



FORSYTH COUNTY
DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL

DRUG PREVENTION WORK
IN FORSYTH COUNTY

EDUCATE.
ADVOCATE.
EMPOWER.



Strategizer
Leading the way to a
healthier Forsyth County

FORSYTH COUNTY
DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL

**DONATE
TODAY!**

SCAN ME

April 2024 Volume 3 Issue 12

[Donate to FCDAC Here](#)

SATURDAY APRIL 21, 2024





Watch FCDAC's Promotional Video!

[Click Here](#)

April 21, 2024
2-5 pm
Cumming City Center



Scan for more information!

Family-friendly!

MUSIC, GAMES, FACE
PAINTING, FOOD TRUCKS,
ICE CREAM, COFFEE,
RESOURCE TABLES, AND
MUCH MORE!



THANKS TO Walk for Recovery SPONSORS!



**NORTH GEORGIA
RECOVERY CENTER**

**DAN MICHAEL
SALON**

THE CONNECTION

**NLB
NO LONGER BOUND**


REALTY4RECOVERY


— FORSYTH COUNTY —
COMMUNITY CONNECTION
family connection™


FULLCIRCLE®

 *The* **INSIGHT** *Program*

**Cindy J.
Mills**

SliceAbility


Family First
ADOLESCENT SERVICES

**ROTARY CLUB OF
ROTARY
INTERNATIONAL
NORTH FORSYTH 400**

Billy Howell



**FORSYTH
COUNTY CHAMBER**

Rotary 
Club of Forsyth County


**FORSYTH COUNTY
DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL**

FCDAC Council Meeting, Work and Programs Round-up

Kayden's Korner



April has arrived, and we begin our countdown for The Walk for Recovery 2024 Event on Sunday, April 21 the

The Memorial Tea Cup Ceremony remembers those who lost their lives to overdose. There will be a sign-up table to have your loved one remembered.



Event on Sunday, April 22 at the Cumming City Center! I am so excited about this year's event! We have great sponsors and are so appreciative of them! See the logos from them listed above!

Guest speakers include Mayor Troy Brumbalow, Commissioner Cindy Mills, Sheriff Ron Freeman, and others!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



We need 100 percent involvement through promotion and personal invitations to every organization and group we participate in. Please put our flyers out everywhere and ask businesses you frequent to support the event by putting flyers next to the cash registers!

Invite your ministers to come and announce it to the congregation. This a family-friendly event with **MUSIC, GAMES, FACE PAINTING, ICE CREAM, AND COFFEE!** We are about Resources, Support, Education and to shout out:

Our next FCDAC Council Meeting is on
Wednesday, May 1
8 a.m.
United Way Offices

RECOVERY IS REAL!

Council Meeting Highlights - Community Outreach

Director Rachel Kayden announced on March 6 that April's monthly meeting would be fulfilled at the **Walk for Recovery** event on **April 21, 2-5 pm** at the **Cumming City Center**.



Susan Tanner led the 2023 Walk for Recovery!

- We are counting on our membership to get the word out to everyone in your sphere of influence. Let's plaster the town with our flyers! This family-friendly educational event has many resources, has family fun, and is designed to break down stigma barriers. Recovery is possible and is happening in Forsyth!
- Narcan Training
- There is still time! Become an Event Sponsor! Please get in touch with [Rachel HERE](#)

Sponsorship Levels

Benefits for	Gold: \$2,500	Silver: \$1,000	Bronze: \$500	Friend of
--------------	---------------	-----------------	---------------	-----------

Sponsorship:				FCDAC
Name/Logo in Media	~Year Round Promotions & Social Media ~Event Press Releases ~ Event Promotions	~Event Press Releases ~Event Promotions	~Event Promotions	Any Level - Thanks on Social Media
Name/Logo on Event Banner	Large at Top	Medium - Middle	Small - Bottom	
Name/Logo on Event T-Shirt	Large at Top	Medium - Middle	Small - Bottom	
Honorable Mention at Event	By Guest of Honor	-	-	
Appreciation Mention at Event	Beginning Opening and Closing	Middle Opening and Closing	Last Opening and Closing	
Free T-shirts	8	6	4	

Sponsorships:

Email rachel@unitedwayforsyth.com with your logo and we'll reply with donation instructions

Friend of FCDAC

Donation:

Use QR Code with Note FCDAC The Walk



Sponsorships and donations support the sustainability of the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council and its programs including The Walk for Recovery

Members, Youth, and Partners Actions

Rx and Illicit Drug Summit in Atlanta, Ga

FCDAC member **Danielle Rietta** attended the Rx and Illicit Drug Summit in Atlanta, GA, from April 1 to 4. The 13th annual Rx Summit brought stakeholders from across the nation to Atlanta to take a stand against the opioid and addiction epidemic. Prevention, treatment, recovery strategies, and best practices were shared. **Danielle Rietta** is a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Counselor with Avita Partners, Forsyth County Outpatient Center. She shared her experience at this year's Summit below.



Pictured left to right: DBHDD Commissioner Kevin Tanner, Danielle Rietta, and Lt. John Dawson.

Lt. Dawson and I are happy to strengthen the ongoing partnership between Avita Community Partners and Hall County Sheriff's Department and learn how to serve better our communities and individuals seeking recovery from the conference. We are grateful to the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council and director Rachel

Kayden for sponsoring our attendance at the Rx and Illicit Drug Summit in Atlanta, GA. Thanks to DBHDD Commissioner Kevin Tanner for serving on the advisory board for the conference and bringing together so many stakeholders in mental health, addiction, and recovery from across the country.



Additionally, thank you to Commissioner

Kevin Tanner, Kim Jones (NAMI), Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver, Rep. Todd Jones, Jeff Breedlove, and the work of many other legislators and advocates for continuing to advance mental health parity in Georgia.



Parent Partners Corner

Riverwatch Middle School Parent Night



Matt Meyer, Program Director The Insight Program (left), **Ashley Dickerson**, pictured right and

Deputy Kevin Ferraro, right, teamed up to present a drug awareness program for parents at Riverwatch Middle School.



They spoke to the parents about understanding THC and its effects on youth. THC is not the marijuana these parents may have encountered in their youth. THC percentages have increased dramatically, and with it, a more significant stronghold of addiction, making it much harder to overcome. Ashley spoke about warning signs parents can observe that may hint at drug experimentation. Deputy Ferraro addressed the parents about what law enforcement is currently seeing.

Parents are their children's greatest advocates, and although they may not believe it, they still have the greatest influence on them.



Ashley Dickerson

Ashley currently holds the role of Revenue Accounting Director at AT&T and is an active member of FCDAC.

Her journey as a parent of a child who suffers from Substance Use Disorder covers a lot of pain, frustration, and isolation but also a lot of hope and healing. Ashley openly shares her experience and insight with other parents.

Marti Roveda



Marti is a Strategic Sourcing Manager for Axia Women's Health, an active member of FCDAC, and a volunteer parent advisor for an under-18 recovery program in Nashville. Having a child in recovery, she is passionate about sharing her strength, hope, and experience to educate and eliminate the stigma among parents of youth with Substance Use Disorder.

Youth Outreach



Sharmada Venkataramani, Elevate with Awareness Podcast, Episode 2 "Insights from Prevention Specialist Matt Meyer."



Sharmada Venkataramani has been a member of the FCDAC Youth Council since September 2023. She is a sophomore attending **South Forsyth High School**. She has an avid interest in drug policy and has published a Georgia State Social Studies Fair award-winning research paper on the pharmaceuticals and the opioid epidemic.

As part of her **Marijuana Awareness Campaign** to inform and do prevention work targeted at parents, kids, and other community members, she launched the **Elevate with Awareness Podcast Series**. Her first episode aired in January 2024. On March 18, the second installment aired Sharmada's interview with **Matt Meyer, Program Director of The Insight Program**. He is a certified alcohol and drug counselor and is in long-term recovery himself. Meyer is an active Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council member and often speaks at Council events, most recently **The Drug Summit**. In this episode, he discusses the consequences of Marijuana use on teens from his work as a prevention specialist.



[CLICK HERE](#) to listen to Episode 2

School News



Gabby Breiten, Gateway and Forsyth Academy Drug Counselor.

Emily Ennis, Prevention Coach, North Forsyth High School.



Emily and Gabby reported they have continued to move full steam ahead in building relationships with students and their parents, and it is paying off in increasing the number of inquiries, conversations, and many opportunities to share insight and resources. Emily says, "In this second year of being a Prevention Coach at North Forsyth High School, I have seen a definite expansion in our program. The number of students I work with weekly continues to grow even towards the end of the year. We've had some memorable sober recreational events, like Iron Chef, that the students are asking to do again. And I am planning the next Iron Chef Competition later this month! I'm grateful for the program's success in reaching more students who may need help and who might not have received help otherwise."

"Gabby and I are most proud that other schools are taking notice and recognizing their students' advantage if a prevention coach comes to the campus," Emily said. "We currently have a weekly support group at Lambert High School, Forsyth Central High School, and Denmark High School, as well as my group at North Forsyth High and Gabby's groups at the Academies."

Relationship building is a real key to successful living. We know that isolation, the feeling of being different, not heard or respected, are ingredients in a recipe for an unhappy period in a person's life. Relationships increase a person's overall well-being and create an environment of community, connection, and accountability that seeks the best for everyone in the relationship.

Well done, ladies! And now it is a sprint to the last day of the school year!

Members teaching Members



Alcohol and Drugs Lower Emotional Intelligence

By Dana Bryan



At a time when so much is known about the effects of drugs and alcohol on our brains, it is sad and disappointing that so many people, both young and old, are ignoring the evidence that these chemicals often cause permanent damage to our brains. The use of drugs and alcohol can alter our brains in a way that affects the way we think and the ability to make wise decisions for the rest of our lives, even if the substances are no longer used. Substance abuse can transform our brains in a way that affects the way we react to stressful situations and toward the people in our lives. Even if drugs or alcohol do not cause death, their use can cause negative consequences that can permanently affect our brain's ability to function at its full potential. This ability can be lost forever.

During FCDAC's March speaker, Dr. Katie Lamberson's presentation about the effect of drugs and alcohol on our brains, I kept thinking of something I read long ago. "When an addict finally quits using drugs or alcohol, his emotional maturity is at the level it was when he started using." I have thought about this a lot and have seen examples over and over which prove that this is true. For instance, if a person starts using drugs or alcohol at age 12 and uses it until he finally becomes clean and sober at age 23, his way of reacting to people and situations and his ability to make decisions will be at the stage of maturity he had reached at age 12. In addition, a person who is making choices that lead to drug or alcohol use will often have the emotional maturity of someone younger than his age. This means that when he finally quits using at age 23, he is only emotionally as mature as he was at age 12, and that emotional behavior is likely to be more like that of an 8-year-old child.

Life brings unexpected situations that require clear thinking to make the best choices. People who are not users of drugs or alcohol are learning how to cope with stress, disappointments, sadness, and difficult decisions in their lives, and they learn how to communicate with others. These life skills and experiences help make future decisions easier and add to our emotional intelligence. In addition, when we are learning to interact with and react to other people, it is important to learn how to deal with people and situations responsibly. If a person turns to drugs or alcohol as a way of escaping difficult situations, he retards the development of the valuable skills he'll need when facing future difficult situations.

The decision to try that first drug is a dangerous one, whether it is made out of curiosity, to impress someone, to feel like part of a certain group, to numb feelings as an escape, or for any other reason. Nobody wakes up one morning and thinks, "I'm going to be a drug addict," but all addiction can be traced back to the time that first drug was taken.



Dana Bryan

Dana is a retired middle school teacher and

member of FCDAC. Through her personal loss of her daughter to drug experimentation, Dana devotes her time reaching out to youth through presentations about the real consequences and high risk of experimenting with addictive substances and how it affects them, their futures, and their families. She contributes her insights monthly to the *Strategizer*.
Thanks, Dana!

Our Partners in Prevention

Is your loved one struggling with substance use?

How we can help for free:



- Medication Assisted Treatment for opiate use
- Infectious Disease Testing + Treatment
- Peer Support Specialist & Linkage to Care
- Free Narcan for overdose reversals
- Sexual Health



Call for more information:
470-230-8223
Visit: 401 Creekstone Ridge
Woodstock, GA 30188
Mon-Thu 10-5pm
Fri 10-4pm

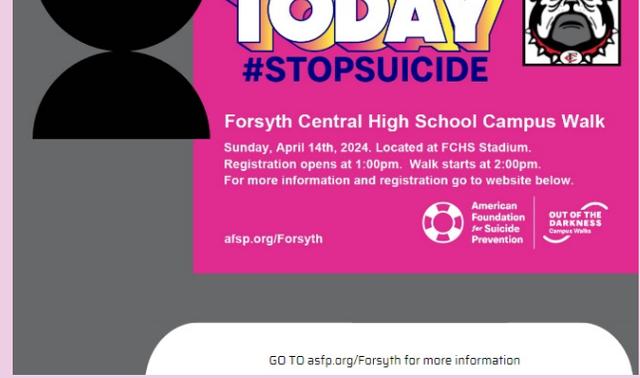
Family Fun Event

Sunday,
April 14, 2024

Alec's
Pizza

Forsyth Central
High School

HOPE WALKS HERE
REGISTER
TODAY!



NEWS FOR YOU

Local News



April 27, 2024
Drop Boxes Available Year-round!

- Forsyth County Sheriff's Office Prescription DropBox, 202 Veterans Memorial Blvd, Cumming, GA
- CVS Pharmacy Medicine Disposal Box 4895 Post Rd, Cumming GA

National Prescription Drug TAKE BACK DAY

- Unused or expired prescription medications are a public safety issue, leading to accidental poisoning, overdose, and abuse.
- Pharmaceutical drugs can be just as dangerous as street drugs when taken

The next National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is April 27, 2024, from 10 am-2 pm at locations nationwide. This event, which happens twice a year, is a safe, convenient, and responsible way to dispose of unused or expired prescription drugs at locations in communities throughout the country. [You can find a location near you.](#)

The October 2023 National Take Back Day brought in 599,897 lbs. (300 tons) nationwide of medications.

State News

Improving Lives in Georgia



Shatterproof is thrilled to share some wonderful news regarding our recent advocacy efforts in Georgia. Thanks to your support, we've achieved a significant victory that will significantly improve access to addiction treatment across the state.

Accessing behavioral health services can be challenging for many, with issues like long waitlists and limited providers, especially in rural areas. Fortunately, Georgia is expanding the **Collaborative Care Model**, an innovative approach bringing crucial resources to patients through their existing primary care

Model, an innovative approach bringing crucial resources to patients through their existing primary care relationships. Emory Healthcare, a leading health system in Georgia, supports this integrated care method.

This model centers on routine screenings for mental health and substance use disorders by a dedicated care team.

Until recently, Georgia Medicaid didn't reimburse doctors for this service. Thanks to our advocacy efforts and a growing focus on improving access to behavioral health care, positive changes are coming for nearly two million Medicaid enrollees in the state.

National News

The Drug Report Podcast

March 13, 2024



Did you know that [The Drug Report](#) has a podcast? Check out this new episode that covers the new JAMA study, finding that a **substantial number of American 12th graders are using Delta-8 THC**. Chris Tremoglie from the Washington Examiner joins us to talk about his latest marijuana editorial and why he got involved in the issue.

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS EPISODE](#)

Senate Rescheduling Marijuana and International Treaty Obligations

Listen to this 15-minute podcast! Kevin Sabet and Jordan Davidson from SAM discuss the new Romney-led Senate letter on rescheduling Marijuana and US treaty obligations. They also discuss how international treaties interact with the current DEA review of rescheduling Marijuana from Schedule 1 to Schedule 3, 4, or 5.

[Listen HERE](#)

South Dakota Bans Intoxicating Hemp Products including Delta-8 THC products

South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem signed a law that outlawed intoxicating hemp products. The law aims to eliminate all products containing synthetic compounds like delta-8 THC from the market.

Products such as gummies, vape pens, pre-rolled joints, and smokable flowers, often referred to as "diet weed" or "marijuana light," are in the law's crosshairs. These products have become widespread in South Dakota and across the U.S., exploiting loopholes in the 2018 U.S. Farm Bill.

[Read the entire article Here.](#)

Legislation of Interest-Bill Progressions in GA

From our Prevention Partner, John Bringuel, Prevention / Intervention Program Manager, The Council on Alcohol and Drugs.

Jeff Breedlove has sent an update on legislation in the State House. Contact him [HERE](#). If you want to track legislation in the current session, [Click Here](#).

- **HB 181 By Representative Rick Townsend - IN SENATE RULES COMMITTEE**

HB 181 - The Kratom Bill was complex. The initial version sought to classify kratom as a Schedule 1 drug, which would make its possession a felony. The current version of the bill instead aims to impose regulations on kratom similar to the types enacted in other states. HB 181 now seeks to raise the minimum age from 18 to 21, ban certain forms of kratom use (vaping), expand the labeling requirements, require manufacturers to register with the state, and mandate that kratom be sold behind the counter or in a locked glass case—among other restrictions.

- **SB 395 By Senator Clint Dixon - IN HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE**

SB 395 authorizes opioid antagonists in elementary and secondary education schools. This is a necessary legal requirement to define legal protections regarding the storage and administration of opioid antagonists on school property.

- **HB 873 By Representative Stan Gunter - PASSED AWAITING GOVERNOR SIGNATURE**

HB 873 will create juvenile treatment court divisions that provide alternative adjudication to the traditional judicial system, allowing juveniles to receive medical support instead of entering the adult criminal justice system.

- **SB 375 By Senator Brian Strickland - PASSED AWAITING GOVERNOR SIGNATURE**

SB 375 adds the Commissioner of Veterans Services to the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council. Given that Behavioral Health medical issues impact many veterans.

- **SB 480 By Senator Mike Hodges - PASSED AWAITING GOVERNOR SIGNATURE**

SB 480 relates to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce by providing student loan repayment for mental health and substance use professionals.

- **SB 377 By Senator Blake Tillery - PASSED AWAITING GOVERNOR SIGNATURE**

SB 377 relates to the courts and social services to provide for the licensing of qualified residential treatment programs; it will revise the definition of “qualified residential treatment program” to conform with federal law and expand services that allow for childcare.

- **HB 1170 By Representative Lee Hawkins - IN SENATE RULES COMMITTEE**

HB 1170 requires that certain state government buildings, courthouses, and university buildings maintain and make accessible opioid antagonists. The bill allows for opioid antagonists to be placed in all buildings where the state requires a defibrillator.

- **HB 1035 By Representative Sharon Cooper - IN SENATE RULES COMMITTEE**

HB 1035 permits an expansion of supplying opioid antagonists through vending machines, addressing the Department of Public Health standing order to allow for more opioid antagonists to be stocked in these machines.

- **HB 1073 By Representative Dale Washburn - IN SENATE RULES COMMITTEE**

HB 1073 relates to proposed zoning decisions and procedures on zoning regarding halfway houses, drug rehabilitation centers, or other facilities for treatment of drug dependency.

FYI



BRAIN-BASED PARENTING PART 2

Listen to PART 2 in this three-part series on **brain-based parenting**. The idea of brain-based parenting is helping many parents better understand several important roles they play in their kids' lives. Understanding this concept can help reduce the risk of underage drinking and drug use and empower brain development as kids move toward becoming fully functioning adults.

[CLICK HERE](#)



April is Alcohol Awareness Month—a time to raise awareness and understanding of alcohol use and misuse. It offers communities a chance to gain more understanding of how individuals struggle with alcohol use and offers resources and support.



Alcohol Effects on Brain and Mental Health*

- Although a person's brain generally reaches its maximum size by age 10, the second decade of life brings widespread changes in the organization and functioning of the brain.
- Changes in brain circuits continue until at least the mid-20s. Alcohol misuse during adolescence might cause negative long-term effects because of physical changes in the brain during development.
- Alcohol misuse during adolescence is also associated with reduced size of the frontal lobe (involved in planning and decision-making), hippocampus (involved in memory), amygdala (involved in fear-sensing), and corpus callosum (involved in the communication between the two sides of the brain).¹
- A growing body of evidence suggests that the earlier people start drinking alcohol, the more likely they are to experience a measurable negative impact on cognitive functions, memory, and school performance over time—perhaps even into adulthood.^{2,3}
- In some people, a history of adolescent alcohol misuse could increase the likelihood of developing alcohol use disorder, and is associated with mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression during adolescence and later in life.^{4,5}
- The good news is that the ability of the brain to change during adolescence can also help the brain recover from some alcohol-induced consequences.
- Alcohol use and sleep problems in adolescence are linked to an increased risk of depression,

which can be made even worse by environmental stressors.⁶

- As with adults, alcohol plays a role in suicide involving underage people who drink.⁷

*National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, [Click Here for References](#)

On the Calendar



April

- National Alcohol Awareness Month
- Stress Awareness Month
- Walk for Recovery, April 21, 2024 Cumming City Center
- Sunrise Parent Retreat, April 26
- National Rx Take Back Day, April 27
- Distracted Driving Awareness Month



May

- Mental Health Awareness Month
- National Prevention Week, May 12-18
- Mother's Day, May 12
- Memorial Day, May 27



Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council | 240 Elm Street, Cumming, GA 30040

[Unsubscribe tammy@unitedwayforsyth.com](mailto:tammy@unitedwayforsyth.com)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by byfcdac1@unitedwayforsyth.com