

DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL



Strategizer

Leading the way to a healthier Forsyth County



May 2025 Volume 5 Issue 1

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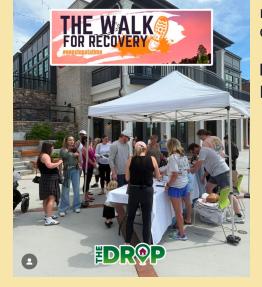




Above:Erin Deady, was the leader and torch bearer of this years Walk 4

Recovery. Erin is an active





Resources galore!

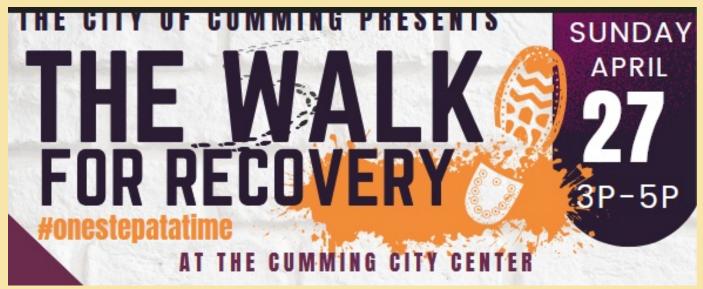
member of FDCAC and the Mom of a young adult in recovery.

Below: Family activities! Face painting!!





Excited attendees Erin Deady and family!



Thanks to our Sponsors!





















Thanks to our Allied Organizations for providing Resources



Twin Lakes



Live Life Counseling



University of North Georgia



District 2 Public Health



North Georgia Recovery Center



Georgia Harm Reduction Coalition

FCDAC Council Meeting, Work and Programs Round-up

Kayden's Korner



The Walk for Recovery was awesome! Thank you to our many volunteers, to Jason Evan Cumming City Councilman, who welcomed everyone to our event this year, and to all

who came out! I am excited to announce that this event sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, and friends. We walk because many caught in the cruel grip of addiction don't reach out for help because of the stigma. We walk to break the silence, break the shame, and proclaim we are a community that stands with everyone who struggles and provides encouragement, resources, recovery groups,

and every type of support necessary for successful recovery.

We premiered our two new community education videos on the main stage! The videos will help our council grow capacity, awareness, and fundraising. They allow more members to deliver a cohesive message to the public at any event, such as the Rotary Club, community awareness events, educational events, email, and social media. Please see the videos below for yourself and share them widely. We aim to reach more people through these short videos with our Council's message of freedom and hope.

As you know, the **Walk 4 Recovery** brings attention and remembrance of all those who lost their lives to fentanyl and other drugs.

We remember they aren't sad statistics, but our beloved parents,

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Our next FCDAC Council Meeting is on Wednesday, June 4 8 a.m. United Way Offices

Council Meeting Highlights



Cindy Mills, FCDAC and Mental Health Coalition founder, welcomed all the attendees in this **joint FCDAC monthly meeting and Mental Health Coalition** meeting on Wednesday, May 14, at 8:30 a.m. We met at **FOCAL 1150 Dahlonegah HWY Cumming GA.**



This month's guest speaker is **Dr. John Constantino**, a board-certified child and adolescent psychiatrist who **specializes in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of behavioral and mental health conditions in children and adolescents.** In 2022, John Constantino, MD, became the Chief of Behavioral and Mental Health at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. In this role, he seeks to innovate behavioral health practice, resolve fragmentation in the delivery of care, enhance access to interventions of proven benefit, and improve long-term mental health outcomes for children and adolescents throughout Georgia.

After completing his training, Dr. Constantino returned to the Washington University School of Medicine to **develop a clinical and scientific program focused on understanding genetic and environmental influences on disorders of social development in childhood and their implications for treatment and preventive intervention.** His Social Developmental Studies Laboratory was continuously federally funded for 25 years by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As one of the leading child psychiatrists in the country, Dr. Constantino's holistic approach to mental health has had an industry-wide impact, and his published research is some of the most highly cited in the field.

As Chief of Behavioral and Mental Health and Liz and Frank Blake Chair for Children's Behavioral and Mental Health, Dr. Constantino seeks to innovate behavioral health practice, resolve fragmentation in the delivery of care, enhance access to interventions of proven benefit, and improve long-term mental

health outcomes for children and adolescents throughout Georgia.



Laurie Cole, Community Development Officer for Children's Behavioral and Mental Health Care Center in Atlanta, appounced that Children's was invested in the health of its children



across the state. Children's is using its \$550M endowment to open satellite clinics around the state, increasing the availability of mental health services for children outside the Atlanta area. She introduced Dr. Constantino, who said, "Mental Health, especially Mental

Health for children, has long taken a back seat and has been much neglected in health care systems.

Dr. Constantino presented data and information regarding issues and the plight of children in Georgia.

- Mental Health kills 10x more children than cancer & other top causes for death
- 1 in 6 children will **experience neglect** in early childhood. This type of trauma, exceeding more than one incident in early childhood, is an indicator of future mental health struggles later in life. Why the neglect by parents? The vast majority of parents want to have healthy children, but we find three factors in parents who neglect their children:
 - The parent or parents are delayed developmentally
 - The parent or parents have an untreated mental illness
 - The parent or parents abuse drugs
- The number one thing we can do to help children is to help the parents at the first sign of neglect of their children.
- State of Child Health & Well Being in GA 2025
 - 17% ADHD
 - 15% Anxiety
 - 5% Depression
 - 63% Not receiving Mental Health Services
 - Federal Mental Health Parity Law (GA H.B 1013) discussed
 - GA H.B 1013 HB 1013, known as the Georgia Mental Health Parity Act, was passed by the Georgia General Assembly and signed into law. It aims to improve access to mental and behavioral health services by ensuring insurance companies cover these services on par with physical health services. The bill mandates compliance with federal mental health parity laws, requiring health insurers to provide coverage for mental health and substance use disorders equitably with physical health.
- We are documenting the gaps for children in care-as-usual in order to enforce the Federal Mental Health Parity Law, as well as Georgia's HB 1013 Mental Health Parity Act.

Community Outreach, Youth, Members, and Partners



FCDAC First Videos are Produced!

Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council is a Drug-Free Coalition non-profit. It began when Cindy J. Mills, then a County Commissioner, saw the devastation alcohol and drugs were having on the youth in our county.

FCDAC's continuing effort to educate, advocate for, and empower our citizenry to lead healthier lives has produced two videos explaining the history and mission of our council and how it is the county's resource hub for prevention. Please consider sharing this video with friends, family, civic, and church groups to help get the word out about the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council.

In the first video, recently retired Forsyth County Commissioner Cindy J. Mills, a founding member of the FC Drug Awareness Council, described how it all began with seeing the need, gathering other likeminded community leaders together, to strategize for a healthier future for our county. **Dr. Katie Lamberson**, UNG Assistant Deaan of the College of Health Sciences and Professions said in the video, "I've learned it's really about the people. The people who don't struggle with addiction sometimes want to think we're different, we're not the same as those who struggle with addictions. Maybe we don't know what it's like to use drugs, but we do know what it's like to feel sad, lonely, bored, or not good enough, and those are the things that are really important for people who are struggling. It's not about the drugs, it's about those things and we can connect with them. I want others to see that and to recognize that we're not as different as we think we are and to look at the things that make us more alike. Then we can give grace to people who are struggling."



Parent Partners Corner

by Ashley Dickerson and Marti Roveda



Marti Roveda, CPS-P, and Parent Coach

Marti is a parent coach who helps parents of youth with substance use disorders find healing and strength through **Equanimity Parent Coaching**. She founded the ARCH Academy of Cumberland Heights (Nashville, TN) Parent Support Tribe, serves on the ARCH Academy Advisory Committee, and co-chairs FCDAC's Parent Partners Committee.

As mentioned last month, our **Parent Partners Committee is expanding**—and we're thrilled to report that we welcomed **10 new volunteers in April!** These passionate parents are stepping forward to help break the stigma surrounding substance use disorder and to share a message of hope and healing with other families.

Several volunteers supported The Walk for Recovery by offering video testimonies, distributing our **What to Expect When You Suspect** flyers, and showing up in person to offer strength, hope, and lived experience to those in attendance.

A few of our new Parent Partners also joined Ashley and me at the **April 15th Gateway Parent Night** to observe how we share our stories and support the families who attend. We're excited to continue this momentum into the next school year and look forward to introducing new faces and fresh stories of hope at future Gateway Parent Nights.



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*.

routh Outreach

Youth Council



Sharmada Venkataramani, FCDAC Youth Leader and board member for Georgians For Responsible Marijuana Policy, sent an update that on April 2, 2025, Senate Resolution 427 passed. "This resolution was to study the effects of marijuana use on youth. Through our work and the help of Senator Kay Kirpatrick, we were also able to ensure that no pro-marijuana bills were passed in the legislature this year. This is hugely important in making sure our youth continue to stay safe from the dangers of marijuana use," Sharmada told the *Strategizer.*

"The Youth Council assisted at FCDAC's Resource table at the Walk for Recovery, which was super successful! We **distributed over 100+ FCDAC alcohol and drug counseling guides to community members," Sharmada reported.**



Billboard Challenge Deadline extended to June 8

The Opioid Awareness Billboard Challenge, Calling All Students!

- What: Create a Billboard to raise awareness of the opioid and Rx pill misuse on the rise in Forsyth County.
- Who: open to all Middle and High School Students.
- The Winning Design will be featured on a Billboard in FC. The winner's name will also be on the billboard and shared on various social media outlets.
- To enter, participants must:
 - Review the informational PowerPoint. <u>Click Here.</u>
 - Pass the Quiz, <u>Click Here</u>
- Design your billboard using Canva.com, use a rectangular layout, and submit it in PDF and JPEG formats.
- Designs must include:
 - Eye-catching tagline (ex. One Pill Kills, Narcan saves lives, Don't Risk it- Test it, Fentanyl=Fatal
- Focus on Naloxone (Narcan) as a solution
 - add line like Narcan obtained at pharmacies, You can get Narcan from the police-no questions asked, Narcan can reverse overdose in minutes.
- Include Resources for help like Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council, CDC Crisis and Access Line, Text 988, 911 for emergencies (stay with overdosing person without legal repercussions)

Sahasra Tatavarti

Sahasra told the Strategizer, "Shawn and I have had a good response from students interested in designing a



Prevention Billboard. However, from feedback, the students are asking for more time before submission. There are many exams and end-of-school activities, so this request is reasonable. The new deadline for submission for the billboard challenge campaign is June 8." • Deadline, June 8

Check out these campaigns for more inspiration: CDC's Real Stories of Addictions, DEA's Campaign One Pill Can Kill, and Stop the Void Georgia Campaign.

School News



Emily Ennis, Gateway and Forsyth Academy Drug Counselor



Ainsley Miller, Prevention Coach, North Forsyth High School.

by Ainsley Miller

We are in the home stretch for the 24-25 school year, which is very exciting!

I am extending my substance prevention and education services through the summer. We decided that allowing the students to meet with me once or twice would give them additional support. Two months is a long time to go without regularly checking in with a counselor, especially when you're trying to stay sober. Most students don't have the consistency and structure of school during the summer period, which can set them up for a lapse. Three students signed up to check in over the summer, which is excellent!

As the school year is ending, I have handed out **questionnaires** to all the students to help provide feedback and statistics regarding the well-being of the substance prevention program.

Summer can be a challenging time. I am providing a **summer resource list** to all my students. It includes formulating lists of trusted people they can call. Having at least one person to talk to honestly, having a friend or two who are sober, with whom they can have fun, is pivotal in developing a strong plan to stay sober. The resource includes suggested strategies and positive activities such as journaling, crafting, swimming, walking, etc. Utilizing the plans formulated now can help students maintain sobriety when boredom sets in, old friends try to reconnect, or other adverse situations arise.

Here are my stats: from the beginning of the school year to April, **814 individual counseling** sessions, **102 group sessions, and nine sober recreational events were held.** I have met with **91** students this semester, **56 of whom are strictly North Forsyth students.**

Our Partners in Prevention

More Great Community Events and Resources ...

From our Friends at The Connection Two Community Events!







Community Connections Family Connections new Drop Center

D.R.O.P. stands for Dedicated Resources Opening Possibilities. The Center is a coordinated point of entry, meaning we have access to 152 counties in Georgia and their resources. We use the homeless management system (HMIS) to connect you with the resources as fast as possible.

Our mission is to help every individual succeed in life. We pursue that goal by addressing the root causes of problems, building on cultural and other strengths, pooling resources, engaging an extraordinary diversity of community members, and committing to a longterm process of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Using a family-centered approach, schools, health and human service agencies, businesses, the faith community, law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, civic clubs, and

others work together with families, focusing on academics, physical and mental health, nurturing parenting, economic success, and community service. We tap existing resources, streamline systems to be more efficient and effective, and initiate new projects.

Dedicated Resources Opening Possibilities





SCAN TO



Operation nesday: 8 am - 3 p Monday, Friday, Inds: By appointme



+470-695-4986 (office) +770-891-2917 (cell

We serve unaccompanied homeless youth ages 18-24

You may qualify if:

You are currently homeless or living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing
You are at imminent risk of being homeless within 14 days and have no where else to go
You are fleeing abuse and feel unsafe where you are staying

Prevention Professional Training: Drug Abuse Prevention Training for Community Professionals: Engaging in Solution-Focused Conversations

DATE: 5/22/2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Lunch Provided) LOCATION: 3270 Darby Drive, Suite 100, Douglasville, Georgia 30135 Cost: Your RSVP - No Cost to Community Professionals

The training/workshop is sponsored by **Operation Drug-Free Community-Future Seekers Inc.**, Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Office of Behavioral Health Prevention, and Federal Grants, and provided by the Council on Alcohol and Drugs. Please be aware that the session will be fast-paced, and not all content from the 31-page Workbook, which will be provided free of charge, will be thoroughly addressed.

This workshop is designed to lay the groundwork for **Drug Abuse Prevention** and will open doors for additional training opportunities. Upon RSVP, you will receive a pre-test to complete. Afterwards, you will receive an email with pre-training materials, including 13 videos, a resource article, and a Self-Assessment Tool. Engaging with these materials beforehand is strongly advised to enhance your training experience. Participants will earn a Certificate of Completion for 5 Clock Hours, applicable

towards Certifications and Credentialing.

CLICK HERE TO RSVP

Join the CARES Team as they present the ROSC/CARES Workshop. Join the CARES Team as they present the DOSC/CADES Workshop



the Robe CARES Workshop.

During the ROSC CARES Workshops, the facilitators present an overview of Georgia's **Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC)** and its role in uplifting those new to recovery. Understanding

ROSCs is foundational for the CARES Academy and the way that peer support services are provided in Georgia.

Following the introduction to ROSC, the facilitators will provide detailed information about how CARES Academy applications are evaluated. Each person will be given examples of both writing and reference samples. This workshop ends with a mock group interview to assist those attending in understanding this part of the CARES Application process.

All peers, including those who use Medication-assisted treatment, are welcome to attend the workshop.

Register Here for In-Person ROSC Workshop Register Now for the In-Person ROSC Workshop on June 3, 2025, 10 am to 2 pm at GC4R

Ga. Rx Drug Abuse Prevention Initiative Collaborative Mtg.

The Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Collaborative meeting, June 11th Norcross at the AC-HIDTA Training Center (3587 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners, GA 30092) 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Lunch provided! Speakers:

Miranda Raines, the Program Director from Recovery Foundations/Recovery Connections, Inc, And Dr. Nancy Connely, M.D., M.P.H., Integrative Medicine, and building connections among people speaking via Zoom.

> Two Ways to Attend To register to attend in person or virtually, please <u>Click HERE</u> Virtual attendees will receive a Zoom link before the meeting via email.

> > **News For You**





Increasing Mental Health Awareness is an ongoing endeavor for Lifelong Well-being.

- As we age, we may experience life changes that impact our mental health. Having open conversations with older adults and noticing changes in elders' interest and energy levels, especially during stressful times such as changes in living situation, loss of a spouse or child, or loss of forms of independence like driving, can help pinpoint difficulties, head them off, and increase their well-being.
- Supportive families, communities, and resources help children lay the groundwork for lifelong well-being. Early discussion about building strong mental health through learning coping skills to manage frustrations and emotions positively, along with regular physical activity, helps improve children's well-being.
- Mental and Physical Health are profoundly connected and support each other. Regular activity, good nutrition, and quality sleep support both mental and physical well-being. Depression and anxiety increase the risk of chronic illnesses like heart disease and diabetes. Preventive care, strong support networks, and early intervention promote lifelong wellness.
- Supportive relationships and connected communities foster a sense of belonging and promote mental well-being for all. Open conversations about mental health help break stigma and encourage people to seek support.







Support and connections are critical for those living with a serious mental illness (SMI).

Learn from people with lived experience how their support systems and connections help them manage their major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. To learn more about serious mental illness and the possibility of recovery, visit samhsa.gov/serious-mental-illness or call SAMHSA's National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referral.

National Prevention Week

May 11- 17

National Prevention Week is a public education platform showcasing the work of communities and organizations nationwide that are preventing substance use and promoting positive mental health.

This year, NPW 2025: #MyPreventionStory

This year, **SAMHSA (the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)** urges you to **create and share a prevention story** on social media — whether it's telling how you are helping to prevent substance use or sharing the ways you're promoting mental health. Be a part of the national conversation that celebrates prevention by **using the hashtag #MyPreventionStory**!

Learn more on SAMHSA's site.

State News ~ Legislative Updates

Weekly Summary

May 19, 2025

State	Bill #	Summary	Status
GA	<u>SB6</u>	Controlled Substances; determine whether a controlled substance has been adulterated; authorize the use of testing equipment <i>Changes: Status (Passed), History Steps</i>	2025-05-12 / Pass Effective Date 2025-07-01
GA	<u>SB79</u>	"Fentanyl Eradication and Removal Act"; enact Changes: Status (Passed), History Steps	2025-05-12 / Pass Effective Date 2025-07-01
GA	<u>SB132</u>	Insanity and Mental Incapacity; hearing before a court orders an evaluation of the mental competency of an accused person to stand trial; require <i>Changes: Status (Passed), History Steps</i>	2025-05-14 / Pass Effective Date 2025-07-01
GA	<u>SB233</u>	Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission; revise the subcommittees Changes: Status (Passed), History Steps	2025-05-14 / Pass Effective Date 2025-05-14

National News

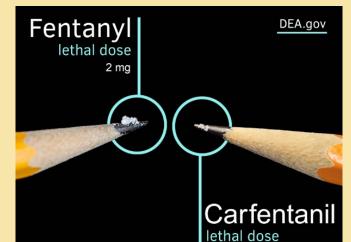


DEA Issues Carfentanil Warning

For Immediate Release Contact: DEA Public Affairs Phone Number: (202) 307-7977

Dangerous opioid 10,000 times more potent than morphine and 100 times more potent than fentanyl.

The DEA has issued a public warning nationwide about the health and safety risks of carfentanil. Carfentanil is a synthetic opioid that is 10,000 times more potent than morphine and 100 times more potent than fentanyl, which itself is 50 times more potent than



heroin. DEA, local law enforcement and first responders have recently seen the presence of carfentanil, which has been linked to a significant number of overdose deaths in various parts of the country. Improper handling of carfentanil, as well as fentanyl and other fentanyl-related compounds, has deadly consequences.



It only takes a very small dose of carfentanil – .02 milligrams – to be lethal, less than the amount of fentanyl found on the tip of a pencil.

"Carfentanil is surfacing in more and more communities," said DEA Acting Administrator Chuck Rosenberg. "We see it on the streets, often disguised as heroin.

Carfentanil is a Schedule II substance under the Controlled Substances Act and is used as a tranquilizing agent for elephants and other large mammals. The lethal dose range for carfentanil in humans is unknown. However, as noted, carfentanil is approximately 100 times more potent than fentanyl, which can be lethal at the 2-milligram range, depending on route of administration and other factors.

Click Here for the full Press Release

Foundation for Drug Policy Solutions Presents The Hyannis Consensus: Blueprint for Effective Drug Policy On Capitol Hill

The Hyannis Consensus is a comprehensive drug policy document that promotes a culture of prevention and a climate of recovery. On April 30, Kevin Sabet, a member of the Foundation for Drug Policy Solutions, presented the document to Capitol Hill staffers in Washington, D.C.

"Our team started the day with Representative Jeff Hurd (R-CO), where we discussed the failures of marijuana legalization in Colorado and across the United States. Then we held a briefing in Congress, featuring panelists Fmr. Rep. and SAM Honorary Co-Chair Patrick Kennedy, FDPS President Dr. Kevin Sabet, FDPS Director of Community Engagement Will Jones, former Senate Chief of Staff Luke Albee, moderated by Marcia Lee Taylor. Staff from various Members' offices sat shoulder-to-shoulder—and even

stood in the back—to learn more about the panelists' perspectives on combating the ongoing drug crises. It was a wide-ranging conversation: everything from incarceration alternatives to the commercialization of marijuana was discussed. Special guest Representative Madeleine Dean (D-PA) joined us to stress the importance of devoting necessary resources to the continuing drug and mental health crises," said Sabet.

"Later, we met with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) director and Secretary Robert F. Kennedy's Deputy Chief of Staff," What is the Hyannis Consensus?

The Blueprint for Effective Drug Policy is the result of more than two years of hard work by nearly 100 experts in all areas of drug policy.

A follow-up meeting with select experts at the Kennedy Compound in Hyannisport refined and cemented the document, hence The Hyannis Consensus.

The Blueprint serves as a policy guide for decision makers, Congressional and Executive Branch staff, grassroots organizers, non-profit organizations, and anyone who wants to change the course of

the drug crisis. **The Blueprint's Five Pillars are Prevention, Intervention and Treatment, Recovery Support, Criminal Justice, and International Cooperation.** Working groups containing experts on each pillar collaborated to ensure that the Blueprint's policy recommendations were practical and cohesive.

Click Here to Download PDF of the Blueprint he said.

FYI

Upcoming Webinar on the Opioid Overdose Crisis

In renewing the Public Health Emergency Declaration to address the nation's opioid crisis, HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. committed to working with everyone in communities, including houses of worship and other community partners, to respond to the opioid overdose crisis. Although overdose deaths have declined, communities have resources available to them to help save more lives.

Join a discussion highlighting communities empowered to save lives from opioid overdoses. Hear how faith and community leaders are becoming part of the solution for their community and learn how you can make a difference.

To join the webinar discussion, 'Become a LifeSaver: Faith and Community Partners Responding to the Opioid Overdose Crisis' on Thursday, June 5th at 2PM ET via Microsoft Teams, please visit https://bit.ly/HHSFaithCenterLifesaverEvent or click the registration button below. For more information, please email Faith@HHS.gov.

Register for June 5 Webinar Here

DEA Fact Sheet Available

Fentanyl Fact Sheet

Discover the origin, appearance, street names, effects, and more of fentanyl by downloading the fact sheet linked below. <u>Click Here</u> for the DEA Fentanyl Fact Sheet.

Shatterproof's Opioid Overdose Response Training

In this abbreviated 5-minute training, participants learn what an opioid overdose is, how to recognize one, and how to save a life with naloxone. This training is **FREE**!



Memorial Day, May 26, 2025



REMEMBERING THEIR SACRIFICE. SUPPORTING VETERANS.

Get help by calling or texting 988 or chatting 988lifeline.org.

This Memorial Day, we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

To veterans facing grief, crisis, or trauma—you are not alone.

Support is available: 988lifeline.org/help-yourself/veterans #MemorialDay #SupportforVeterans

On the Calendar



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

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