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## Meth abuse hurts families

It is no secret that methamphetamine abuse is a major problem in Missouri.

Statewide, methamphetamine involvement accounts for one of every eight foster care placements. And the problem is growing.

Despite its toll on families and health, meth use has increased in part because it is readily available, easy to manufacture and inexpensive.

When one or both parents are involved in the manufacture of the drug, or are addicted to it, their children are exposed to dangerous chemical operations and risky parental behaviors.

It is crucially important to keep families together, and meth abuse threatens the safety and happiness of too many families. That is why Kids Hope United, the Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division, the Missouri Department of Mental Health Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, the Missouri Institute of Mental Health and the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association have partnered together to help children and families involved with methamphetamine.

The project, called Circle of Hope, targets nine counties in the southwest corner of the state (Jasper, Newton, McDonald, Lawrence, Barry, Greene, Christian, Taney and Stone). These counties have high numbers of children in care due to family methamphetamine abuse.

In order to prevent the need for children to be taken from their homes, the Circle of Hope project is dedicated to providing much-needed intensive in-home services to build protection for children from within their homes, building stronger, safer families.

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