 6, 2018 at 4:00 PM



Phase 1 of Children's Hospital's Addiction Services Program, which has been in the works for two years, will have a multidisciplinary approach to prevention, starting with education, screening, care coordination, referral and community outreach.(Akron Children's Hospital)

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shares



By Jennifer Conn, Akron reporter, cleveland.com,

jconn@cleveland.com

AKRON, Ohio - As the opiate crisis continues to unfold in Summit County and across the U.S., Akron Children's Hospital has launched a program aimed at preventing children and teens from ever becoming addicted.

Children's new Addiction Services Program will roll out in phases, in a region with one of the highest overdose rates in the country.

According to the Summit County executive's office, the county counted more deaths from drug overdoses in 2015 and 2016 than overdose deaths in the decade of 2000 to 2009.

"Solving this problem will not be easy and will require a multidisciplinary effort," said Akron Children's President Grace Wakulchik in a news release. "As a leader in pediatric care, we felt the need to be more strategic in our services - with the ultimate goal of preventing today's children and teens from becoming the next generation of adults struggling with lifelong addiction."

Children's addiction program is supported through a \$250,000 donation from FedEx Custom Critical, to help Children's have an impact on the epidemic, said FedEx Custom Critical President and CEO Virginia Addicott. The opiate crisis affects families, she said, and that bleeds over into the workforce and the economy.



"Every single social service is impacted by this," Addicott said. "Many, many businesses really need to get involved because this is such a critical thing for our community."

A \$300,000 donation also came from Brian Malone and Lea Heidman, who lost their 21-year-old daughter, Alyssa. Alyssa had been prescribed opiates after several surgeries, and, despite medical care, she succumbed to addiction and died in 2015. The gift is from the family's personal funds and Fighting for Alyssa, a foundation created in their daughter's memory.

In 2017, Summit County emergency rooms treated 354 overdose patients under 25 years old.

Yet many people don't realize the impact the epidemic is having on children, through their own addiction or through contact with addicted caregivers or family members, said Dr. Sarah Friebert.

Friebert, who helped create the new program, is founder and medical director of Akron Children's Haslinger Pediatric Palliative Care Center.



What's more, the long-term effects of neonatal addiction are still unclear, she said.

"It's not as simple as just 'say no to drugs,'" Friebert said. "These kids are in a soup that's got all these ingredients that affects them on so many levels."

And though high school kids don't usually use heroin, drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana can have consequences. Experimentation at a young age has been correlated with drug and alcohol abuse and dependence when kids are older, Children's Hospital reports.



Dr. Sarah Friebert helped create Children's Addiction Services Program, and is founder and medical director of Children's Haslinger Pediatric Palliative Care Center.





Phase 1 of Children's Addiction Services Program, which has been in the works for two years, will take a multidisciplinary approach to prevention, starting with education, screening, care coordination, referral and community outreach.

An important component of Phase 1 is identifying community organizations with programs in place to understand what's available and find out where there are gaps, Friebert said.

"We want to be aware of the resources so we can connect people with what will be helpful for them," she said.

As information is gathered and processed, and partnerships established, Children's program will serve as a central resource for the community, for both treatment and prevention.

"There's something to be said for the environment kids are growing up in," Friebert said. "There are ways we can offer them opportunities to connect with other people, with mentors. To show them stimulation other than chemicals."



Connecting children with others is important because of the prevalence of social media, Friebert said.

"We're living in this wasteland of communication now," she said. "We're so connected on social media yet we have all these kids who are isolated. The more connected we are the more disconnected we are in life."

Although opiates are prevalent in today's news, Children's program will work to build its network to serve children and young people with any kind of addiction, Friebert said.

As more funding becomes available and the program grows, medically assisted treatment and outpatient care will also be added as part of Phase 2 of the program.

"Ultimately, once Summit County figures out how to do this, we can become a model and move from the worst in the country to the best," she said.

For more information about Children's Addiction Services Program, call 330-543-3343.



Akron Children's Hospital Launches Addiction Treatment Program

By KABIR BHATIA • JUN 7, 2018



Clinical pharmacologist/toxicologist Michelle Bestic (left), is joined by Lea Heidman, Brian Malone, and Dr. Sarah Friebert. Lea and Brian, who lost their daughter, Alyssa, at age 21 to a heroin overdose, were the first to donate money to for the program.

[Akron Children's Hospital](#) is starting a new addiction treatment program, which will centralize many of its services that assist young people with substance-abuse issues.

The program's start-up is being funded by \$800,000 in donations, including \$300,000 from a family who lost their 21-year-old daughter to opioid addiction.

Michelle Bestic is a clinical pharmacologist at Akron Children's, and says their initial focus has been on education and prevention. She says they hope to begin studying the effects of addiction on newborns.

That includes "a component to really help the mothers that have babies that are born with physical dependence on certain substances. And (to) follow those kids long-term to see what kind of risk factors they have in the future so we don't see a second generation of an opioid crisis."

Bestic says the hospital is currently working with doctors to look into non-opioid pain-relief options, and in the future the program could include a medication-assisted outpatient treatment center.

Morning journal lorain

Fighting for Alyssa gives grant to LCADA Way



Metro Creative Connection

POSTED: 06/16/18, 10:36 AM EDT |

[0 COMMENTS](#)

Community report

The Lorain County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Service Inc. has received a \$4,000 grant.

The LCADA Way accepted the funds from Fighting for Alyssa on May 14 during a charity golf outing.

Fighting for Alyssa was established in 2015 by Medina residents Lea Heidman and Brian Malone after the Heroin overdose of their 21 year-old daughter Alyssa, according to news release. The nonprofit organization is dedicated to raising funds to assist local agencies in promoting awareness, prevention and treatment of substance use disorder.

During the golf outing, Fighting for Alyssa awarded \$52,000 to The LCADA Way, Akron Children's Hospital, Bianco Accommodation, Robby's Voice, The Recovery Center of Medina County, Summit County Community Health Center, Hope Untied, Restore Addiction Recovery, Cover 2 Resources and Summit County Community Partnership.



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July 6, 2018

Ms. Lea Heidman & Mr. Brian Malone

5681 River Styx Road

Medina, OH 44256

Dear Ms. Heidman & Mr. Malone:

I recently read about your daughter Alyssa's story in the *Akron Beacon Journal*. I am so sorry that you lost Alyssa to addiction.

Thank you for making a generous donation to the new Substance Abuse Center at Akron Children's Hospital. It is honorable that you have taken such a tragic situation and turned it into a way to help others. I have seen the negative impact of the drug epidemic in Northeast Ohio and I know the Substance Abuse Center at Akron Children's Hospital is going to help countless teens and young adults.

I hope seeing all of the good your donation is doing will help you through the grieving process. I wish you and your family all the best for the future.

Sincerely,

SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

Summit County Prosecutor

SBW/meb



Fighting For Alyssa ✓

September 3, 2018 · 🌐



On August, 31st, International Overdose Awareness Day, Fighting for Alyssa was honored to be one of three recipients of the Legacy Award from Medina County, which is an award for a local organizations committed to serving those struggling with addiction and those living in recovery. The recipients were Medina county based organizations that were created out of the loss of a loved one. FFA was honored to be a part of this important and moving event and would like to thank all who were a part of it, including Medina city mayor, Dennis Hansel. Congratulations to the other recipients, Robby's Voice and Cathy's House for all of the wonderful work you do!
[#lovespeaks](#)



Weather grounds Kite Fest

Bob Sandrick | The Gazette

Published on Sept. 10, 2018 | Updated 1:06 a. m.



Sophia Hilberg, 6, of Medina attempts to fly a kite in the rain Saturday during the annual Kite Fest at Buckeye Woods Park.

BOB SANDRICK /
GAZETTE

MEDINA — Tyler Rasey defied the drizzle and low temperatures Saturday and tried to fly a kite at the fourth annual Kite Fest in Buckeye Woods Park. After about 10 minutes, he gave up.

“There’s too much rain and not enough wind,” said Rasey, a 16-year-old Medina resident.

The Kite Fest, which recognizes those recovering from alcohol and drug addiction, was mostly a wash out this year. Few of the expected 300-plus enthusiasts showed up because of steady rain.

However, a companion event, the annual 5K Walk/Run for Recovery fundraiser, went on as planned at Buckeye Woods. About 100 runners and walkers participated.

Cindy McQuown — part of a committee that helped organize Saturday's festivities and a member of the Ohio Citizen Advocates for Addiction Recovery Board of Directors — served as a "sweeper" during the run/walk, making sure everyone stayed on course.

"It's a whole lot nicer to run in the rain than it is to run in 88 percent-90 percent humidity, which is what I did Monday," McQuown said. "When the humidity is high, it's harder to run and it's harder to run fast."

Runners donated \$30 and walkers donated \$20 to Fighting for Alyssa, a nonprofit that works to prevent and treat substance abuse and addiction.

After the 5K, Fighting for Alyssa donated \$25,000 to several groups, including The LCADA Way, which provides addiction-recovery programs in the Medina County area; Robby's Voice and Cathy's House, both Medina addiction-recovery organizations; Community Assessment and Treatment Services, an addiction-recovery center in Cleveland; and the Medina County Drug Abuse Commission, one of the Kite Fest organizers.

The Kite Fest takes place in September because the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has designated September as National Recovery Month.

"Kites are a symbol of freedom, and movement from darkness to light, which truly symbolizes recovery," said Lea Heidman, who with her husband, Brian Malone, founded Fighting for Alyssa in 2015 after their daughter Alyssa died of a heroin overdose.

"Kite Fest is a message of hope, a way to bring people together to fight addictions," Malone added.

Traditionally, the New Era Kite Club of West Virginia sells kites and hosts kite-building workshops for children at the Kite Fest. The club canceled its appearance this year because of the weather.

However, Medina County Share Cluster, which promotes nonviolent, drug-free living, was on hand to paint faces and craft balloon animals. Also, the Medina County Sheriff's Office D.A.R.E. car and K-9 unit were at the fest.

Sponsors of the Kite Fest and 5K included Akron Children's Hospital, Buehler Food Markets Inc., Medina Dairy Queen, TITLE Boxing Club, The LCADA Way, KeyBank, Huntington, OhioGuidestone and Medina County Share Cluster.

YOURTOWN MEDINA & CENTRAL MEDINA COUNTY

WWW.MEDINA-GAZETTE.COM

*In YourTown, we spotlight
a different Medina County community:*

TODAY: Medina/Central Medina

THURSDAY: Brunswick/Northern Medina

FRIDAY: Wadsworth/Southern Medina

KITE FEST LIFTS UP SERENITE:

The Recovery Center of Medina County and Serenite Restaurant & Culinary Institute received a \$2,000 grant at the Medina County Drug Abuse Commission's Kite Fest on Sept. 8 at Buckeye Woods Park.

Pictured, from left, are Medina County Common Pleas Judge Joyce V. Kimbler, Johanna Smith and baby Lucy, Jess Hazeltine, administrative manager for the recovery center, Beth Connelly and Susan Wentz. All but Kimbler and Hazeltine are volunteers at the recovery center.

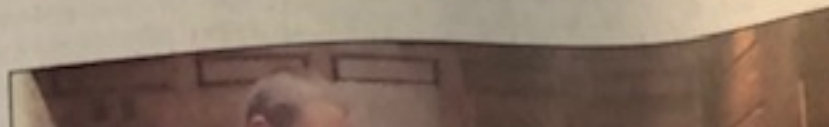
The grant will be used to support the recovery center and the culinary school.

PHOTO PROVIDED



NOTEBOOK

Principal gives



DAILY BRIEFING

By Beacon Journal/GateHouse Media Ohio staff report

Published September 11, 2018

NORTHEAST OHIO Local groups receive \$25,000 in funding

Eleven Akron and Cleveland organizations that work with drug recovery and prevention have been awarded **\$25,000** in grants from a local nonprofit group.

Fighting for Alyssa, an organization dedicated to the awareness, prevention, and treatment of substance abuse and addiction, awarded the grants.

The nonprofit was founded by Lea Heidman and Brian Malone after their daughter, Alyssa Apostolakis, died from a heroin overdose in 2015.

Apostolakis wanted to be a counselor to help children and young adults struggling with drug addictions and her parents' foundation aims to fulfill her promise.

The organization awarded the following programs with grants, which ranged from \$2,000 to \$5,000: the Lantern of Cleveland, the LCADA Way of Wadsworth, Robby's Voice of Medina, A Way Out of Recovery Solutions of Akron, Community Assessment and Treatment Services of Cleveland, Running2BeWell of Akron, Recovery Center of Medina County, Hidden in Plain Sight, Cathy's House of Medina, Medina County Drug Abuse Commission and \$5,000 to MCPALS (Medina County Police Activities League).

"The grant dollars will be used in five counties: Medina, Summit, Cuyahoga, Lorain and Erie," Heidman said. "The recipients all work with the recovery community."

Recovery Center of Medina County

Alyssa's Room



The LCADA Way dedicates room to Alyssa Apostolakis

Alyssa Alfano | The Gazette

Published on Jan. 15, 2019 | Updated 1:21 a. m.



Joe Matuscak, Brian Malone (Alyssa Apostolakis' father), Tom Stuber, Lee Heidman (Alyssa's mother) and Marc Ricker pose for a photo after a plaque was present with Alyssa's photo on it.

ALYSSA ALFANO /
GAZETTE

MEDINA — It is a somewhat simple room. It's filled with a table and chairs along with a white board. It's designed for group meetings, a place where people can speak their minds about their addictions and with support move forward on the road to recovery.

It is something Alyssa Apostolakis wanted.

So this room at The LCADA Way Medina Wellness Center is called Alyssa's Room, an ever-present reminder that sobriety is worth fighting for every day.

On Monday, The LCADA Way presented the founders of Fighting for Alyssa, a foundation dedicated to supporting those fighting substance abuse, with a plaque and a room dedication at their Medina facility located at 740 E. Washington St.

Fighting for Alyssa started in 2015 after 21-year-old Alyssa Apostolakis, a Medina native, died of a heroin overdose. Two months later, her parents, Lea Heidman and Brian Malone, started the foundation to raise funds to distribute to local agencies that are dedicated to the awareness, prevention and treatment of substance abuse in local communities.

"She was a college student. She loved art and music and the outdoors and so, when she passed away, we wanted to do something to carry on, first of all her mission, which was she always wanted to be sober and that's the 'fight' in Fighting for Alyssa," said Heidman.

A plaque that tells Alyssa's story will hang in the room where many local group meetings take place.

"You know, LCADA was one of the first people that I had a relationship with when I started the foundation. I'm very, very honored and proud to be in association with LCADA," said Heidman. "I'm very guarded about her brand and I would only associate with the very best."

The LCADA Way, a full-service addiction treatment and recovery agency, started in Lorain County in 1981. In November 2015, it expanded its services into Medina County with the opening of its second wellness center.

Alyssa's parents said they were introduced to leaders of the organization several years ago and have been associated ever since.

“She was one of the key reasons that we came to Medina in the first place,” said Tom Stuber, president and CEO of The LCADA Way.

Heidman and Malone were on The LCADA Way board for several years.

“We just thought it would be a nice thing to do,” Stuber said during the dedication. “The family is dedicated to their mission to help people with addiction and we think that needs to be recognized.”

For more information about Fighting for Alyssa, visit www.fightingforalyssa.org and for more information on The LCADA Way visit <https://thelcadaway.org/>.

Contact reporter Alyssa Alfano at aalfano@medina-gazette.com.

Media Videos

▶ **WVIZ TV**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsGqgjI42-0>

▶ **WEWS TV**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5ltSo7367M>

▶ **WKYC TV**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kkjMG-Xv7I>

