





Strategizer

Leading the way to a healthier Forsyth County







Focus on the Future

Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council **Drug Summit**

Come to learn about what our children are facing and what the schools are offering to help





Date: February 4th, 2025 Time: 6:00PM



Hosted by FCDAC at:

The University of North Georgia

Address: 300 Aquatic Cir, Cumming, GA 30040

Link to RSVP: https://www.eventcreate.com/e/forsyth-county-drug-awarene?uid=

QR code to RSVP:



FCDAC Council Meeting, Work and Programs Round-up

Kayden's Korner



Happy 2025 to you! Great

The Walk for Recovery date has been



We have received notice that the application for a grant from the Opioid Abatement Settlement funds has been accepted. This means our Council will be able to continue working for a healthier Forsyth County for

another two years!

Our flagship events that increase awareness and prevention education in our community are the Drug Summit and the Walk for Recovery. The Drug Summit is next month, Tuesday, February 4, at the University of North Georgia and will serve as our February Meeting. I am looking for a core organizing committee and many volunteers to make this year the best! This year, we will hear from a panel of high school principals. Council Member and Principal at the Acadamies Drew Hayes will lead the discussion. Everyone is needed to support and promote the event with flyers and social media posts.

Contact Rachel **HERE**

April 13, 2025, at The Cumming City Center.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Our next FCDAC Council Meeting is on
Tuesday, February 4
Drug Summit
6 p.m.
University of North Georgia
300 Aquatic Circle, Cumming GA

Council Meeting Highlights

Director Rachel Kayden opened the 8 a.m. monthly council meeting by Welcoming everyone, introducing attendees, and making announcements.

Announcements:

- Rachel announced, "As part of the Opioid Abatement Settlement, we submitted a grant request.
 Our application has been accepted, which means Council funding will continue for another two years."
- Rachel said, "I need volunteers to organize and assist with the upcoming Drug Summit on Tuesday, February 4, at UNG. Please invite your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Everyone is needed to support and promote the event with flyers and social media posts. This year, our panel will consist of School Principals, including Council Member and Principal Drew Hayes. This is one of two flagship events, a free, open-to-the-public educational event that provides resources and increases community awareness."
- The Drug Summit will serve as our February Council Meeting.
- Drew Hayes announced that an Alternative School Summit will be held on January 24. Principals
 and other school officials from around the state will attend to learn about what Forsyth County is
 doing.

Youth Council Member Manasvi Kondamudi and Pacer and Julie Cordry from Prodigal Child Ministries will be our guest speakers this month.

Manasvi Kondamudi briefed the Council on her project Narcan and Prevention/Resource Kits, which she plans to distribute to schools, treatment centers, and even outside our county across the state.

and high schools. She created a PowerPoint presentation that describes the connection between SUD, the opioid crisis, and Mental Health problems. She outlined how youth leaders play an essential role in creating solutions, providing education and training, and increasing awareness.

Rachel said, "One of the community sectors FCDAC has not developed is our Religious Community Sector. We know our churches have a vast reach into the lives of many adults and youth in the community. This year, we are increasing our efforts in this vital area. Our speakers bureau, including some of our youth, could reach congregations and their youth. Please consider inviting your pastor, your youth pastor, or other church leaders to become part of our coalition and see how FCDAC might provide prevention resources and Narcan training inside the church. This morning, we will hear from Pacer and Julie Cordry, whose faith-based ministry provides support programming for parents whose children have SUD.



Pacer and Julie Cordry's son has a dual diagnosis of SUD and bipolar disease. When he turned 14, he became involved with alcohol and other substances. They were unaware of resources to help them. As they began to search for answers and treatment for their son, they experienced

devastation in their family life and marriage. Thankfully, they found help and their footing, but it broke their hearts when they met families whose experience left their only brokenness. After a few years, the Cordrys founded the **Sunrise Retreat** for parents struggling with the same exhausting and detrimental family-life experiences. These retreats provide parents with a weekend to focus on personal

growth and renewal. After about six years of hosting Sunrise Retreats, they were invited to assume leadership of Prodigal Child Ministries. Sunrise Retreats and Prodigal Child Ministries share the same heart for parents. Utilizing their relationship with Johnson Ferry Baptist Church (JFBC), which hosted their programs, many parents and families have been helped. Below are the current programs at JFBC.

THE HEART OF OUR MINISTRY

- Mission: Providing hope, support, and resources to parents.
- To encourage and support parents of any prodigal
- Founded in 2000 by John and Fair Brocard. This is our 25th year of serving parents!



(Everything is free) @ JFBC 7:00pm Prodigal Parent Process book study

*Hope After a Loss 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month @ JFBC 7:00pm *Moms Prayer Group 3rd Friday of each month @ JFBC Cafe 8:30am *In home Monday evening Bible study (moms who have children with addiction/mental health difficulties) 6:00-8:00pm

NEW SUPPORT GROUPS STARTING IN 2025

New Groups forming:

*First Redeemer Church (Wed evenings) Prodigal Parent

Process (Jan 8 2025)

*Browns Bridge Church (Sun mornings) Prodigal Parent

Process (Feb 16 2025)

*NorthStar Church (Kennesaw)- Thursday evenings -Prodigal Parent Process



On the left, see the new groups forming nearer Cumming. Note they will be studying the *Prodigal Parent Process*, a book they found extremely helpful. If you are interested in participating or finding out more information about Prodigal Ministries programs and Retreats contact us <u>Here</u> or <u>Here</u>.

PCM Parent Retreat- February 2025

PRODIGAL CHILD
MINISTRIES

The next Prodigal Child Parent Retreat will be February 7-9, 2025, at The Ark on Lake Lanier!

All retreats for parents are free and funded by loving and generous benefactors and community businesses!

• Parents are loved, pampered, and provided with a weekend of respite, renewal, and opportunity to make new friendships with others who are walking similar journeys and bring new perspectives and balance to their lives, their marriages, and the rest of the family.

Few Spots Left Contact Us **HERE**

PCM Dream List

Our First Dream come true is our New Sibling Virtual Support Group!

NEW SUPPORTING OUR SIBLINGS



Other Dreams to Come

- Scholarships for Parent Counseling
- Increase Retreats to 2 per year
- Retreat Grads do
 Community

VIRTUAL GROUP



Let's Stay Connected

Website: www.prodigalchildministries.org

Email: Julie@ProdigalChildMinistries.org

Phone: 678-878-8324

- Service Project
- Recovery Month (January)
 Community
 Meet-up Night
- Continue to Grow our Parent
 Support Groups and Book Studies into more church and community settings.
- Continue to give a selected Treatment Center 10% of our donations.

Community Outreach, Youth, Members, and Partners

Youth Outreach

Youth Council



Manasvi Kondamudi is a South Forsyth High School freshman who is passionate about community service and public awareness initiatives."I am an active member of my school's Science Olympiad club and HOSA chapter, where I continue to explore my passion for healthcare and science. I also play competitive soccer."

Narcan and Prevention Kits

Manasavi assembled Narcan and Prevention Kits. These kits include life-saving Narcan, educational materials, resource guides, and items that promote healthier lifestyles. They are intended for individuals and families in the community to help them understand the risks associated with substance abuse and provide tools for prevention and support. The kits will be distributed through local community events, awareness programs, and partnerships with organizations to ensure they reach those who need them.

School News

Emily Ennis, Prevention Coach,

Gateway and Forsyth Academy



Ainsley Miller, Prevention

Coach, North Forsyth High School



Ainsley Miller's report: I facilitated a recreational movie day at North Forsyth High School before winter break. We watched the Christmas movie **Elf**. I had 14 students come; they enjoyed watching the movie while drinking hot chocolate!

I have an upcoming recreational activity planned for January 29th, the "Day of Champions." Essentially, it is a bunch of competitive mini-games. One of the games I am planning will be a hopscotch, "rock, paper, scissors, and shoot" relay competition. It requires each student team to work together to try and win!



Emily and I will attend the Drug and Alcohol Awareness breakfast on January 18th at Harmony Grove Baptist Church. This is an opportunity to be involved in a community event and meet other community members!

Lastly, **Emily and I have a few transition meetings** for students transitioning from Gateway to North Forsyth High School and a few other students transitioning from North Forsyth High School to the Academies!

Parent Partners Corner

by Marti Roveda and Ashley Dickerson



Marti Roveda

Marti's only child began his recovery journey at the age of 16, igniting Marti's passion for educating and supporting parents of youth struggling with substance use disorders. Driven by this commitment, she founded Equanimity Parent Coaching to help parents find peace and serenity during the challenging times of their parenting journey. Marti is also an active member of FCDAC and volunteers as a parent advisor for an under-18 recovery program in Nashville.

December was a quiet month for the Parent Partners Committee, but the new year is brimming with opportunities for impactful prevention advocacy and outreach.

Marti is partnering with Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy (GRMP) during the 2025 Legislative session to advocate for closing the Delta-8 loophole. She has provided a compelling impact statement for GRMP to share with legislators, and she is on call for in-person meetings to share her family's story about the detrimental effects of high-potency THC.

The Parent Partners are also preparing for the upcoming Drug Summit, where they will host a table to distribute their **What to Expect When You Suspect** flyer and connect with the community.



Ashley Dickerson

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

Her personal 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 story of personal recovery with other parents to reduce the shame and stigma of the

disease and help start the dialog among parents who may be struggling to find support for themselves. She contributes her insights monthly to the *Strategizer*."

Members teaching Members



Recovery Is Possible. Begin Now.

By Dana Bryan

It is never too late to seek treatment for a Substance Use Disorder (SUD), but January is a good time to begin. In fact, SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) has declared January 2025 to be the first annual Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month. It is encouraging that almost 75 percent of those who have ever had a problem with substances claim to be either in recovery or to be completely recovered. This statistic is provided by the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

Begin by evaluating your relationship with a substance, whether it is alcohol or a drug. If you realize that a substance is controlling you, acknowledge that you have a problem. This is a necessary step toward recovery. In fact, it is the first step in a 12-step program. Have the courage to ask for help locating a program that meets your needs and financial ability to pay. Seek help from someone whose opinion you value and trust, such as a school counselor, family counselor, psychiatrist, family doctor, minister, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), or Narcotics Anonymous (NA). Ask for help before your addiction has cost you relationships with family and friends, your job, your health, or your life. A problem with substance abuse is often accompanied by a mental health diagnosis. If this is the case, be sure that your treatment for substance abuse is coordinated with treatment for the mental health issue.

If a person has been hospitalized for their addiction, it is important to go to a safe place as he continues recovery outside of the residential treatment program. This can be back with their family if drugs or



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!

alcohol are not part of that environment. If going back home is not a wise option, wonderful organizations such as **No Longer Bound (NLB)** provide housing in an environment with other men who are also working on their recovery. An expression often used in recovery is "Change your playground and playmates" when leaving a treatment center. This is a reminder that it is helpful to be in an environment where the recovering addict does not encounter the people or places associated with the past use of drugs or alcohol.

In the New Year, I wish each of you success in reaching the goals that will lead you away from substance abuse or anything that will prevent you from developing your talents and interests and reaching your unique potential. Happy New Year!

More Great Community Events from our Friends at the ...



7th Annual Cannabis Prevention
Education Summit
January 28, 2025
1:00 pm - 4:30 pm EST
Virtual Event

Join Let's Be Clear, GA as we examine the growing concerns surrounding cannabis use, particularly products with high THC concentrations, and their impact on mental health and public safety.

Dr. Libby Stuyt will highlight the emerging evidence linking high-THC cannabis use with an increased risk of mental health disorders, including anxiety, depression, psychosis, and other severe psychological conditions.

Dr. Gregg Raduka will share how recent legislation has allowed for the growth of both the availability and potency of THC products. He will walk participants through current GA legislation, highlighting flaws that will continue to allow high-THC products to be readily available in our communities.

Register Here

Harmony Grove Saturday, January 18, 2025 Sign-up Today!



Georgia Recovery Community

2025 Addiction Awareness Recovery
Day
Georgia General Assembly.
Tuesday, January 21, 2025



Register Here

Cindy Jones Mills Bid Farewell to Forsyth County Commission



FCDAC members are among those who gathered to thank Mills for her service as County Commissioner and her constant support to increase the education and awareness of Drug and Alcohol abuse in Forsyth County. Shown Left to Right: Susan Tanner, Cindy J. Mills, Sarah Pedarre, Matt Meyer, and Dana Bryan.

One of Cindy's friends hosted a reception on January 9, 2025, to honor her hard work and accomplishments while serving as County Commissioner. Cindy was one of the founding members of the FCDAC and is responsible for many programs and rulings that promote drug awareness and mental health issues in Forsyth County. This includes working with Gateway Academy principal Drew Hayes and others to push the County Commissioners to fund drug prevention coaches in some schools (Gateway and Forsyth Academies and North Forsyth High School).

The reception was held at **Tam's Backstage Restaurant** in the old Forsyth County Schoolhouse.

Cindy J Mills, FCDAC Founder, finished her 12 years as District 4 County Commissioner. On December 20, 2024, Forsyth County's threeterm District 4 commissioner bid farewell.



As soon as Mills was elected in 2012, she enrolled in The Association of County Commissioners of Georgia's (ACCG) new approach to county official education and training: the Lifelong Learning Academy. Mills completed the training in one year to become a Certified County Commissioner and then accumulated more knowledge by tackling the ACCG Specialty Track courses. Diligently working over the next eight years to complete all eight specialty tracks, Mills joined an exclusive group of, at that time, six county commissioners in GA to have gained that achievement. Later, Mills served on the Board of Managers and Policy Council and as chair of the General County Government Policy Committee with the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG).

Of her many accomplishments, the one closest to her heart was improving the health, safety, and lifestyle quality of her constituents and all of North Georgia. Before becoming a County Commissioner, Mills served 11 years on the Parks & Recreation Board. She led the way in bringing Matt Community Park and Lanierland Park to life, as well as the new renovations at Bennett Park. She also collaborated to form concept designs for the Coal Mountain Town Center and Coal Mountain Connector.

State News

Opioid Settlement Funds

In the aftermath of litigation, the companies that played a role in creating the nation's deadliest overdose epidemic have begun paying settlements to state and local governments. Shatterproof and Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health are leading a national coalition of organizations that endorse the <u>Principles for the Use of Funds from the Opioid Litigation</u> (Click to read more) to avoid misdirection of these funds to fill gaps in the state's budget.

According to information from **Shatterproof**, here's what's happening in GA. The Georgia Opioid Advisory Commission was established by Governor Kemp's executive order and consists of nine seats. Of the nine, four remain vacant. Members include **David Dove**, executive counsel, Governor's Office; **Xavier Crockett**, director of the Division of Health Protection, Georgia Department of Public Health; **Cassandra Price**, director of the Division of Addictive Diseases, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; **Gary Sisk**, Sheriff of Catoosa County, **Grant Thomas**, director of the Office of Health Strategy and Coordination, Governor's Office. Council members generally fall into seven categories: Law enforcement and Criminal Justice, Elected Officials and Government representatives, Medical and Social Service providers, Public health and Human Services, Private Health and Human Services, and Lived or Shared experience.

Money from these lawsuits must be spent on addiction programs that are proven to save lives.

We're working with states and local governments to implement good government approaches and best practices, including:

- Funds should be spent on evidence-based interventions to save lives and shouldn't supplant existing funding;
- Decision-making processes should be transparent and incorporate diverse stakeholders;
- Regular reporting on how funds are spent, and their impacts should be made public.

Click Here to Find More

Addiction Recovery Awareness Day for the Georgia General Assembly

On Tuesday, January 21, 2025, JOIN the Georgia Recovery Community - health care professionals, family members, and other allies for the 2025 Addiction Recovery Awareness Day for the Georgia General Assembly.

This is our time to unite and support funding for the Georgia Recovery Community. The purpose of this day is to recognize and elevate the power of Recovery in the lives of everyday Georgians and to say thank you for the bipartisan support the Georgia Recovery Community receives from the General Assembly and our state Constitutional Officers.

If you have any questions about registration, please contact Ciara Carnes.

Email Here or Call Here.

ARAD2025
ADDICTION RECOVERY AWARENESS DAY

Register Here



Advocacy

You are an Advocate!

"The Number One domestic Policy issue is the Addiction Epidemic. The Number one cause of death in America, including Georgia, for people 18 - 45 is overdose/fentanyl poisoning. There are 46 MILLION Americans in active addiction / 1.3 MILLION across Georgia. There are over 900,000 people across Georgia in recovery from addiction / 29 MILLION nationwide. Together, with our family and friends, we will be working to educate our public officials at the federal, state, and local level on the importance of expanding funding for existing peer-led recovery programs in communities across Georgia," said Jeff Breedlove, Strategic Policy Advisor, The Georgia Council for Recovery.

As a member of FCDAC, you are an Advocate! Thank you! Our members and allies are working hard to educate, break the stigma, and advance peer and family-positive addiction recovery throughout our county and state. We must be aggressive at the federal, state, and local levels to advance legislation to support our efforts.



Two good organizations that work diligently on the Legislative end are the Georgia Council for Recovery and Let's Be Clear Georgia / Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy. Check with them for information on how you can contact them and influence legislative efforts.

Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy

What is Needed Now to Protect Georgia's Children and Adults



Help GRMP pass a Bill to Close the Delta Loophole this Session

Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy and its partners request that Georgia close the Delta THC loophole. This loophole allows products with dangerously high levels of hemp-derived **THC** (such as Delta-8 THC) and other intoxicating chemicals (called "cannbinoids") such as **HHC** to be sold legally to anyone at any age resulting in de facto recreational legalization.



Dispensary in Helen, GA selling 95% Delta-8 THC vapes lead to traffic deaths, addiction, and psychotic episodes.

A Georgia gummy may only contain up to 0.3% Delta-9 THC but can contain up to 99% Delta-8 THC.

How to Close the Delta THC Loophole

Provide limits on the total THC and HHC concentration (percentage) in consumable hemp products by changing the current limit of

A total delta-9 THC concentration of no more than 0.3%

to

A <mark>total intoxicating cannabinoid</mark> concentration of no more than 0.3%

Establish a safe limit on the total number of milligrams* of intoxicating cannabinoids allowed in consumable hemp products (gummies, tinctures, beverages, topical applications).

*To limit the amount of intoxicating cannabinoids both the % and weight of THC and HHC must be considered. Even the hemp and marijuana industries state that 10 mg of THC can get a new user high.

22 States have closed the Delta Loophole or aspects of it.

For how you can help please contact Michael Mumper, MBA, Executive Director, at mmumper@gamarijuana policy or call 770-592-7238.

www.GaMarijuanaPolicy.org Facebook/Twitter/Instagram @GaMJPolicy

FYI

Alcohol and Your Brain



Check out NIH's *Alcohol and Your Brain*, an interactive activity for youth ages 13 and older to learn about alcohol's effects on five areas of the brain.

Take a rollercoaster ride through the brain to learn about alcohol's harmful effects on five different brain structures.

Two versions of this activity are available: one formatted for the virtual reality (VR) environment and the other in video form.



April 21-24, 2025 Nashville, TN

Who Should Attend?

Featured Speakers Include:

- Kentucky Representative Hal Rogers,
- Nora Volkow Director of the National

The Rx and Illicit Drug Summit welcomes and attracts a wide

range of stakeholders addressing the opioid crisis, including:

- Counselors, social workers, therapists, psychologists, interventionists
- Law enforcement personnel
- First responders
- Public health and prevention officials
- Federal, state, and local officials and lawmakers
- Education specialists and researchers
- Treatment center owners and operators
- · Advocates, families, and people in recovery
- Physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, pharmacists, dentists
- Attorneys

- Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) at the National Institutes of Health
- Russell Coleman, Kentucky AG
- Debra Hembree Lambert, J.D. Chief Justice, Kentucky Supreme Court

Register Here



DEA Guide Available Drugs of Abuse: A DEA Resource Guide

Drugs of Abuse: A DEA Resource Guide is a reliable publication on the most commonly misused drugs in the United States. This guide provides important information about the harm and consequences of drug misuse. You can also read descriptions of a drug's effects on the body and mind, overdose potential, origin, legal status, and other key facts.



Download Your Guide Here

On the Calendar



January

- Substance Use Disorder
 Treatment Month
- New Years, January 1
- FCDAC Council Meeting, Tuesday, January 7
- Harmony Grove Drug & Alcohol Awareness Breakfast, Saturday, January 18 8 a.m.
- ARAD 2025 Advocate at the State Capitol, Tuesday, January 21
- Virtual Cannabis
 Prevention Education
 Summit, January 28

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! WALK FOR RECOVERY Sunday, April 13, 2025 The Cumming City Center



February



- FCDAC Drug Summit at UNG, Tuesday, February
 - 4
- PCM Retreat, February 7-9
- Saint Valentine's Day, February 14



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

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