



September 23, 2024

## **Straight Talk**

**Welcome to the latest edition of the Steered Straight Newsletter! We are thrilled to bring you updates on the impactful work that Michael DeLeon and the Steered Straight team are doing to support communities, young people, and families nationwide. Our mission is to inform, educate, and empower young people to make positive choices. Thank you for joining us on this journey to make a difference.**



I would like to extend a personal invitation for you to check out another incredible FREE resource on our website. [Steered Straight website link to the Victorias Voice VITAL SIGNS curriculum](#). I have attached the program overview that will give you a good idea of how the program came to be and what it contains. There is more information such as the course outline and what each section contains if you click the link. I hope you will see the tremendous value this curriculum contains and choose to utilize this opportunity for the sake of your children. Please click the link above to be directed to the information and curriculum. We are proud to be able to offer this amazing tool and grateful to the Victoria's Voice Foundation for putting it

together and sharing the story of their beautiful daughter in hopes of helping others.

**Michael DeLeon**



## WELCOME TO VITAL SIGNS

**VITAL SIGNS** was born from the loss of David and Jackie Siegel's 18-year-old daughter Victoria to a drug overdose in 2015.

In the depths of their despair, David and Jackie dedicated themselves to understanding how this tragedy came to pass. And in doing so, they learned a great deal about the recognizable signs of risk in youth – the very signs they either missed, misunderstood, or underestimated in Victoria. Although they cannot change their story of loss, David and Jackie have created the **VITAL SIGNS** program to save other parents and families from experiencing a similar tragedy.

*“The best leaders I know are students of leadership. There's no such thing as an expert leader. It doesn't exist. [Just] like there's no such thing as an expert parent. It doesn't exist. We are students of leadership. And even the most senior leaders constantly are reading books, reading articles, watching talks, having conversations all the time about leadership.*”

*They're always in learning mode.”*

- Simon Sinek on TikTok, best-selling author and acclaimed inspirational speaker on business leadership

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

**VITAL SIGNS** was created to empower parents and caregivers with lifesaving information and practical tools to help guide their children safely through adolescence today.

The program was developed in collaboration with psychotherapist and addiction specialist Brandy Klingman, LCSW. Brandy narrates the **VITAL SIGNS** sessions, providing insights and information as both a clinician and a parent of three young children.

Brandy also runs a small private practice and owns and operates several clinics in Louisiana addressing mental health and substance use disorder.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

**VITAL SIGNS** sessions two through nine each cover one of several youth risk factors: family foundation, self-esteem, bullying, sexual behaviors, alcohol, vaping and marijuana, drugs, and suicide.

Individual sessions are broken down into a series of short video segments to allow time to pause for reflection. You will need to download and print the session aids prior to starting each session.

The last part of each session focuses on the specific **VITAL SIGNS** and **SOLUTIONS** relative to the session topic. Family Follow-Up activities and additional resources are also provided to help bring about the most positive outcomes for your child.

## PARENT INCENTIVES

Individuals who complete 6 or more sessions and the post survey will receive a **VITAL SIGNS** Completion Kit:

- One copy of the *Victoria's Voice* diary
- One drug test provided by our partner National Drug Screening
- One reduced-rate travel certificate provided by our partner Interval International for a week's stay at one of their resorts (rules and restrictions apply)

Your certificate of completion will be automatically generated following completion of 6 sessions and the post-survey. Please submit a screenshot or copy of your certificate to [Rachael@victoriasvoicefoundation.com](mailto:Rachael@victoriasvoicefoundation.com) to claim your incentives.

## PARENT WARNING

Many of the videos in this program contain images of drug and alcohol use that you may find disturbing. THESE are the images that your children are bombarded with in the media, where drug and alcohol use is glamorized as something that all the cool kids are doing.

# Road Warrior



## How the Miles Make a Difference

Michael was beyond proud to lead this conference with the amazing Queen of Versailles, Jackie Siegel, and Super Bowl Champion Fred Stokes - alongside so many other heroes like HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas) program, the DEA, and amazing and dedicated advocates and champions fighting to SAVE OUR KIDS!!!

Michael was beyond words to be able to work with First Lady Suzanne Youngkin from the Commonwealth of Virginia on Steered Straight's fentanyl program, continuing education programs for schools and families, and the One Step Away program for Virginia prisons and jails. Steered Straight is grateful and so hopeful that we are going to be able to make a bigger impact than ever this year.

Steered Straight

## **In The News**

**National speaker visits Catholic Central Schools  
to combat youth addiction**

**Jessica Riley of WTOV9 FOX states, "As the opioid, vaping, mental health crisis and more continue to affect young people, a national speaker made**

**a stop at Catholic Central Schools to spread his message about prevention".**

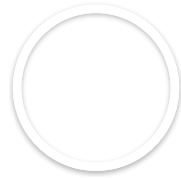
Please click on the video link above to read the full story and watch the video of Michael DeLeon on WTOV9 FOX where he discusses his message about prevention and the prevalent need in Ohio. Ohio is the #1 state in America for drug death overall and the #1 state in America for Fentanyl death.

## **On the Road to Recovery**

Steered Straight and Recovery Army sat down with Nick Gambardella. Nick's story of addiction started at the shocking age of 8 when he smoked weed for the first time with his older brother and his babysitter's boyfriend. At around 11 or 12 he was introduced to more weed, alcohol, and other substances were added as well as it becoming a regular occurrence. His drug use escalated and was filled with other illegal activity such as dealing drugs, burglary, gang involvement, and fraud. He spent 7 1/2 years in prison between 2010 and 2020. At 30 years of age, he was faced with a long prison sentence and the realization that his life needed to change. He knew he had embarrassed himself, but he could not stand that he had also embarrassed his family. He wanted to be a better man. He used his time in prison to work on himself and when he got out, he married a childhood friend, the love of his life. Six months after getting out of prison he was in a severe work accident. He found himself in the hospital being pumped full of dope in the form of pain medication. All the feelings that he loved on opiates came flooding back. He went through 23 surgeries, lost 57 units of blood and almost lost his life 3 separate times. He left the hospital with an amputation, a drug addiction, and depression. He managed to get clean again and still attends meetings to keep his sobriety. He has a message and story to share. Please check out Nick's full story and let it inspire you.

To see more stories of hope and inspiration please visit:

[www.recoveryarmy.com](http://www.recoveryarmy.com)

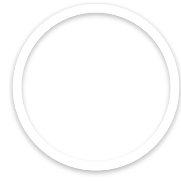


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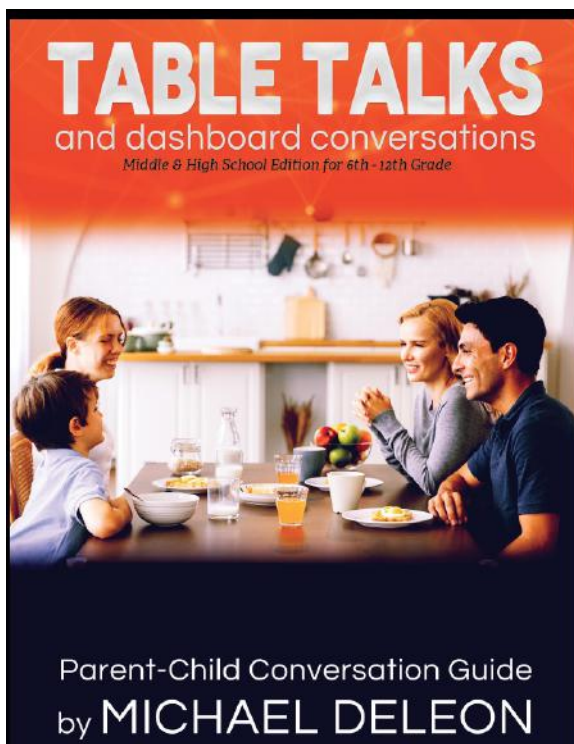
## **TABLE TALKS**

Michael has created workbooks for parents and children that guide them in managing relationships and discussing difficult topics beyond drug and alcohol abuse. Each month, he focuses on a different subjects and offers many different topics of conversation and activities you can do with your children to help foster that deep connection and communication that is so vital.





**Table Talks and Dashboard Conversations** is an in-depth conversation guide for parents and kids. You can order through [Amazon](#) or the [Steered Straight website](#).



### **The Month of September:**

The focus of September is emotional health and suicide prevention. Adolescent suicide is at a 50 year high. This is a vital topic to have conversations about with the young people in your life. It is an uncomfortable topic. No one really wants to discuss it, but it is something we need to stop avoiding now more than ever. Each week in September we will focus on a new topic or activity related to emotional health and suicide prevention. This week I want you to talk to your kids about the only type of love that we are in control of in our lives, SELF LOVE. Introduce them to positive affirmations and help them come up with at least 3 things a day that they are grateful for and 3 things that they love about

themselves. Please share your list of 3 things with them as well. Dinner time or a car ride is a great time to have the discussion. Remind them of their worth and of how important it is that we treat ourselves with as much love and kindness and we treat other people with in our lives. Spend the week building your kids up! The more we open up with kids, the more they will open up to the important adults in their lives.

## Headlines We Are Following

[What is Galaxy Gas and Why Is It Dangerous? \(msn.com\)](#)

[SAM Friday Fact 08/30/2024: Friday Fact: Missouri Marijuana Poison Control Calls for Children Under 5 Skyrocket by 2300% Over 6 Years - Smart Approaches to Marijuana \(learnaboutsam.org\)](#)

[Governor Newsom issues regulations to protect kids from dangerous and intoxicating hemp products | Governor of California](#)

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## Contact Steered Straight

Michael and his team of professional Steered Straight speakers are eager to meet you in person and make a profound impact on your students, staff, and community. To bring their inspiring message to your next event, contact Steered Straight to schedule.

[\*\*CONTACT STEERED STRAIGHT\*\*](#)



## Follow On Social Media



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# TESTIMONY FROM AN AWESOME STUDENT TODAY



turn my life around I don't  
vape no more



43



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Testimonies like this man, preaching to these ...



steeredstraight · Original audio





Watch now on TikTok

@steeredstraight

Check out these awesome posts.

Michael met up with a student who heard his presentation last year and it LITERALLY changed his life. Watch the Instagram real and hear this amazing young man's testimony. So proud of him for sharing the positive changes he has made which will inspire others to do the same.

The TikTok post shows the powerful message Michael delivers makes an immediate impact. Kids not only turned in their vapes, but a couple of brave kids did it in front of EVERYONE. So awesome to see.

Michael DeLeon and the team at Steered Straight are working hard to ensure this generation gets what they need to change the world. No other program like it and no one delivers the message better. All for the kids! Follow Michael and Steered Straight on social media so you don't miss a beat!

#steeredstraight #motivator #explore #advice #drugfree #antivaping #recovery #quitvaping #stayinyourlane



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