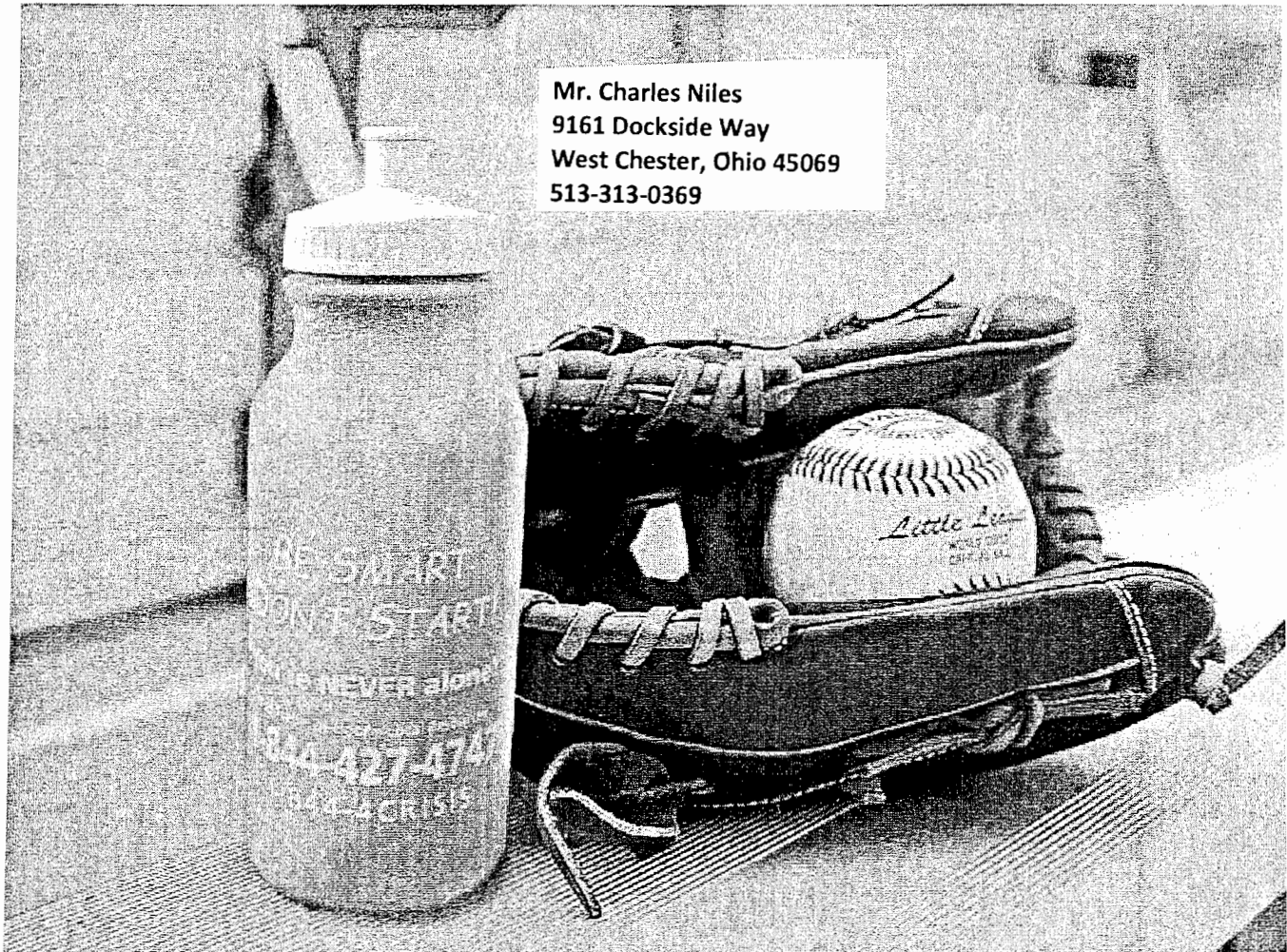


*After losing his son to a heroin overdose in 2015, Mr. Niles began his “Be Smart, Don’t Start” campaign.*



Opioid addiction, which has been named one of the leading causes of accidental death in the United States by the Centers for Disease Control, has become an increasing issue over the last few years, and for longtime Little League® volunteer and District Administrator (D.A.), Charlie Niles, educating the youth about its dangers is being done one plastic bottle at a time.

After losing his son to a heroin overdose in 2015, Mr. Niles knew that his mission in life was to find a way to

educate young boys and girls of the dangers <sup>of</sup> that opioid addiction.

"In 2015, there were 198 overdoses in Butler County alone, and my son was one of them," said Mr. Niles, who served as Ohio District 9 Administrator for 20 years. "I knew somebody had to do something about it, so I went inside, went to my word processor, typed two pages on heroin, and took it to the county commissioner to try and get money for water bottles that kids could have at practices and games with them."

Those bottles, inscribed with the phrases "Be Smart, Don't Start," and "Drug Free" on each side, quickly became an icon throughout the county. Last year, Mr. Niles went on to deliver 5,500 bottles to children throughout Butler County alone. Since then, Mr. Niles has also had the opportunity to attend Little League's Ohio State D.A. meeting, where he was able to talk with 11 other D.A.s to encourage them to bring the program to their respective areas, including 6,500 bottles in the Cincinnati area alone.

"We're fighting heroin by educating the kids, and that's what we have to do to, or this epidemic is going to keep growing," added Mr. Niles. "By giving water bottles with these permanent sayings on them, we can help remind these kids not to do drugs. It's the education of the kids that I'm after, and that's what we're doing."

Earlier this year, Little League President and CEO Stephen D. Keener shared Mr. Niles' story as he spoke alongside Pennsylvania State Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine and Pennsylvania State Senator Gene Yaw

at UPMC Susquehanna in Williamsport, Pa. The focus of Dr. Levine and Senator Yaw's efforts is the importance of monitoring opioids prescribed to young athletes for pain management after an injury and educating parents on the importance of working with their children's physicians to ensure these pain relievers do not lead to a future addiction.

"If we can help educate even a handful of young parents who have kids playing Little League today on the dangers, the consequences, and the information they need to know about this dangerous addiction, it's a small part that we can play in this effort that Charlie started," said Mr. Keener at the event. "I keep one of Charlie's bottles in my office as a reminder every day about how devastating the opioid addiction can be to families and communities, and hope that Charlie's initiative will tell all Little League families that this tragic outcome can be avoided."

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