

# BASE

WORKING TO CREATE A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY



# MEDIA KIT



**2020**

Develops Pride Partnership to better serve LGBTQ+ community

Transitions to virtual programs

**2019**

Reports a 22% reduction in Evansville High School students participating in underage drinking

Teams with Healthy Edgerton to bring Healthy Living with Chronic Pain, a six-week program, to rural communities

Receives Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking (STOP) Grant

**2018**

Helps pass a new law that holds adults accountable with a \$500 fine for providing a place for underage drinking

Partners with the Evansville School District and Police Department to pass vaping ordinance that makes it illegal for youth to possess vaping products

**2017**

Receives the Coalition of Excellence Award from CADCA for Intermediate Outcomes of prescription drug misuse

Collects the National Exemplary Award for Innovative Substance Abuse Prevention Programs, Practices and Policies from the National Prevention Network

**2016**

Trains teachers in LGBTQ+ Safe Space

Accepts the Coalition of Excellence Award from CADCA for Short-Term Outcomes for underage in drinking

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## ABOUT BUILDING A SAFER EVANSVILLE

Building A Safer Evansville (BASE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a safer, healthier and more inclusive Evansville by leading public health and substance abuse prevention initiatives and connecting community partners to resources. From organizational training to LGBTQ+ workshops and youth substance abuse funding, BASE has become a national model for comprehensive community wellness programs across the country.

BASE was formed in 2009 to address a rise in alcohol, drug and suicide problems in the Evansville community. Through community outreach such as lockbox initiatives, changes in city and school district policies, prescription drug take back days, health fairs, leadership forums, diversity training, youth substance abuse education curriculum and the development of the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) Group, the coalition has made a positive impact on Evansville. Recently, BASE coordinated Evansville's first-ever Pride Month in June 2020, holding virtual events in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. BASE also created the Evansville Pride Partnership which works with local businesses to ensure they are inclusive and supportive of the LGBTQ+ community.

BASE continues to seek new partners and coalition members who want to inspire action and make Evansville a healthier place to live. Parents, community members and business leaders can also donate time, money and resources to enhance prevention efforts and events, and are encouraged to be involved by attending meetings and helping plan future activities.



### MISSION

The Building A Safer Evansville (BASE) mission is to connect with community partners and inspire action to create a safe, healthy community.

### VISION

Building A Safer Evansville (BASE) envisions a community that is safe, healthy and inclusive.

**BASE MEDIA CONTACT**

Executive Director Jennifer Braun  
jbraun.base@gmail.com

Assists the Evansville Police Department in becoming Rock County's first force to carry Narcan

2015

Receives DFC Mentoring Grant to mentor Stoughton Wellness Coalition

2014

Coordinates first Evansville Night Out event which gives families a safe, affordable and alcohol-free night of fun. This annual substance-free family event now has over 2,000 attendees

Sends four students to CADCA's National Youth Leadership Initiative (NYLI)

2013

Receives \$625,000 grant from the federal Drug Free Communities Support Program to be awarded over five years

2012

Advocates for a Social Host Ordinance for Evansville

Creates the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) Group at Evansville HS

Coordinates the installation of a medication drop box with the Evansville Police Department

2011

2010

Enters into a formal DFC Mentoring Grant with Partners in Prevention-Rock County

2009

Forms as a coalition in response to community needs

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## OUR STORY

Evansville is a small town in Wisconsin centrally located between Madison and Janesville. The town's old-world charm can be felt as you drive through the historic downtown during homecoming week and see the local businesses with "Blue Devil Pride" painted on their windows by the local teenagers. The population of Evansville is close to 6,000 and features a broad range of ethnic, cultural and educational backgrounds. Neighboring communities on the outskirts of Evansville add approximately another 8,000 people to the area that feed into the Evansville School District.

BASE was born out of necessity. Following troubling results found in the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey administered to students, three youth suicides and a drunk driving accident, the Evansville community came together with Partners for Prevention – Rock County to form BASE. The survey revealed that an alarming number of Evansville High School students were abusing alcohol and drugs and had considered suicide. In the beginning, BASE focused on substance abuse prevention, education and awareness with the goal to lower drug and alcohol abuse rates among youth in Evansville. The coalition found success by implementing curriculum and forming partnerships, advocating for prevention, and working with community partners to change policies and procedures. In the last 10 years, BASE has received federal and state grants to bolster its activities, becoming a trusted resource and change agent in Evansville. From Evansville Night Out and Shop with a Cop to Reality Maze, Medication Take Back Days and QPR Training for suicide prevention, BASE has proven to be a vital part of the Evansville community. BASE has also broadened its offerings, addressing the opioid crisis and the dangers of vaping while implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives, including Evansville's first-ever LGBTQ+ Pride Month in 2020.

## IN THE NEWS

[Evansville High School's Reality Maze teaches freshmen dangers of risky behavior](#)

[Building a Safer Evansville hosts fourth Evansville Night Out](#)

[Evansville officers recognized for saving lives](#)

[Five local coalitions receive state grants for opioid prevention](#)

[Evansville High School research participation leads to substance abuse program](#)

[Hospital grants to address vaping prevention, healthy eating and chronic pain](#)

[Community warned to 'Lock Up Ur Meds' from teens](#)

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

More than  
**2,400 pounds**  
of medications have been  
collected by medication  
drop boxes since 2011.



BASE has facilitated more than  
**SIXTY**  
community changes including new  
programs and awareness-raising  
events to **reduce substance abuse**.

More than  
**400**  
medication lockboxes have  
been distributed by BASE.



BASE youth developed a strategic plan  
to address drinking at the annual  
Fourth of July Festival. **Policies** were  
changed that **affected approximately**  
**10,000 youth and adults**  
that attend the four-day festival.

**2,000+ ATTENDEES**  
to annual Evansville Night Out.  
The **substance-free** event is  
hosted by BASE and features  
various family activities.



Since 2012, BASE youth  
volunteers have donated more  
than 4,000 hours to **empower**  
**their peers** to make **healthier**  
and **safer life choices**.



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## SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

- Support smart and effective policies to reduce youth substance abuse, including education on the negative effects associated with marijuana, opioids, over-the-counter drugs, underage drinking and vaping
- Installation of medication drop boxes
- Support medication diversion initiatives
- Implementation of Fourth of July Festival Best Practices to reduce drinking
- Students Against Destructive Decisions Group (SADD)
- Compliance checks
- Recovery coach talks with schools
- Hidden in Plain Sight bedroom drug paraphernalia program
- Vape cart education



## PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- Address diversity and equality in the Evansville community through LGBTQ+ initiatives
- LGBTQ+ Safe Space training
- Racial Justice conversations
- Support the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)
- Sit on Evansville Community School District Diversity and Inclusivity Committee



## DEVELOP MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Promote mental and emotional health
- Provide support for Evansville High School's BASE Youth Coalition
- Develop youth leaders
- Mental health first aid training
- Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR) suicide prevention training



## EDUCATE AND TRAIN PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- Lead training for law enforcement and other organizations
- Engage community partners
- Lead various workshops and seminars
- Support community partners to attend trainings



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### MEGAN HALVENSLEBEN

President  
*Evansville Community School District*

### ERIN HOWELL

Vice President  
*Vivent Health*

### CHIEF PATRICK REESE

Treasurer  
*Evansville Police Department*

### DULCIE BERGSMA

*State Bank of Cross Plains*

### JIM BROOKS

*Evansville Community Partnership*

### KYLIE HOOPS

*Youth Representative*

### SEAN MANGOLD

*Recovery Coach*

### LAURA MAYS

*Stoughton Health*

### DEB MILLER

*Evansville High School*

### GAIL PLUEMER-WINTER

*Parent*

"Being in SADD and BASE has helped me learn a lot about leadership. As someone who's typically been a follower, the skills I've learned will help me throughout the rest of my life. Being a part of these groups has also helped me feel like I belong and that my voice is heard."

– Annabelle S., *Youth Testimonial*

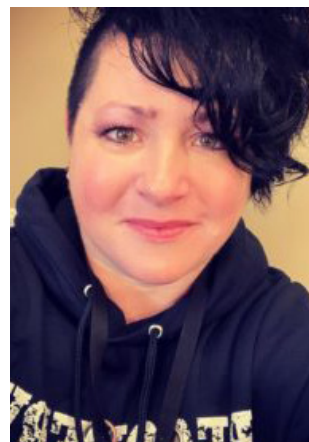
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## EXECUTIVE TEAM



**MEGAN HALVENSLEBEN**  
President



**ERIN HOWELL**  
Vice President



**CHIEF PATRICK REESE**  
Treasurer

### JENNIFER BRAUN, Executive Director

A leader with a passion for public health, education and community organizing, Jennifer Braun has led BASE as the Executive Director since 2009. Under her direction, BASE has reduced the rate of substance abuse among youth in the Evansville community and become a model for comprehensive community wellness programs across the United States.

Her leadership has helped BASE secure grant funding and receive numerous awards for its work in youth substance abuse prevention and education, including recent honors:

- 2016 CADCA GOT OUTCOMES! Coalition of Excellence Award for Short-Term Outcomes
- 2017 CADCA GOT OUTCOMES! Coalition of Excellence Award for Intermediate Outcomes (RX drug abuse prevention)
- 2017 National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) Exemplary Award for Innovative Substance Abuse Prevent Programs, Practices and Policies (medication diversion program)

Jennifer has over 13 years of experience in nonprofits, grant writing, marketing, community planning and development in the Evansville area. She is a certified prevention specialist for the State of Wisconsin and sits on the advisory committee for the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County. Jennifer is also a member of the LGBTQ+ Substance Abuse Prevention Workgroup, Rock County Prevention Network and the Rock County Heroin Taskforce. She has completed professional development programs with the Healthy Wisconsin Leadership Institute, CADCA Coalition Academy and Leadership Development Academy of Rock County.

A graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater with degrees in political science and communications, Jennifer enjoys reading, running, hiking, skiing, fishing and thrift store shopping when she isn't focusing on improving the Evansville community or spending time with her family, which includes husband, Josh, and children, Elinor, Auna and Henrik, as well as dogs, Sasha and Griffey.

Contact Jennifer at [jbrown.base@gmail.com](mailto:jbrown.base@gmail.com).





## EXECUTIVE TEAM BIOS

### MEGAN HALVENSLEBEN, President

Megan Halvensleben joined the BASE board as the president in 2020. That same year, Megan began work as a social worker for the Evansville Community School District.

She has a master's degree in social work from George Williams College in Williams Bay, Wisc., as well as a bachelor's degree from Edgewood College in Madison, Wisc.

Megan enjoys working as an advocate for vulnerable populations and owns a Foster Home License from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Family Services.

In addition to providing support for the youth in the community, her favorite parts of BASE are collaborating with the community partners and meeting new people.

Megan has also worked as a care manager for My Choice Family Care in Rock County and served on the Challenging Solutions Workgroup and Rock County Transition Committee. She completed internships in intake service coordination at the Crossroads Counseling Center and the TAGOS Leadership Academy in Janesville, Wisc.

Megan has one son and she and her husband live on a small farm just outside of Evansville where they raise several different animals.

### ERIN HOWELL, Vice President

Erin Howell has served as the vice president of the BASE board since 2020. She dove headfirst into the role, helping lead Narcan training sessions, managing events, such as "Shop with a Cop," and coordinating PRIDE events and outreach.

A prevention specialist for Vivent Health, Erin leads various initiatives aimed at helping rehabilitate addicts, including needle exchanges, harm reduction, education and disease testing, making her a seamless fit for her role in helping shape and lead BASE.

Erin's favorite part of working with BASE is developing events and partnerships geared toward the LGBTQ+ community. In 2020, she was instrumental in coordinating Evansville's first-ever Pride Month and attended a Mental Health First Aid USA Conference on behalf of BASE in Milwaukee.

Erin has worked in prevention for several years. Her husband Bill is also involved in serving the Evansville community by leading Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings in the area. Erin has three children, including two currently in the Evansville School District.

"BASE has given me the chance to make a difference with issues I believe in. Before I joined BASE, I disagreed with the choices that some of the kids my age were making, but wasn't able to do anything about them. Now, through BASE and SADD I feel that I am able to make changes regarding these issues in my school and community. Through BASE, I have gone to two CADCA events in Austin and DC and have had the chance to meet others my age who are also making change in their communities. BASE also gives me the chance to step out of my comfort zone, presenting to the coalition, groups at my school, and groups and committees around my community."

– Aliye G., Youth Testimonial



# PROGRAMS & EVENTS



## SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

Evansville Night Out  
Shop with a Cop  
Medication Take Back Days  
Safer at Home Art Contest  
Show Us Your Prom  
Evansville Community Virtual Scavenger Hunt  
Middle School Lock-In  
Healthy Living with Chronic Pain  
Too Good for Drugs and Violence



## PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Evansville Pride Month  
Law Enforcement and LGBTQ+ Workshop  
LGBTQ+ Learning Series  
Educational Videos  
Evansville Day of Silence 2020  
Pride Disc Golf Tournament  
Community Conversations  
Racial Justice Community Conversations



## DEVELOP MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Alliance for Wisconsin Youth  
Show Us Your Quarantine Reality Maze  
CADCA Youth Leadership Forum  
Community Art Gala



## EDUCATE AND TRAIN PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Virtual Story Time with an Evansville Police Officer  
Narcotics Overdose Death Prevention Training  
Latino Diversity Training  
Bullying Prevention training  
Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR) Training

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## CHIEF PATRICK REESE, Treasurer

Chief Patrick Reese joined the BASE board in 2014. He is currently the treasurer after serving on the board in a variety of capacities, including as the vice president.

In his role as the treasurer, Chief Reese signs off on every bill and helps manage all funding.

As the police chief for the Evansville Police Department, Chief Reese also acts as the liaison between his department and BASE. The Police Department and BASE operate hand-in-hand on several projects, events and initiatives, including drug and alcohol prevention education, Narcan training, "Shop with a Cop," drug drop-off boxes and the victim assistance fund to name a few.

Even before he joined the board, Chief Reese was heavily involved with BASE. The coalition's first office was in the Evansville Police Department building down the hall from Chief Reese. He has seen firsthand the impact BASE has had on the Evansville community, particularly in reducing underage drinking and attitudes surrounding drug and tobacco use among teens.

Chief Reese has been a police officer for over 20 years. He joined the Evansville Police Department in 2005 and was named police chief in 2019. He is married to David, and has one stepson, Austin. In his spare time, he loves to travel. His favorite destination is Thailand.

## MARK MELLECKER, Project Coordinator

Mark Mellecker joined BASE as Project Coordinator in January of 2020 and has seamlessly added value to the team, helping lead efforts to research grant funding, develop relationships with community partners, manage social and digital media and coordinate projects.

In less than a year, Mark has already received a number of certifications and completed professional development seminars, including:

- QPR Training for Suicide Prevention
- Narcan Training for Opioid Overdose
- Wisconsin Alcohol Policy Seminar
- 2020 National Prevention Network Conference

After BASE secured the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act Grant (STOP Act Grant), Mark joined the team and started working directly with programs to help reduce alcohol abuse in the LGBTQ+ community. Mark is proud to see the strides the Evansville and Rock County communities have made for LGBTQ+ youth, including the area's first ever Pride Month this year, and he welcomes BASE's role in helping foster a more inclusive and safer environment for area youth.

An Iowa City native, he graduated from the University of Iowa in 2016 with a degree in theatre arts. Mark is an avid cyclist who has completed the RAGBRAI, an annual bicycle ride across Iowa. An Eagle Scout, he plans to volunteer with local Boy Scouts in the near future. He lives in Evansville with his wife, McKenzie, and their dog.

Contact Mark at [mmellecker.base@gmail.com](mailto:mmellecker.base@gmail.com).



## COMMUNITY TESTIMONIALS

"Thank you to Building a Safer Evansville (BASE) for their partnership with Stoughton Health. Your leadership in youth prevention has helped Stoughton Health address alcohol and mental health issues that were identified in our community health needs assessment. By us working together, we are creating a healthier, stronger community. We're grateful for all you do."

- **Laura Mays**, *Executive Director, Stoughton Hospital Foundation*

"The Evansville Community School District is incredibly thankful for our partnership with BASE. With BASE's support, the district has provided networking opportunities, valuable student data, trainings, resources and materials with others on addiction, high-risk behaviors, prevention and intervention which otherwise would not have been an option. This has had a direct positive impact on our students, families and community. BASE has also empowered high school students to run a successful SADD program, providing preventative education to classmates as well as offering alternative low-risk events during predictive times of high-risk behaviors. The district prioritizes BASE's partnership by having students and staff serve on the Board of Directors. BASE's involvement with the district has undoubtedly created a safer environment for our students."

- **Janessa Katzenberger**, *Director of Student Services, Evansville Community School District*

"BASE has been an essential partner with the Evansville Police Department in fulfilling its mission in service to the community. They have been instrumental in helping change policy in response to vulnerable populations of youth and others affected by addiction. BASE has partnered with EPD to bring down the number of underage liquor sales to minors in our community through education, enforcement and follow up. Through promoting and sponsoring training for our officers, BASE has been able to bring a Drug Recognition Expert into our agency on staff and has provided tools that help save lives of those suffering from alcohol and drug abuse."

- **Chief Patrick Reese**, *Evansville Police Department*

**BUILDING A SAFER EVANSVILLE, INC**

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[BuildingASaferEvansville.org](http://BuildingASaferEvansville.org)



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