



The FCDAC STRATEGIZER

Leading the way to a
healthier Forsyth County

Receive Our Newsletter

July 2023 Volume 3 Issue 3

Happy Birthday, America!



Are Some Kids Especially Vulnerable to Substance Abuse?*

Personality Types That Make Kids
More Susceptible to Drug Use

* These excerpts are from an article that appears on the [Natural High](#) website, published on: September 17, 2021, Last updated on: December 12, 2022

A Canadian research team led by Dr. Patricia Conrod says their research shows that personality factors can be highly predictive of who develops problems with alcohol and substance misuse. There are four personality types, particularly, that seem to have a higher correlation with struggles, and there's a personality profile that can be administered to students to help them better understand themselves.

The 4 Personality Types

Impulsivity

An impulsive person acts with their gut on the spur of the moment without thinking much about the consequences of their actions.

Sensation Seeking

A sensation seeker craves excitement and often acts without thinking clearly about the consequences.

Anxiety Sensitivity

The assessment describes someone with this type as having stressful physical sensations and worrying about anxious feelings.

Negative Thinking

A person who often feels sad, guilty, and irritable is susceptible to negative thinking. This is usually a more complex personality since thinking happens underneath the surface.

What does this mean for parents and concerned adults?

- First, it's helpful to consider who the kids are in our lives and how best to care for them. Also, it speaks to the importance of providing opportunities for kids to **grow in self-awareness**.
- Second, it's important to carve out time daily for **thoughtful self-reflection**. A great habit for all of us!
- Third, caring adults can commit to engaging in honest discussions with young people about their personality tendencies, acting as neutral mirrors to help them understand themselves. In many ways, knowledge leads to power and self-awareness as a foundation for healthy choices.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the full article.



Natural High is a drug prevention nonprofit that inspires and empowers youth to find their natural high and develop the skills and courage to live life well— to find their 'Natural High' rather than use alcohol or drugs.

Summer is a great time to use Natural High's tools with the young people in your life to connect and encourage their healthiest life and their Natural High.

[Click Here](#) to check out all NH resources!

This is just one of many short videos that can be used to open up conversations with young people presented by Natural High.



Queen Harrison, USA Olympic runner and gold medalist in the Pan American Games, shares why she lives a drug-free life and pursues track and field. Queen Harrison, a world-class track and hurdler, set her goal for track and field at an early age. Her grit and passion for the sport she loved earned her a highly-coveted Bowerman trophy in 2010, a spot in the 2012 Olympic trials and most recently, a gold medal in the 2015 Pan American Games.



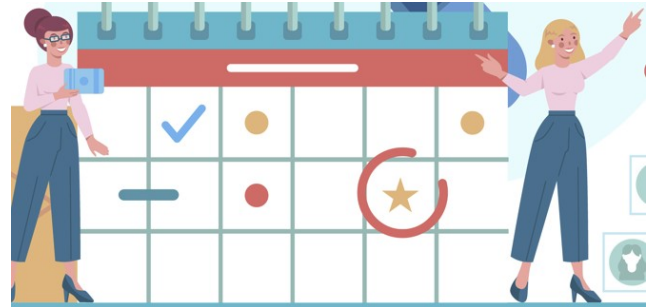
Happy 4th of July!

Our DFC (drug-free coalition) is all about **FREEDOM**. As a Council, we are committed to taking back and freeing our community from the enslavement and chains resulting from the misuse of alcohol and drugs. Our summer theme is centered on the importance of **making the most of and improving our connectedness in our relationships**.

We are now mid-summer; how are your efforts going? Like establishing any new habit, inevitably, we fall short or stumble. The key to success is to **get up** as quickly as possible, **make adjustments**, and **keep on!** So during summer, remember that making connections with family (both by blood and common interests) is our priority.

I will be attending a CADCA conference on July 16 in Texas. I will make my report about it in August!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Our next FCDAC Council Meeting is on **Wednesday, August 2**
United Way Offices

Council Meeting Highlights

Director Rachel Kayden opened the 8 a.m. monthly council meeting by welcoming everyone and with introductions of attendees along with announcements.

Our guest speaker was **Stacey Edwards**. She is the Executive Director of Special Equestrians of Georgia. She has over twenty years of experience with children and adults dealing with emotional, behavioral, and mental health challenges. She brought with her a special guest, **Romeo!**

Announcements:

- Director Rachel will attend the July 16 CADCA Mid-Year Conference in Texas. She will be reporting on this meeting at our August meeting on August 2.
- FCDAC is co-hosting the **Mobilize Recovery Bus Tour Finale Stop** on September 23 at the City Center. We will have promotional information by our August Meeting. We are forming a committee to prepare.



- **FCDAC NEEDS VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FOLLOWING AREAS** 1. **Bus Tour Committee** to prepare for the Grand Finale of the Recovery Bus Tour at City Center. 2. **Data organizational assistance**. We have survey results and need to translate them into recognizable data to explain the community needs and assessments. 3. **Youth Committee Chairperson** to work with the youth council, some of whom you will meet today. 4. Expanding Speaker's Bureau is necessary because we will be speaking in all the county middle and highschoools. We need speakers! [Click Here](#) to contact Rachel.



- **Lindsey Simpson**, FCS Support Facilitator, announced that a **Mentoring** program is

Mentoring

Forsyth County Schools

Research shows mentoring can reduce absenteeism while increasing social, emotional and overall well-being resulting in youth who are productive members of society.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

**Select ONE training date, PLEASE register prior to training through our online application.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>July 20, 2023 6:00pm-8:00pm</p> <p>Forsyth County Board of Education 1120 Dahlonega Highway Cumming, GA 30040</p> | <p>August 15, 2023 9:30am-11:30am</p> <p>Oswell Middle School 605 Tribble Gap Road Cumming, GA 30040</p> | <p>August 17, 2023 9:00am-11:00am</p> <p>Chestnut Elementary School 6945 Keith Bridge Road Gainesville, GA 30506</p> |
|---|---|---|

Please visit our webpage for registration and additional training dates <http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/mentor>



beginning in the new school year, and they need Mentors. Applications are online and consist of a weekly commitment of 30 minutes to meet with the student.

- **Kayla Bergeron, Director of the Connection announced:** 1. We had over 100 people attend our pre-July 4th cookout. 2. Plans are in the works for Recovery Month 'Thank you' event in September. We are gathering thank you testimonials. 3. Art Wellness Workshop July 15, 10 -12. 4. We are planning a cooperative program with Georgia Public Broadcasting. 5. Upcoming AD campaign, 6. Warrior Moms, 7. Teacup Memorial cohosting with Realty4Recovery (Jennifer Hodge).



This month's guest speaker was **Stacey Edwards**. She is the Executive Director of **Special Equestrians of Georgia** and has over twenty years of experience with children and adults who deal with emotional, behavioral, and mental health challenges. And she brought an adorable guest!

Stacey Edwards introduced the Council to **Romeo**, Special Equestrians of Georgia's (SEG) Mini Horse Outreach member. Romeo is a therapeutic mini-horse. The SEG minis have an outreach program to schools, hospitals, rehabs, nursing homes, and special events for the special needs and community.

Equine Assisted Therapy

Horse-Assisted Psychotherapy integrates horses into the lives of people who experienced trauma, physical and mental disabilities and assists them in finding new levels of wellness. "The horse is low on the intelligence scale but very high on the intuitive, emotional scale. Profoundly, the horse can make an unspoken connection through body language and touch with the humans who encounter them," Stacey told the council. Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) is founded on the premise that learning to understand a horse's behavior, similar to humans, will transfer to how a

person sees and comprehends their behavior.

People who engage in Equine-Assisted Therapy Activities like grooming, feeding, and caring for horses under the care of mental health professionals often experience improvements in emotional regulation



Painting by Kayla Bergeron, Director of The Connection

under the care of mental health professionals often experience improvements in emotional regulation, mindfulness, executive functioning, confidence, responsibility, and peace. This therapy aims to help an individual reach personal goals, optimal happiness, and an understanding of self. Equine-Assisted Therapy (EAT) has become increasingly popular because of its experiential approach and emerging evidence of its effectiveness.

Their website states, "We aim to provide a supportive environment that empowers all individuals through equine-assisted activities to reach their full potential."

Stacey concluded her presentation by inviting council members to visit the farm, become acquainted with the horses, and notice how their brains slow down and they experience peace. You may want to become a volunteer!

[Contact Stacey Here](#)

Community Outreach, Youth, Members, and Partners

MOBILIZE RECOVERY ACROSS GEORGIA

EDUCATING | MOTIVATING | CELEBRATING | ENGAGING | MOBILIZING



CLINTON
GLOBAL
INITIATIVE



We are coming in September! Mobilize Recovery Across GA* is a bus tour crisscrossing GA during National Recovery Month. Over 800,000 Georgians live in long-term recovery from Substance Use Disorder. The tour will unite Georgians to celebrate recovery and educate individuals on harm reduction and recovery resources. The tour is designed to connect communities and is based on bringing people together. At each stop, the Overdose Response Network, with support from the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse, will connect community members-Professional from treatment facilities, law enforcement, families and allies of people in recovery, local media outlets, faith leaders, policymakers, and state representatives, local businesses and collegiate recovery communities. **The tour will culminate at City Center in Cumming!**

*Part of the Clinton Foundation.

Parent Partners Corner

by Ashley Dickerson and Marti Roveda

Rotary Presentation, June 20

Marti presented to the Buford North Gwinnett Rotary on June 20th. She shared her story, FCDAC's statistics page, and our **What to Expect if You Suspect** flyer. The data shocked the eight members in attendance, especially the age of first use.

Marti and Ashley are using the summer months to plan and strategize and **identify paths for sharing our mission**. We look forward to building our



Ashley Dickerson

Ashely is Revenue Accounting Director at AT&T and is an active member of FCDAC.

Her journey parenting 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 shares her recovery with other parents to reduce the shame and

our mission. We look forward to building our calendars with presentations to parents of youth moving from elementary to middle school. Our desire is to educate those we address and prevent their children's first use of substances.

We also look forward to **building our volunteer base of parents** who want to share their strength, hope, experience, and prevention efforts as part of the Parent Support Committee.

Please get in touch with us if you're aware of presentation opportunities or are interested in joining our mission!

[Visit our Website](#)

parents to reduce the shame and stigma and help start the dialog among parents struggling to find support. She contributes her insights monthly to the *Strategizer*."

Marti Roveda



Marti is a Strategic Sourcing for Axia Women's Health, an active member of FCDAC, and a volunteer parent advisor for an under-18 recovery program in Nashville. With a child who began recovery before age 18, Marti is passionate about educating and eliminating stigma associated with SUD. She partners with Ashley to contribute monthly insights to the *Strategizer*.

Youth Outreach

New Faces on the Youth Council



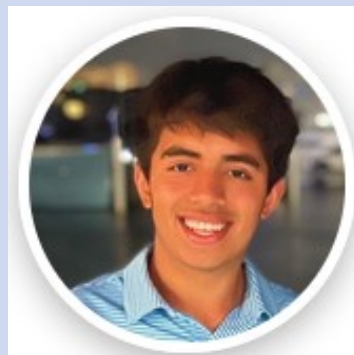
Sheil Dharan

Sheil Dharan is a senior at Denmark High School and Youth Sector Leader. With a strong passion for drug prevention, Sheil is establishing a youth drug prevention club in the 2023-24 school year. His interests lie in raising awareness, educating peers, and creating effective interventions to combat drug abuse among youth. Sheil dreams of fostering a healthier and safer environment for his fellow students. He believes serving on the youth council will provide a platform to influence policy and shape a future focused on drug prevention and intervention.



Saanvi Kankipati

Saanvi Kankipati is a South Forsyth High School senior and a new member of the FCDAC Youth Council. This fall, she will be the President of South Forsyth High



Avi Karamchani

Avi Karamchani is a Lambert High School junior passionate about STEM, youth mental health, and advocating for health awareness. "I am part of the Boy's Track & Field team and the iGEM Competition team

the President of South Forsyth High School's Drug Awareness Club, **Be Smart, Don't Start.**

"I'm looking forward to getting more involved with the FCDAC!" Saanvi said.

Field team and the IGEM Competition team at Lambert High School. I am also the founder of **FitToday**, a platform focused on bringing awareness to mental and physical health. This interest led me to the FCDAC Youth Council and to work with Georgia Representative Dr. Rich McCormick on youth mental health issues. I am excited about the path ahead and working towards improving youth health!"

Our Partners in Prevention

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

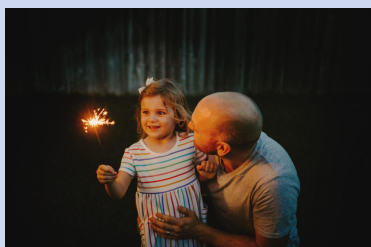


shift HAPPENS
A MINDFULNESS, MEDITATION, BOUNDARY SETTING, MANIFESTATION COACHING PROGRAM

Wellness Workshop
Saturday, July 15, 2023
10am-12pm

Join Edvique for a fun mindfulness workshop where we will learn to widen our tolerance, build resilience and regulate our emotions in an intentional way.

THE CONNECTION
608 VETERANS MEMORIAL BLVD. CUMMING, GA 30040
(470) 253-8564



BACK TO SCHOOL

SCHOOL SUPPLIES GIVEAWAY

THE CONNECTION The Connection
In Partnership with
The Department of Community Supervision

Drop-In from 10am to 1pm
July 21, 2023
The Connection Forsyth
(470) 253-8564
608 Veterans Memorial Blvd.



An event announced by our partner in prevention,

Ester Lopez, Assistant Director of Prevention / Intervention
Project Director, Voices for Prevention (V4P), The Council on Alcohol and Drugs
(678) 403-8946



Join **Voices for Prevention** on **July 15, 2023**, from **9 AM- 3:30 PM** for the 2nd annual Youth Advocacy Project (YAP) Youth Summit.

This is a **FREE event for youth ages 12-18**. There will be games, prizes, a live DJ, free lunch, and much more!

FREE Event for youth ages 12-18

Youth Advocacy Summit
Saturday, July 15, 2023
9 AM- 3:30 PM

Hilton Marietta Conference Center & Hotel
500 Powder Springs Road
Marietta, GA 30064

[Click Here to Register](#)

We will choose one lucky winner from the first 100 people to register for a \$50 Amazon gift card.



Members teaching Members



HELP, HOPE, HORSES, HEALING, & HAPPINESS

By Dana Bryan

On July 5th, the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council had two very special visitors—**Romeo and Stacey Edwards**. Romeo is a calm, friendly, well-trained miniature horse, not much larger than a very large dog. Romeo stood by Stacey's side during her entire presentation. Stacey Edwards is the Executive Director of Special Equestrians of Georgia. This organization's mission is to "provide a nurturing therapeutic

environment to help individuals facing physical, emotional, and mental challenges." Her program is successful in helping youth (over the age of nine) and adults who suffer from issues as difficult to treat as substance abuse, PTSD, schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, mood disorders, and bullying. The program can benefit individuals, families, military veterans, law enforcement, and first responders. Stacey's program has been successful with those who were skeptical when they arrived and those who did not want to be there and came with a negative attitude

Dana Bryan

Dana is a retired

middle school teacher and member of FCDAC. Through her



Soon after a person arrives, a miniature horse is introduced to the individual. Stacey has selected each horse to match the needs of the person with the personality characteristics of the specific horse. Stacey explained that horses have the instinctive ability to sense the emotions of people. In fact, she considers horses to be the smartest emotional animal in the world. Instead of talking or trying to reason with the person who comes to "The Farm," Stacey hands him a brush and encourages the person to start grooming the horse. She explained that horses sense your feelings and sense what they must do to support you emotionally. Amazingly, as people begin to groom their horse, their focus is on the horse, and they soon open up and begin to share their life stories without any encouragement from Stacey. This is the beginning of their journey toward improvement in their mental health. When the person begins to tell his story, the horse's behavior changes as it senses the emotional changes in the person. Stacy explained that the horse will stay connected with its groomer during that session and will follow the groomer without needing a lead line.

People who are recovering addicts and alcoholics often say that the opposite of addiction is connection. They refer to their connections with other people, the world, and their own interests and abilities. It is hoped that as a person at "The Farm" forms a connection with his horse, he will begin to grow in the ability to form healthy relationships, communicate with others in a healthy way, and will learn how to handle responsibility as he learns to feel responsible for the needs of the horse. As people learn to understand a horse's behavior, they begin to understand their own behavior. The mission of the Special Equestrians of Georgia program is to help each individual set and reach his personal goals, achieve optimal happiness, gain an understanding of self, and discover an inner peace.

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!



13185 New Providence Road
Milton, GA 30004

Email: specialeofga@gmail.com

Tel: 404.218.4008 - *text preferred*

NEWS FOR YOU

US Files Charges Against Chinese Fentanyl Manufacturers

In a June 23, 2023 article, Reuters reported that "The U.S. Justice Department on Friday filed criminal charges against four Chinese chemical manufacturing companies and eight individuals over allegations they illegally trafficked the chemicals used to make fentanyl - a highly addictive painkiller that has fueled the opioid crisis in the United States.

The indictments mark the first time the U.S. has sought to prosecute any of the Chinese companies responsible for manufacturing precursor chemicals used to make the painkiller. The move came after Antony Blinken made the first visit to China by a U.S. Secretary of State in five years and said he had made clear that Washington needs much greater Chinese cooperation to stem the flow of fentanyl. During his visit, the two sides agreed to stabilize their intense rivalry so that it did not veer into conflict, but failed to produce any breakthrough, and the mood quickly soured again after U.S. President Joe Biden on Tuesday referred to Chinese leader Xi Jinping as a dictator.

The companies at the heart of the three separate indictments are accused of selling precursor chemicals to the Sinaloa Cartel in Mexico, which has flooded the U.S. with the drug."

[Click Here](#) to read more of the article.

Men Die of Drug Overdose at 2 to 3 Times Greater Rate Than Women

These findings were published in the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology*. In fact, from 2020 to 2021, men had a rate of overdose mortality from opioids and psychostimulants that was 2 to 3 times greater than the overdose mortality rate for women. Investigators led the study from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

"Though men and women are being exposed to the modern, fentanyl-contaminated drug supply, something is leading men to die at significantly higher rates," NIDA Director Nora Volkow, MD, said in a news release. "It may be that men use drugs more frequently or in greater doses, which could increase their risk of death, or there may be protective factors among women that reduce their risk of death compared to men."

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the complete article.

A NIDA NEWS RELEASE, June 20, 2023-

Xylazine (Tranq) Increases Overdose Risk

A new study in rats suggests that xylazine, the active ingredient in a non-opioid veterinary tranquilizer not approved for human use, can worsen the life-threatening effects of opioids. The findings imply that when combined with opioid drugs such as fentanyl and heroin, xylazine may damage the ability of the brain to get enough oxygen, which is one of the most dangerous effects of opioid drugs and can lead to death. The study, published in *Psychopharmacology*, was conducted by researchers at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health.

Research has shown that xylazine is often added to illicit opioids, including fentanyl, and that xylazine has been increasingly detected in the illegal opioid supply. While some people knowingly use fentanyl and xylazine in combination, many people do not know if the drugs they plan to use contain fentanyl, xylazine, or both. This combination can be extremely dangerous, and in April 2023, the U.S. government declared fentanyl adulterated or associated with xylazine as an emerging drug threat.

[Click Here](#) to read more.

A CDC Marijuana and Public Health Report-

What You Need to Know about Substance Use and Driving – Including Marijuana

Each December, the CDC recognizes National Impaired Driving Prevention Month to raise awareness about the dangers of impaired driving.

Fast Facts

- 11,654 people in the United States were killed in

How Marijuana Use Affects Driving

Marijuana use affects areas of the brain that control your body's movements, balance, coordination, memory, and judgment. Marijuana use can impair important skills required for safe driving by:

- Slowing your reaction time and ability to make decisions
- Making it difficult to multitask
- Impairing coordination
- Distorting perception

How Alcohol Affects Driving

- The amount of alcohol in a person's system is called blood alcohol concentration (BAC). The effects of alcohol use on driving include difficulty steering.
- Reduced ability to respond to emergency driving situations
- Reduced ability to maintain lane position and brake appropriately
- Reduced ability to process what is happening on the road

Use of Multiple Substances While Driving

Using more than one drug together or in a short time frame, also known as **polysubstance use**, can make driving especially dangerous. Studies have shown that the use of multiple substances (such as marijuana and alcohol) at the same time can increase impairment. Whether intentional or not, mixing drugs may increase the strength and be more unpredictable than using one drug alone, and even deadly.

How Can You Prevent Impaired Driving?

- Plan. If you plan to drink alcohol or use drugs, make plans so you do not have to drive.
- Agree on a trusted designated driver ahead of time. If you are with a group, agree on a trusted designated driver in the group who will not drink alcohol or use drugs.
- Get a ride home. If you have been drinking alcohol and/or using other drugs, get a ride home with a driver who has not been drinking or using drugs, use a rideshare service, or call a taxi.

Were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes in 2020—a 14% increase from 2019. That's about 32 people every day or one person every 45 minutes.

- **7 million Americans reported driving under the influence of marijuana or other illicit drugs in 2020.**
- **Alcohol and marijuana were the two most commonly reported substances involved in impaired driving in 2018, with 8% and 4.7% of the U.S. population aged ≥16 years reporting alcohol and marijuana respectively.**
- **1 in 8 high school student drivers reported driving after using marijuana at least once during the past month in 2017.**

Call for Advocacy

Stop Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Congress has reintroduced the Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act. This legislation would allow banks to accept the federally illegal proceeds from the sale of marijuana. This will set a precedent to allow other federally illegal industries to gain access to the banking system. Additionally, granting marijuana businesses access to the banking system will make it easier for them to do business, exacerbating the negative consequences of marijuana proliferation, including increased traffic fatalities, youth use rates, ER visits, and hospitalizations.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Please send the sample letter below to your members of Congress raising concerns about the SAFE Banking Act and urging them to vote against this legislation.

HOW TO DO IT

[Click here](#) to send letters to your members of Congress (2 Senators and one member of the House of Representatives) asking them to vote "No" on the SAFE Banking Act.

SAMPLE LETTER

I am writing today to urge you to oppose the SAFE Banking Act. This legislation seeks to legitimize marijuana business operations that remain illegal under federal law. Granting marijuana businesses access to the banking system will vastly increase the access and availability of marijuana and high-potency tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) products with serious public health and safety consequences. The SAFE Banking Act would result in international drug cartels gaining an even stronger foothold in being able to launder money from other illegal activities. The SAFE Banking Act is an ill-advised measure as our nation grapples with the opioid, stimulant, and vaping crises.

The negative consequences associated with the growth of the marijuana industry, including increased traffic fatalities, youth use rates, ER visits, and hospitalizations, would only be further exacerbated by this legislation. Please vote "No" on the SAFE Banking Act.

FYI

Awkward Conversations: Signs Of Drug Use and What To Do If You Find Something Season 2 Episode 6

This episode encourages parents to know the signs of possible drug use and what to do. The host, Jodie Sweetin, is joined by Timothy P. McMahon, whom the DEA has employed since 1998, and Amy McCarthy, Clinical Social Worker at Boston Children's Hospital.



DEA Special Agent McMahon shares common ways kids hide drugs in plain sight and what signs to look for with changes to personality, involvement, or money use.

They also share tips on talking to your child about drugs and responding with love rather than anger if you discover your child is using drugs. This topic can be scary and overwhelming to parents, but they need to remember that the sooner you address it, the better.

The Drug Enforcement Administration collaborating with the **Elks Drug Awareness Program**, announces the next installment of Awkward Conversations. This year's project features the second season of a video podcast series featuring Full House and Fuller House's Jodie Sweetin, guest experts, and celebrity parents. The 20 video podcast episodes cover a variety of subjects to help parents learn how to empower their kids with the tools needed to stay safe, drug-free, and make healthy decisions. Topics include signs of drug use in teens, fake pills, preventing drug misuse among college students, bullying and peer pressure and its consequences, understanding your kids' social media use, and do's and don'ts when discussing drugs.

On the Calendar



July

- Connection's Pre-Independence Day Party
July 2, 12-4 pm.
- 4th of July, Happy Birthday, America!
- Connection's School Supplies Giveaway, July 21, 10 am -1 pm

August

- First Day of School, August 3.
- International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31.



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

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