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## Program will aid children affected by meth abuse

[mcintron](#)

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A program offering services to families affected by methamphetamine abuse in southwest Missouri has recently been launched by a Chicago-based private non-profit human service organization. Circle of Hope with its newly named director Shannon Stokes will target nine counties in the southwest corner of the state with especially high numbers of children in care who have been affected by their families' meth drug abuse.

Kids Hope United will collaborate with the Missouri Department of Social Services/Children's Division, the Missouri Department of Mental Health/Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, and the Missouri Institute of Mental Health in providing and supporting services to these children and their families. In addition, Kids Hope United will be working with the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association and other state and community partners to strengthen inter-agency collaboration and integration of programs and services through the creation of a statewide Missouri Alliance for Drug Endangered Children.

The multi-state based organization with regional boards of directors comprised of an array of industry, religious, professional and government leaders, advocates changes on behalf of vulnerable children and families in what they believe is a "broken" child welfare system. Circle of Hope specifically will focus on using intensive in-home services to build protection for children from within their families. Work will include the development of partnerships at both the county and state levels so that community resources effectively can be used to stabilize these families.

As director of programs, Stokes will be responsible for the overall leadership management, and organizational development of programs and services of the project. She will develop, execute and evaluate the activities of the programs and services; build alliances and partnerships with the community; supervise senior supervisors and administrative staff; and prepare required reports. She will also oversee team development, evaluation and advocacy as well as ensure compliance with all program contracts and policies.

Stokes previously served as a senior research coordinator for the University of Missouri - Columbia's College of Education, where she designed and conducted program evaluations for state agencies and community-based organizations. While at the university, she also was a research analyst for eight years at the Institute of Public Policy and was

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responsible for program evaluations and data analysis. She is the author of several articles, conference papers and technical reports.

She earned her Bachelor of Arts in political science in 1996 and her Master of Public Administration in 1999 from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

For more information about Kids Hope United, go [here](#).

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