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Strategizer

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healthier Forsyth County



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SCAN ME

October 2024 Volume 4 Issue 6

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FCDAC Names Two New Board Members

Meet Dr. Katie Lamberson, UNG Assistant Dean of the College of Health Sciences and Professions. She earned a B.A. in Psychology from Bowling Green State University, an MRC, a Master of Rehabilitation Counseling from Bowling Green State University, and a Ph.D. in Counseling and Counselor Education from the University of North Carolina at



Greensboro. Dr. Lamberson has been an FCDAC Council member since 2023.

In March 2024, she received the Educational Excellence Award. She spoke at Caron Atlanta's fourth annual Community Awards Breakfast in Atlanta, where she received the reward. Lamberson said, "I want us to find the same empathy for those with addictions as we have for people who have mental health problems. Everyone who has experienced addiction has experienced trauma." "People deserve to be understood.

They're not better or worse than anyone else," she said.

UNG has the only accredited master's addiction counseling track in Georgia. Dr. Lamberson developed the addiction counseling program in 2018.

Meet **Matt Meyer**, Program Director for the Insight Program in Roswell and Peachtree City. Matt moved to north Georgia with his wife in 2007. Matt has been in long-term recovery since 1998. Due to his own experience with addiction, beginning recovery at age 19, he has dedicated his life to working with young people who struggle with drug and alcohol abuse.



Since joining FCDAC, he has been instrumental in establishing Drug Counselors at Gateway, Forsyth Academy, and North Forsyth High School. He is a frequent speaker and panelist at FCDAC events, such as the annual **Walk for Recovery**.

FCDAC Council Meeting, Work and Programs Round-up

Kayden's Korner



Fall is here, schools and prevention programs are in full swing, and FCDAC welcomes two new Board Members: Matt Meyer and Dr. Katie Lamberson. The FCDAC Board was founded at the start of our Coalition in 2013. Others on the board include

Cindy Mills, Lindsey Simpson, Sara Pederre, and Adam Miller. We welcome Matt and Dr. Katie!

Our project Coordinator, **Charlie Kapustin**, is leaving for college. Our new Project Coordinator is **Alycea Vega**. We will welcome her in November, and we thank and wish Charlie all the best.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



**Our next FCDAC Council Meeting is on
Wednesday, November 6
8 a.m.
United Way Offices**

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 the selection of two new board members: **Matt Meyer and Dr. Katie Lamberson**, who will join existing board members Cindy Mills, Lindsey Simpson, Sara Pederre, and Adam Miller.
- Our Project Coordinator, **Charlie Kapustin** is returning to college on October 15. We wish him well. **Alycea Vega** will be our new Project Coordinator and will be introduced at the November meeting.
- **The Connection** will collect coats, blankets, and hygiene products for families throughout October and the first weeks in November for distribution at Thanksgiving. (see flyer below)
- **About Face, USA** presents a Comedy Show for Veterans on November 29 and 30, benefitting Veterans and their families. (see flyer below)

This month's guest speaker is **Chris Janson** from **Most High Media**, who explains the power of **therapeutic storytelling and the empowerment of individuals interested in video media production**. Our mission is to offer a creative and unique alternative that fills a gap in the heavily bogged-down process of getting healthy after addiction and mental illness. We offer therapeutic content through documentaries and podcasts on our Most High Media App made by and for people in recovery. Since 2017, **Most High Ministries** has shared the Georgia recovery community's experience, hope, and strength through faith, the community of recovery, and all recovery paths. We share our strength and hope with others through our stories, podcasts, and documentaries. We leverage media to deliver a recovery solution woven into an engaging storyline while simultaneously training individuals in recovery with marketable skills for the film and media industry.



The presentation focused on the power of **therapeutic storytelling and the empowerment of individuals with training in the entertainment industry**.

Healing is found when people connect with each other.

- Telling stories is impactful to the listener and therapeutic for the teller.
- Through stories, podcasts, and documentaries, we have told over 150 stories.
- When a story is shared, its impact can give it a meaningful purpose, transforming otherwise meaningless pain into hope and strength.
- We found that recreational drug use is usually at the beginning of addiction stories—a person trying to fit in.
- We found those, but not all, move from recreational to addiction.
- When the drug causes a life problem in relationships, work or school life, or with the law. Then, they will seek treatment, begin the process, and continue care.
- Netflix of recovery. That's what our stories are. We who live in large cities have more resources than are available in rural areas. Our app can provide a needed resource for those desiring to enter treatment and needing encouragement in the recovery process. Our media can provide that encouragement and fill a resource gap in rural communities.
- The therapeutic stories benefit those early in recovery, in the first 30, 60, and 90 days. Founding Most High Media, which resulted from advice from a former employer, Steve Harvey: "Combine your talent and passion, and you can build on it." He and his organization, very small at the time, helped Janson get into rehab and saved my job for me, so unlike many of my peers in recovery, I came out to a job. There, I learned skills like building a website and being behind a camera, which I could combine with my passion for telling stories and helping others.
- Two birds (healing self and helping others), one seed (recovery).
- The pain of addiction causes deep wounds, but when it is shared in a person's story, that wound heals and becomes a scar. The story sharing is of therapeutic value to the person. By putting the story out there, the hearer of the story is helped and impacted because it resonates with them. Two people, the story has positive effects on them both.
- ***The World According To Rolly, a short film by Most High Media, premieres on October 24 at 7 p.m. at Aurora Cineplex, 5100 Commerce Pkwy, Roswell, GA.***

Check out [Most High Media Here](#)

Rachel thanked Chris for sharing his work with our coalition. A short question and answer period and sharing concluded the meeting.

Watch the meeting on FCDAC's Youtube channel [HERE](#).

Community Outreach, Youth, Members, and Partners

Youth

Youth Council



Sharmada Venkataramani, Youth Sector Leader

Sharmada Venkataramani, FCDAC Youth Sector Leader, addressed those gathered at the **Recovery is a Family Affair on September 14 at the Connection**. She shared her work spreading awareness about dangerous drugs like Delta 8 and Kratom that are available at gas stations. Sharmada is currently working with Georgia legislators on different bills that will make substances like these disappear from the public market.

On **September 17**, the Georgia House committee studying the "youth vaping epidemic" held its third and final meeting as it pushed for the creation of a statewide vape registry. **Sharmada testified before the GA House Appropriations Committee** to discuss why increased vaping regulations are warranted. "I testified about how illegal vapes like elf bars lead to teen mortality."



School News



Gabby Breiten, Gateway and Forsyth Academy Drug Counselor



Emily Ennis, Prevention Coach, North Forsyth High School.

Last month, we held the ever-popular **Water Balloon Volleyball** event! Thirty-eight students participated, and volleyball ended in a huge water balloon fight. The kids had a blast! I had lots of help from my friends **Gabby Breiten** (Gateway's Substance Abuse Counselor, **Sam Strickland** (a substance abuse counselor), and another North Forsyth teacher who were there to set up and be on site for the event. Gabby Breiten held a similar but smaller Water Balloon Volleyball event at Gateway.

This month, we start a small group at **Lambert High School**, and students are signing up for that now. We will hold weekly group sessions to discuss substance prevention and create a safe environment for students to share daily struggles. We presented in the 10th-grade world history classes this month as

students to share daily struggles. We presented in the 10th grade World History classes this month as well. Ainsley Miller, Gabby Breiten, and I made the presentation to these classes, connected with some of the students, and got our faces out to more students in the community. We are grateful for the opportunity to plant seeds about how substances can negatively affect someone and provide them hope and resources if ever needed. We are excited to work with Lambert again this year, and I hope we can continue to help those in need.

This month, Ainsley Miller and I will put on a **Mac and Cheese cook-off** with the students at North. The kids at North chose this event and are excited to compete in this riveting cooking competition! We are in full swing of facilitating two separate groups twice per week at North and meeting with students individually throughout the day. We are discussing the benefits of positive peer pressure through student accountability with each other, seeing how it positively impacts one's ability to remain sober.

This year, we will participate in the **Trunk or Treat Festival**. We will hand out candy and flyers for substance prevention services and other FCDAC resources. I am looking forward to an impactful and fun month with the students here at North and continuing our outreach in other Forsyth County Schools.

Parent Partners Corner

by Ashley Dickerson and Marti Roveda



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.

The Parent Partners program is off to a fantastic start this school year! Ashley and Marti teamed up with Emily and Gabby, counselors at North and Gateway, to participate in Lambert High School's Parent University. Emily and Gabby provided valuable insights into the substance use trends they are monitoring within the district, while Ashley and Marti shared their personal family journeys. Together, they answered a wide range of questions from parents.

Our message reached over 30 attendees, all of whom received our "What to Expect When You Suspect" flyer, offering practical guidance for parents facing similar challenges.

Looking ahead, we're excited to host two Gateway Parent Nights in October and November. We will once again share our stories and highlight the

importance of the recovery journey for both parents and youth. We welcome every opportunity to connect with the community and support struggling families.



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.

If you or someone you know could benefit from our program, feel free to reach out to us or share our email: parents4FCDAC@gmail.com.



Members teaching Members

WISDOM FROM THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY By Dana Bryan



"Recovery is when you move beyond sobriety and into whole life." This definition is taken from the website of **Most High Media**. This organization

emphasizes that recovery is accomplished by investing time and effort and listening attentively to others in the recovery community.

Christian Janson from Most High Media was our speaker at the October Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council meeting. The purpose of Most High Media is to focus on recovery through the use of tools from media and the entertainment industry. The individuals in this program work on their recovery by sharing their stories through podcasts and documentaries. As they present their stories and work on their recovery, they are also learning marketable skills in the media and entertainment industry.

Through my daughter's struggle with addiction, I was a part of

several parent organizations. These include the following: a therapeutic school in Oregon that offered a summer program that my daughter attended between her 7th and 8th-grade years; the parent counseling group that was a part of my daughter's program at an in-patient facility, where she spent six months during her 8th-grade year with a dual diagnosis that included addiction; and the local parent group that was a part of the therapeutic school my daughter attended in Maine. (Much of our time was spent on the campus in Maine.)

As I listened to Christian Janson, I heard many of the same facts and philosophies taught and emphasized in all programs designed to guide individuals through recovery. All recovery programs I have experienced have much in common in their communication, and I think of this as the WISDOM OF RECOVERY. This includes my experience with my daughter's programs and programs such as Insight, No Longer Bound, and Full Circle.

Lessons pertaining to addiction and recovery:

1. There is power in the connection with others through programs supporting recovery.
2. Most addicts start with the recreational use of an addictive substance.
3. Many addicts choose to use an addictive substance to fit in and feel a part of a group.
4. As addiction progresses, the individual experiences loss of health, loss of meaningful relationships, loss of success in academics or sports, and other significant losses such as loss of a job.
5. The pain of addiction becomes the purpose in the life of a person in recovery as they share their



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!

5. The pain of addiction becomes the purpose in the life of a person in recovery as they share their story with others.
6. Find an interest or talent that is your passion, which can give purpose and meaning to your life. Christian Janson advises combining your talent and your passion.
 7. It is therapeutic to find a way in which you can help others.
 8. In recovery, turn your pain into purpose by sharing your story.
 9. If you want recovery, do not try to do it alone. Join a recovery community to benefit from their support.
 10. Trust the process and be kind to yourself.
 11. Trust that your life will get better.
 12. Recovery must be a choice.
 13. When addicts are ready, they will ask for the success they see around them in the recovery community.
 14. The support of the recovery community is the greatest asset a former addict has in their search for sobriety.

One of the most useful lessons I have learned was something that was emphasized to parents at the therapeutic school my daughter attended in Maine.

“We cannot control what other people do or say, but we can control our reaction to their behavior.”

Changing our reaction to someone’s objectionable behavior will often achieve a positive result. I have found this skill quite beneficial in challenging interpersonal experiences.

Police Sector Report

by Deputy Kevin Ferraro



DEA National Prescription Take Back Day October



October 28, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. is National Prescription Take Back Day. This is a great time to remind you and everyone you know to remove expired and unneeded prescription drugs from your medicine cabinet. Fortunately for us, we have **YEAR-ROUND DRUG DROP BOXES** available. Please play your part in removing expired and unneeded

prescriptions from wherever medicine is stored in your home. Here are some of the many drop box locations locally.

- Kaiser Permanente Forsyth Pharmacy 1400 Northside Forsyth Dr. Ste.350 Medical Building, Cumming, GA 30041
- Georgia CVS Pharmacy, L.L.C.4895 Post Rd., Cumming, GA 30040
- Magnolia Pharmacy Services 2620 Bethelview Dr. Ste. 100, Cumming, GA 30040
- Forsyth County Sheriff's Office Prescription Drop Box 202 Veterans Memorial Blvd, Cumming, GA

30040

These secure boxes offer community members a safe way to dispose of unwanted and expired medications.

Our Partners in Prevention

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

American Lung Association Humorous Anti-Vaping PSAs



The American Lung Association teamed up with the AD Council to make some humorous PSAs encouraging parents to talk to their kids about vaping dangers.

Parents are the best **INFLUENCERS** in their children's lives!




THE CONNECTION
 MAKE A DIFFERENCE

COATS, BLANKETS & HYGIENE PRODUCTS FOR FAMILIES

Drop Off New/Gently Used Items at:
608 Veterans Memorial Blvd, Cumming, GA 30040
 Contact erin@theconnectionforsyth.org
(470) 253-8564



October-November 2024

New/Gently Used Coats & Blankets. Thank you!!



21+

Stand-Up for VETERANS

Tickets: \$40
 Veterans: \$25
 After Oct.15: \$50
 VIP Tickets: \$100



Headliner:
Dave Landau

Scan for TIX





With Dave Landau

4 SHOWS
 NOV. 29th & 30th
 6:30 & 9:30
 each night

At The American Legion Post 201
 201 Wills Rd, Alpharetta, GA 30009

A Thanksgiving Stand-Up Comedy Show Benefiting Veterans and their Families

Sean Larkins
Def Comedy Jam



Host
Richie Satori




Carlos Rodriguez
Dry Bar Comedy



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CHRIS HERREN

SPEAKING SERIES

Chris Herren, a former NBA basketball star, is a renowned speaker and advocate for substance abuse prevention. With a powerful story of

CARTA

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Christian-based 12 Step Recovery Meetings
 email us CARTAsouthside@gmail.com

PEACHTREE CITY

overcoming addiction, Chris had dedicated his life to education teenagers on the dangerous paths that alcohol and drugs lead us. He champions compassion and dignity in how students treat each other. Chris speaks to the hearts of these young students helping them understand the decisions they make now will have a lasting impact on their lives tomorrow. So far Chris has spoken to over one million teenagers... we would like him to speak to our teenagers in Coweta and Fayette County as well. We have too many teens losing their lives to alcohol and drugs. This will save lives.



We have a commitment from the Herren Foundation for Mr. Herren to speak to students at every high school in both Coweta and Fayette Counties... nearly 14,000 teenagers! Additionally there will be two evening parent / community events. The dates for Coweta are Oct 28 - 29, 2024 and for Fayette Mar 25 - 27, 2025.

We are a non-profit and 100% of the financial burden of this initiative is on us as communities. Individuals can make a *donation of any amount* on our website listed below. *Business and Corporate sponsorships* start at \$500 and are rewarded with a powerful advertising package. Check out our webpage and if you need more information please reach out to our program manager Tara Hannon by email at TaraHannon@FayetteFactor.org or by phone 470-651-6374

THANK YOU!



www.FACT4future.org



THANK YOU!

JOIN US →

Live or Zoom

7 PM

MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89543750407>

Meeting ID: 895 4375 0407

CARTA... It's Smarter!

We use the *NIV Recovery Devotional Bible Zondervan 2019*

Buy one for \$19 on Amazon or come to a live mtg and we will give you one!

Live!
in Peachtree City

SUNDAYS @ 4:00 PM

@ the "Abandoned Gazebo"

110 Kelly Dr, Peachtree City
back of the parking lot across from PTC Dam weather permitting*
otherwise we meet at LifeSwitch DUI School located at 420 Dividend Dr, Peachtree City

For text notification of location email your cell# and name to CARTAsouthside@gmail.com

Mark Your Calendars Now!

35th ANNUAL NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

FORUM

SAMHSA's 21st Annual Prevention Day

February 3-6, 2025 Gaylord National National Harbor, MD

UNLOCK THE POWER OF COALITIONS

CADCA

February 3-6, 2025 National Harbor, MD

CADCA's National Leadership Forum is the premiere training event for prevention professionals, community leaders, advocates, and experts to convene, share insights, and collaborate on innovative strategies to drive lasting and impactful community change.

Rx and Illicit Drug Summit

April 21-24, 2025 Nashville, TN

HMP Global

April 21-24, 2025 Nashville

Rx and Illicit Drug Summit is the largest, most influential event addressing this crisis, where strategies are shared and put into action.

News For You

Local News

R

Recovery is A Family Affair

Recovery Month

On September 14, 2024, The Connection celebrated Recovery Month by hosting an event that brought together many in the recovery and prevention communities, as well as family, friends, and community supporters.



Left, Charlie Kapustin, event attendee, center, and right, speaker, Graham Skinner.



FCDAC Resource table. Thanks Charlie!



Community celebrating recovery at the Connecton, September 14. Recovery is a Family Affair!

Walker Whitman, right, speaking about his recovery journey.





Charlie Kapustin, FCDAC Project Coordinator, hosted the FCDAC resource table at the **Recovery is a Family Affair** on **September 14** at the **Connection**. The well-attended event featured members of the Connection Community who shared their recovery journeys, demonstrating that Recovery is always possible and is happening!



Walker Whitman, a young person in recovery, pictured above, spoke about his journey in recovery. Walker told about his time before getting sober and the hopelessness he encountered while juxtaposing the beautiful life that he lives today. We also heard from **Graham Skinner**, the chief marketing officer at Thoroughbred Wellness and Recovery. He shared his insight on what it was like getting sober and how he has dedicated his life to helping others achieve a meaningful life. He shared how he is responsible for holding interventions for individuals whose loved ones are concerned for their well-being.

National News

**Mental Illness Awareness Week is October 6-12,
World Mental Health Day is October 10.**

Since 1990, Americans have celebrated the first full week of October as **Mental Illness Awareness Week** after the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) lobbied Congress to create this critical awareness event. This year, **Mental Illness Awareness Week is October 6 – 12** and **World Mental Health Day is October 10**. This year's theme is **My Mental Health at Work**.

[NAMI Toolkit Available Here.](#)

Nearly **49 million** people
ages **12 and older** struggle with
a substance use disorder.

The Stats Don't Lie!

During 2023 alone, more than 107,000 people died from overdoses — the highest number in history. At the same time, nearly **49 million** Americans continued to live with the disease of addiction.

2024 National Red Ribbon Rally

Watch this year's rally!

This year's **Red Ribbon Rally** features voices from our community and special guests, including youth performances that celebrate living drug-free. We recognize the elementary, middle, and



free. We recognize the elementary, middle, and high school winners of the DEA's Red Ribbon Visual Arts Contest and announce the community groups selected to receive the DEA's 2024 Community Drug Prevention Award.

FYI

Rising New Problem: Ketamine

According to an article by [Mark S. Gold, M.D.](#) in *Psychology Today*, updated September 19, 2024, Ketamin Use Disorder (KUD) is reaching increasing numbers. "The internet is full of accounts of people becoming **addicted to ketamine** taken at clubs, home, or recreationally as an alternative to cocaine or other drugs they fear might be adulterated with fentanyl. Ketamine addictions are also reported by people taking ketamine off-label for depression or anxiety, who assumed they were safe because a doctor prescribed their ketamine."

Key points

- "Ketamine use disorder/ketamine addiction is being recognized as an **emerging addictive disorder**."
- Ketamine, an essential medicine according to WHO, has health and addiction risks in recreational use.
- Ketamine use disorder diagnostic questions have been proposed and can be used by clinicians and users."

[Read the Entire Article](#)

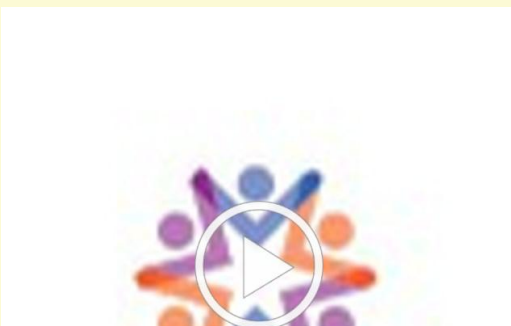
Smoking or Vaping: Which Is Worse for Your Lungs?

Youth have a much lower opinion of cigarettes than vapes or e-cigarettes, often believing vapes are healthier.

According to Betsy Reed, Editor of Guardian US on August 28, 2024, online edition, **Vaping damages young people's lungs as much as smoking**, according to research that has prompted fresh debate over the health risks of e-cigarettes. The study compared vapers and smokers in a strenuous exercise test and found both groups emerged as less fit and much more out of breath than people with neither habit.



[Click Here to Read the Article](#)



Know Ur Vape

It is a **humorous** twist on an influencer unboxing a new product!

The [Know Ur Vape campaign](#) is a collaboration between these influencers and others, as well as the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction

Service, Connecticut's Tobacco Enforcement Division, the Connecticut Clearing House, and a professional marketing team.

On the Calendar



October

- FCDAC Council Meeting October 2, 2024
- National Substance Use Prevention Month
- Red Ribbon Week, October 23-31
- Mental Illness Awareness Week, October 1-7
- National Prescription Drug Take Back Day - October 26, 2024
- Halloween, October 31



November

- Fall Back 1 hour, Sunday November 3
- Great American Smokeout, November 21, 2024
- Thanksgiving November 28, 2024



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

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