



**FORSYTH COUNTY**  
DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL

# The FCDAC STRATEGIZER

Leading the way to a  
healthier Forsyth County

June 2023 Volume 3 Issue 2

Receive Our Newsletter



2023

## "CONNECTION IS THE OPPOSITE OF ADDICTION"

This quote made during the panel discussion at the **Walk for Recovery** is still loudly resonating with many FCDAC Council Members. Summer, when many people have a vacation on their minds, and even if you are working regular hours, Summer provides excellent opportunities to **develop and create connections**. Here's one Council Member reflecting on what making connections looks like in his life.

**Adam Miller**

My personal thoughts on making a connection are to 1) God, 2) Self, and 3) Others, in that specific order. Being in touch with God helps us accept and connect to our true, authentic selves. That, in turn, helps us in our capacity for connection with others.

**Adam Miller** is the Director of Outreach at *No Longer Bound*.



At "The Bound," we teach that a relationship is like a bridge that travels to and from a destination (from us to others and back). The components of this bridge, the pillars that support



the bridge consist of "**The 4 C's**," Contact, Communication, Compassion, and Commitment. Incorporating the 4 C's into each component - God, Self, and Others - is necessary to build healthy relationships that give and receive love. For the God component, I do a daily devotional; I spend quiet time with Him daily in the mornings, attend church on Sundays, and try my best to listen to others He may be using to speak to me. I try my best to let Him tell me who I am instead of listening to negative self-talk.

For the Self component, I am active and intentional in self-care. I engage in activities that stroke my creative spirit, art, cutting hair, and building motorcycles. For pleasure, I enjoy taking adventures, riding motorcycles, and playing video games with friends. Regular 12-step meeting attendance and mentoring others in recovery are some disciplines that serve me well.

For the Others component, I am trying my best to fight my selfish and self-centered nature by putting others' needs before mine and serving those around me.

## FCDAC Council Meeting, Work and Programs Round-up



### Happy Summer!

Indeed, the opposite of addiction is **CONNECTION!**

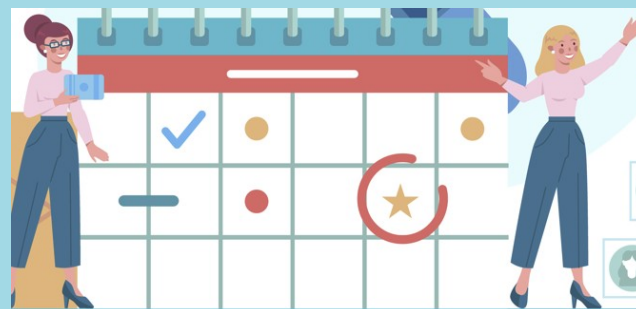
Our DFC (drug-free coalition) is about **preventing alcohol and drug misuse** before that octopus wraps its tentacles around the lives of our

citizenry, especially our young. As Adam Miller eloquently describes his recipe for connection, I am reminded to return to fundamental values and ideals. Be real, be honest, and be radically generous with my time and love.

FCDAC is one of a few Drug-Free Coalitions across Georgia. In our community, we seek to collaborate with prevention-minded people and organizations interested in advancing our mission. The ever-expanding membership of FCDAC builds relationships, and together we support and assist each other in a multi-pronged approach to educate, advocate, and empower the community.

The point is that we are **building relationships with people passionate about prevention**. Our relationships with people in these organizations will allow us to assist in their efforts and ideas to prevent addiction by preventing and delaying exposure to alcohol and drugs.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Our next FCDAC Council Meeting is on  
**Wednesday, July 5**  
**8 a.m.**  
**United Way Offices**

# Council Meeting Highlights

- Introductions by **Director Rachel Kayden**. Special thanks to **Adam Miller** and the **No Longer Bound team** for hosting our monthly meeting. What a beautiful facility!
- Announcements: **Vinyak Menon**, **Youth Sector leader**, has three Deterra Drug Deactivation Systems boxes for distribution. His campaign has distributed 10,000 bags across the county. Contact Vinyak [HERE](#).

**Maureen Bixler**, Live Life Counseling, will start a youth (IOP for 13-18 years old) trauma-focused substance abuse program that runs Mon, Wed, and Thurs 5-8 pm. If you would like more information, [you can click here](#).

On **September 23rd**, FCDAC will co-host an event with the **Georgia Recovery Council** at the City Center. It's a **bus tour through GA**, and the **finale will be in Forsyth**. Watch for upcoming details in the newsletter and flyers.

- Introduction of **Dr. Weston Robins**. He is the founder, President, and CEO of **Eternal Strength**. Dr. Weston Robins is a licensed professional counselor and a visionary leader in the realm of Psychology. He holds a Ph.D. in Consciousness and Society from the University of West Georgia. Dr. Robins has been an advocate in practice and academia for a truly humanistic and person-centered approach to serving youth across levels of care, from emergency stabilization to finding their own purpose and spiritual path. In addition to his work at Eternal Strength, Dr. Robins teaches at University. He is actively engaged in research and study in the arenas of radical youth work, family systems work, and the field of Psychology, Counseling & Psychotherapy.

- Counseling & Psychotherapy as a whole.

1. Theories of Addiction Causation-
  - Biological
  - Psychological
  - Sociocultural
  - Developmental
  - Spiritual

2. Instead of looking at addiction through only one of the five theories, I believe it's time to take a trans contextual/multidisciplinary approach because none of the theories operates within an individual in isolation. Each theory has realities that impact the individual. None can contain the complete answer because each one is connected and affected by the other within the complex nature of the individual. We need to think of it like the workings of an ecosystem. Our biology is impacted by our psychology, which is affected by our culture, which is influenced by our developmental age and spirituality.

3. "I believe that addiction and anybody that has encountered it has a beautiful essence and incredible quality, and when channeled appropriately, it can be absolutely amazing. That's rarely talked about. Often we only see its horror, damages, and deficits. People often feel damaged and broken by the addiction experience, but when they realize the same energy that took them into the darkness of addiction, if managed positively, that same energy can take them into wholeness and fantastic life."

4. Our model uses **creative arts** to connect to the deepest part of the client. Things like drawing, painting, acting, dance, music, writing, poetry, pottery/ceramics, and more. Any creative art that

touches an individual is a pathway for them to express the emotions inside and a doorway to their healing. Creativity brings them to a place where they know themselves and are fully seen and heard in the Community. That is incredibly healing. You only ever feel true Community



and heard in the community, that is incredibly healing. You only get 100% of the community when you feel fully seen and heard. We all know what it feels like to be surrounded by people and still feel alone. When you encounter it, it is the best medicine.

5. Our model can be integrated into other models and programs. Our model creatively uses creative arts to unlock the client's heart and emotions inside a community environment. That is why community involvement and regular community events are vital. At its best, this model could work well in a collaborative effort between many organizations.

6. All our counseling is centered on person-centered, humanistic, and relational in its scope. The ability to have relationships and connections builds sacred trust and sacred space where individuals can open up and say what is happening deep within them.

7. I want to finish with these quotes from others "I work on myself to help others, and I help others to work on myself. I can't do other's work; I can only work on myself." And "When we let our light shine, we unconsciously give others permission to do the same."

8. Eternal Strength is a private a-la-carte customized operation. We meet with the family for an initial consultation and then formulate an initial plan, a wrap-around support approach of all the theories, which is reviewed and course-corrected monthly. We have financial aid program for those who need that. **Available to everyone in the Community are our monthly events.** We have 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday parents/teen support at Maple Street Biscuit that is also open to anyone.

- In closing, Director Rachel emphasized that the council's point is prevention. We take this information, and it becomes our responsibility to go to the Community and tell others. If any of our FCDAC members want to do a program, or event, put up a billboard, distribute deterra bags, or whatever, the council is here to help. We want to build a healthy community. Our goal is to work downstream before addiction happens. Let's work hard and keep moving forward.

## Community Outreach, Youth, Members, and Partners

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

#### Parent Partner's Corner

By Ashley Dickerson and Marti Rovedo

**As school** is out and Summer break begins, Marti Rovedo and Ashley Dickerson are planning Back To School opportunities to connect with parents and share our strengths, hope, and experience. We met with Kristin Keith with the Forsyth County Student Support Department. We discussed ways to increase exposure to our Parent Program among the school administrators as they plan for the Fall events involving step-up programs, PTO events, or any other events parents may attend. We provided Kristin with the alarming statistical data collected from over 200 surveys completed by students at Gateway and Forsyth Academy. These statistics are why these two moms tirelessly seek parent audiences whose children are entering middle school and high school.

While Summer vacation is often a welcome break from chaotic schedules, it can lead to isolation and a lack of connection. Whether or not your child suffers from substance use disorder, staying connected over the Summer is important for youth and parents. Influencing youth to work a summer job or engage in volunteer activities can help create new connections and build confidence. Setting boundaries is the best way to influence our youth. For example, offer an allowance for



**Ashley Dickerson** is co-chair of [Parents4FDCAC](#).

Her personal journey as a parent of a child who suffers from SUD covers a lot of pain, but also a lot of hope. Ashley shares with other parents to reduce the shame and stigma and help start the dialog and support resources. She contributes her insights monthly to the *Strategizer*." To reach her, [CLICK HERE](#).



**Marti Rovedo** is co-chair of [Parents4FDCAC](#).



way to influence our youth. For example, offer an allowance for volunteering or other activities outside the home that create positive connections. They will still make connections if they can land a job and earn their own money!

When a family struggles with substance use disorder, you can use boundaries to influence youth to engage in a recovery program like FullCircle. Engaging in a recovery program results in an allowance; not participating means no allowance. Parents need connection with other parents who understand having a youth struggling with substance use disorder. We encourage them to seek relationships through programs such as Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL), or the FullCircle parent program (if the child participates). Summer is also a great time to connect as a family. Possibly set Sunday as Family Day to hike, hang out at the lake, or go bowling. Do anything that allows fun and conversation to build family connections and enjoy your Summer!



She is a volunteer parent advisor for an under-18 recovery program in Nashville. Having a child who started their recovery journey before turning 18, Marti is passionate about sharing her strength, hope, and experience to educate and eliminate the stigma with parents

To reach her,

[CLICK HERE](#)

## YOUTH OUTREACH-SCHOOL NEWS



### Don't let Gaming Rob You of Connecting! or Does Gaming Prevent You from Connecting?



SHATTER-PROOF.

#### Presence of Mind: Healthy Gaming vs. Gaming Overload\*

What does healthy gaming look like? What are signs that your gaming may be an issue? Find out how you can support yourself and others with meaningful tools to manage gaming overload!

This short interactive video will help you understand these questions:

- What are the good things about being a gamer?
- Why are games so appealing?
- How can you tell if your gaming is becoming an issue?
- What can you do if you're worried about the gaming habits of your friend – or your own?

\*This segment is Part 5 of CADCA's Presence of Mind series. In it, you'll learn that the number of hours you game doesn't mean you have a problem – a problem is when you cannot stop gaming and participate in real life.

[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

## OUR PARTNERS IN PREVENTION

Lunch 'n Learn, May 16  
Cumming Home Ministries





**Britt Parramore**  
**Founder at PathLight Counselig, LLC**  
**Woodstock, Georgia**



Photo credit: Council member **Nancy Smallwood**-  
Thanks!

**Karen Rivera (L), Executive Director of Cumming Home Ministries and FCDAC member**, introduced Guest Speaker **Britt Parramore (R)** at the **Lunch 'n Learn** on May 16 at Cumming Home Ministries.

**Cumming Home Ministries, a 501c3 non-profit organization**, is a *no-cost service* providing counseling, treatment assessments, and recovery sponsorships to recovery partners.

For more information, [Click Here](#)

### What is Cumming Home Ministries?

Homelessness is an issue in Forsyth County and is not just for drug addicts and alcoholics. Cumming Home Ministries (CHM) started in 2010 because of one such man in a tent.

CHM provides a Christ-centered home to over 150 homeless men needing and wanting to make positive long-term changes in their lives. We have seen men gain sobriety and become active members of society.

A vicious cycle contributes to homelessness: reintegration into society is more successful with a transitional housing option. CHM's nine-month housing program provides the opportunity for men to hear of the Lord's love for them, experience stability, build healthy supportive relationships, develop life skills and good work ethics, continue long-term recovery, obtain needed documents for secure full-time stable employment, budget, and step out of their past of just surviving to thrive. Our Ministry provides transportation to/from work and GED and career training, supplements minor health care and counseling needs, and communication with Probation Officers.

CHM also serves the Community in many ways. CHM is an approved non-profit for completing Community Service hours, we partner with a Prison Ministry, and our Thrift Store donates books to the County Jail. Our Store supports displaced families with clothing and household essentials, gives out free baked goods and backpacks to area schools, clothing and blankets to other area homeless shelters, sponsors an Annual Free Health Fair, and partners with many other local non-profits.

### Lunch 'n Learn

On Tuesday, May 16, Cumming Home Ministries presented Guest Speaker **Britt Parramore**, founder of Pathlight Counseling. Pathlight Counseling in Woodstock, GA, specializes in treating Addictive Disorders. It utilizes **positive psychology** and Biblically sound principles to promote health and change.

"**Positive Psychology** is the study of conditions, processes, and characteristics that contribute to optimal functioning," Parramore stated. It focuses on the client's strengths and less on their weaknesses, helping the client create new goals to utilize these strengths. The results of positive psychology proved overwhelming improvement and thriving in the lives of those clients.

[Click Here](#) for the Cumming Home Ministries FB page and watch the entire fascinating presentation!



A message from our partner in prevention,  
John Bringuel, MA, RBF, TPNPC, ICPS, Prevention / Intervention Program Manager  
The Council on Alcohol and Drugs



Dear Collaborative Members and Stakeholders,

I want to share with you a new resource from the Georgia Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Initiative Collaborative. It is called the **Prescription Drug Use, Misuse, Abuse, and Overdose Toolkit**. It provides information and resources to community members and healthcare professionals that offer awareness, education, and prevention solutions about the risks of misusing or abusing prescription drugs.

[CLICK HERE](#)

## A CALL FOR ADVOCACY

### A Call for State Advocacy Effort



The pot industry and its lobbyists want to keep the dangerous Delta-8 THC loophole that legalized hemp-derived pot products containing as much as 40% THC open in HB 458 S. This will further their addiction-for-profit model.

Delta-8 THC and other hemp-derived psychoactive products are addictive and harmful to the brain. There is no federal age limit for buying Delta-8 THC, so these products are sold to kids throughout Georgia in gas stations and online. The Georgia General Assembly can act and ban these dangerous pot products.

These products, like Delta-8 THC, were made legal through the poorly written hemp legalization provisions of the 2018 Farm Bill. The Georgia Senate is considering a bill that could contain a provision closing the Delta-8 loophole in all cannabis and hemp products.

Could you contact your State Senator as soon as possible? **Using your home address to send messages**, let them know you want the Delta-8 loophole closed in Georgia in House Bill 458 S. You

can find your State Senator's contact information by going [HERE](#).

## Members teaching Members

### Making Connections with Others Key to Health



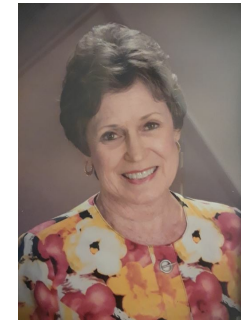
**NO LONGER BOUND**



I joined the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council soon after its establishment in 2010. One of our goals is to make Forsyth citizens aware of the prevalence of drug use among today's youth and to educate our community about the increase in drug-related deaths among our youth. We also want to be a resource for learning

about support opportunities available in our county where youth and young adults struggling with the challenges of sobriety can meet and/or live with others seeking a life beyond their past addiction. Many organizations promote a healthy lifestyle among youth and young adults and their families, and many of these organizations can now be found in Forsyth. In fact, these opportunities increase each year. As with many worthwhile accomplishments, "It takes a village."

The importance of feeling connected with a group has long been recognized by psychologists as a vital human requirement, following physiological and safety needs in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This sheds light on the value of joining groups whose members have the common purpose of living a clean and sober life away from the presence of drugs, alcohol, or other addictive substances. The speaker at our June Drug Awareness Council meeting, Dr. Wes Robins, is the founder of this type of organization. Dr. Robins and a long-time friend, Zac Sweat, founded Eternal Strength Experiential Youth Center. It is a comprehensive mental health care center for ages 10-25. This 8500 square foot therapeutic youth location includes an art room, recording studio, gym, video game arena, lounge with pool table, meditation room, and a rock-climbing wall. The goal is to help former addicts channel the energy of addiction appropriately to accomplish creativity and productivity.



**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!



Throughout his presentation, Dr. Robins emphasized the importance of CONNECTIONS in various ways.

He used the example of our fingers which are connected by the gap between each finger.

(1) He labeled the thumb to represent the biomedical: brain chemistry, DNA, and neurological components.

(2) The index finger represents the psychological, and Dr. Robins explained that something which happens in a person's life can lead to addiction.

(3) The middle finger represents the impact of sociocultural factors, such as removing American Indians from their culture and land.

(4) The ring finger represents Developmental rhetoric and language to talk about all youth as one



(4) The ring finger represents Developmental, Metabolic and language to talk about all youth as one group by using terms such as "rebellious."  
(5) The pinky finger represents the Spiritual aspect of one's life. This emphasizes the importance of turning to something larger than yourself.

The location of our June meeting was on the campus of **No Longer Bound (NLB)**. It is an organization in Forsyth County where many men have succeeded in achieving sobriety. No Longer Bound was founded in 1990 by Mike Harden, who had returned in 1969 from the Vietnam War addicted to drugs and alcohol.

Although NLB has existed since 1990, they moved to their present location only a few years ago so they would have room to help a greater number. They are now in a dormitory that houses 56 beds, and we met in their dining hall, the newest addition to their campus. No Longer Bound is a faith-based, long-term addiction recovery and clinical treatment program for men 18 years and older. It is a 12-month program and is licensed by the state of Georgia. Since 1990, over 1300 men have overcome addiction through the NLB program. They use a staff of clinical therapists, certified counselors, and medical professionals, and their program includes individual counseling, group therapy, and family therapy. NLB is one more example of a place in Forsyth County where people can form a CONNECTION with a group to regain a sober and purposeful life in which they can reach their unique potential and make a positive contribution to society.

## NEWS FOR YOU

### LOCAL NEWS

#### Rx Summit 2023 Highlights



#### Rx Summit 2023 Highlights

Take a look! Can you spot any of our FCDAC reps in the video? Commissioner Cindy Mills, Matt Meyer, Adam Miller, and Lindsey Simpson attended the Summit in Atlanta April 10-13. There were nearly 3,000 attendees who listened and learned about effective strategies and best practices for prevention, treatment, and recovery. It was announced that **next year's Summit will return to Atlanta, April 1-4, 2024**. Will you be there?

### STATE NEWS

#### Fentanyl Overdose Clusters in North GA



#### District 2 Public Health

Zachary Taylor, M.D., M.S., Health Director  
1280 Athens Street • Gainesville, Georgia 30507  
PH: 770-535-5743 • FAX: 770-535-5958 • [www.phdistrict2.org](http://www.phdistrict2.org)

May 17, 2023

Dear Community Partner,

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has identified a **cluster of fentanyl-involved overdoses that have occurred in North Georgia, specifically in the city of Gainesville located in Hall County**. We are aware of four overdoses that are associated with the cluster. Preliminary information indicated that the overdoses may have been caused by fentanyl. Persons who overdosed also reported using marijuana, cocaine and/or alcohol.

On May 7, at least four patients were seen at a local hospital. Patients reported consuming marijuana, cocaine, and drinking alcohol. Review of medical records confirmed the presence of fentanyl by a toxicology screening. All patients tested positive for fentanyl. DPH is continuing to investigate this situation; we do not have any additional details at this time and this information may change.

*It is critical that persons who use drugs understand that there is a risk of overdose when using stimulants or other drugs that may be mixed with fentanyl or other synthetic opioids.*

If you see unusual overdose activity or suspect the presence of a substance and/or drug mixed with potent synthetic opioids in your area, please notify the DPH Drug Surveillance Unit at [ga.opioidprogram@dph.ga.gov](mailto:ga.opioidprogram@dph.ga.gov). To report an overdose which may be related to these drugs or for toxicological advice, call the Georgia Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.

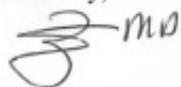
**Whenever possible, naloxone should be carried when working in an environment where an overdose may occur.**

- Georgia has a standing order for prescription of naloxone for overdose prevention, which makes naloxone available at any pharmacy without a prescription. For details on the standing order, please see the document available here: <https://dph.georgia.gov/document/document/standing-order/download>.
- When administering naloxone, please note that multiple doses may be necessary.

DPH will continue to monitor this situation and provide updates as they are warranted. We ask that you continue to keep DPH informed of any relevant updates. For more information about overdose prevention and Georgia's response please visit <https://dph.georgia.gov/stopopioidaddiction>.

Thank you for all that you do.

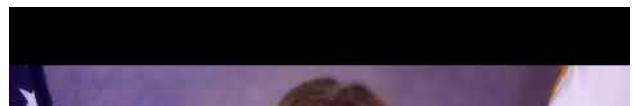
Sincerely,



## NATIONAL NEWS

**107,375 people DIED** in the United States in 2021 of drug overdoses and drug poisonings with a staggering **67 percent** of those deaths

involving synthetic opioids like fentanyl.



# MAY FENTANYL AWARENESS DAY

9, amplified the nationwide efforts to increase awareness and decrease demand for fentanyl, a highly addictive synthetic

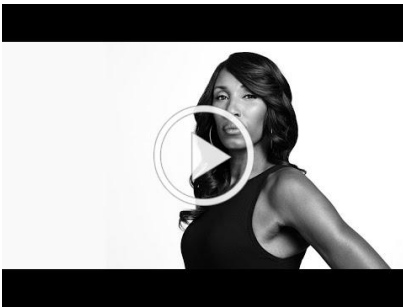
opioid that continues to drive the overdose epidemic. Fentanyl is involved in more deaths of Americans under 50 than any cause of death, including heart disease, cancer, homicide, suicide, and other accidents.



National Fentanyl Awareness Day - Administrator Milgram PSA

## FYI

### Natural High Resource



Lisa Leslie knew that focusing on school and basketball was the only way to reach her dreams. Her determination led her to countless WNBA awards and four Olympic gold medals. Drug use affect the entire family, not just those who misuse drugs. Respect for her family helped Lisa to choose to stay clear of drugs.

### "It's Just Weed"\*

15 things about marijuana that the cannabis industry doesn't want you to know

"It's just weed." Many parents have that thought. Those are the words that still haunt the parents of [Johnny Stack](#). Johnny got involved with marijuana at an early age and by age 19 he had developed **cannabis-induced psychosis**. Johnny had hallucinations; he thought the mob was chasing him and he ran off a building to his death.

[Brian Smith](#) loved weed. Then the vomiting began. The teenager and his mother couldn't believe what the doctors said was causing his dreadful abdominal pain and vomiting: smoking weed. **He developed and died from cannabis hyperemesis syndrome (CHS). He was 17.**

[Dr. Roneet Lev, FACE](#) is an emergency department and addiction physician and served as the first Chief Medical Officer at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. Dr. Lev says that he

and his colleagues see marijuana poisonings daily in the ED with **"CHS and Cannabis Induced Psychosis** being the most common marijuana-associated daily diagnosis in emergency departments across our country."

1. Today's marijuana is not just a plant - it is genetically modified, potent, and contains toxins

The cannabis products sold at dispensaries have been genetically altered for a high

9. Marijuana is not safer than alcohol

One of the common talking points of Big Marijuana is that it is safer than alcohol. While there is no doubt alcohol is a health hazard, scientifically and medically, they are different. They don't need to compete on



percentage of THC, making the drug very potent. The marijuana plant of 1995 averaged 4 % THC. Today's plant products contain THC levels as high as 17 – 40%. High-potency marijuana is also sold in food and drink products. Concentrate cannabis products such as shatters, dabs, and oils are made in a lab and can have THC concentrations of nearly 90% - that is like smoking over 100 joints from 1995.

## 2. Marijuana can have contaminants and toxins.

The cannabis industry is poorly regulated. The public has no FDA protection or protective standards, allowing for various toxins, carcinogens, and contaminants. Fungal contamination of cannabis flower is well known. The marijuana plant has over 400 chemicals and can include toxins such as [heavy metals like lead and mercury](#) as well as [carcinogens](#).

## 3. The drug industry targets youth

It is well known that the tobacco industry [targeted youth](#). Big tobacco learned that younger age of onset and higher nicotine content, increases addiction, and therefore increases profits. Big marijuana has learned and improved upon Big tobacco and sells candies and drinks that targets children and young adults.

While the legal age is 18 or 21, the scientific age for an adult brain is 25 - 27. Addiction is [up to 7 times](#) higher for a growing brain than an adult brain. We would have less addiction if the population abstained from any addictive substance until age 25.

## 4. Marijuana stunts brain growth

The [brain continues to grow](#) until the mid-20s by synaptic pruning and myelination. Synaptic pruning is a selection process where the brain keeps pathways that are used and cuts out pathways that are not used. From birth to age 25 is the most critical period to learn and develop strong, healthy neuronal pathways. Marijuana steals away healthy pathways. The last part of the brain to develop myelin is the frontal lobe, where the executive function of the brain, decision-making, motivation, and

judgment, happens. Marijuana stunts this growth of the brain.

## 5. Marijuana is Addictive

Cannabis use disorder or addiction is defined using the same [DSM V 11-point criteria](#) as alcohol use disorder or opioid use disorder. [Three out of 10](#) cannabis users develop addiction, but those starting [before age 18 are 7 times](#) more likely to develop addiction.

[Cannabis withdrawal is reported by up to 30% of regular users and in 50-90% of heavy users.](#) Many cannabis users do not

different. They don't need to compete on who is worse; in fact, they are addictive and cause more problems when used together.

Young adults with alcohol poisoning sober quickly in a few hours. Marijuana is a lipid or fat-soluble molecule that goes to the brain and sticks around for a while.

There are no receptors for alcohol in the brain or body, while the brain and body have many cannabinoid receptors that can be altered by marijuana. People who drink alcohol or get drunk rarely develop [psychosis at a young age](#). [Psychosis associated with marijuana](#) can happen at first use or after several times and happens at a younger age.

## 10. Marijuana is not safer than tobacco

Smoking and vaping of any product is bad for your lungs. Smoked cannabis products can [contain similar toxins to tobacco products](#). In fact, [vaping cannabis is worse for the lungs than tobacco](#).

A study compared second hand smoke from a Marlboro cigarette, a marijuana joint, and a vape, found that a marijuana joint produces [3.5 times as much secondhand smoke as a Marlboro cigarette](#).

A [radiology study](#) compared the CT scan of chronic marijuana smokers, versus tobacco smokers and non-smokers. The CT findings for marijuana smokers showed the worst effects.

## 11. Marijuana is not recommended for pain

The majority of people who use marijuana as medicine, claim it helps with pain. However, cannabis is contraindicated in patients who have an opioid use disorder according to the [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#). [Concurrent marijuana and long-term opioid use does not improve pain](#). [Cannabis use increased the risk of opioid use disorder in a study of 34,653 participants](#).

## 12. Marijuana is not recommended for seizures

There is false and dangerous messaging that marijuana is good for seizures. In fact, it decreases the [seizure threshold](#) and [increases the risk of seizures](#). CBD, cannabidiol, is available in prescription form as [Epidiolex](#), and is recommended for a select subset of babies with a rare seizure disorder called Dravet Syndrome or Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome. These babies are not smoking pot or using any type of THC products. CBD is pharmacologically distinct from THC.

## 13. Driving while using marijuana can be deadly

People may think driving under the influence of marijuana makes you drive slow. That may have been true 15 years ago, but today's pot is more potent and

believe they suffer from withdrawal until they understand that the symptoms of cannabis withdrawal are different than alcohol or opioid withdrawal. The common symptoms of cannabis withdrawal are irritability, anxiety, insomnia, headache, and significant cravings for marijuana. Typically, these symptoms last for about two weeks after cessation.

## 6. Marijuana is a risk factor for psychosis and schizophrenia

As a physician I can write a prescription for FDA approved THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana in the form of dronabinol (Marinol) with a maximal dose of 20 mg (less than half of a 1990 marijuana joint). The listed [FDA warning for dronabinol](#) for low dose THC includes neuropsychiatric adverse reactions.

High potency THC has a greater association with psychosis, a symptom of misinterpreting reality by hallucinations, delusions or paranoia. Large European studies associated high potency THC, defined at over 10% concentration in plant-based products, with [5-fold increased odds ratio](#) of developing a psychotic disorder. A study published in [Lancet](#) of 10 studies including 7390 patients showed a dose-response between frequency of cannabis and risk of psychosis. Furthermore, [states with liberal cannabis laws have increased psychosis associated with cannabis](#).

Not everyone who smokes tobacco will develop cancer, heart disease or emphysema, but it is a known risk factor. Similarly, marijuana is a risk factor for psychosis which can turn into permanent schizophrenia.

## 7. Marijuana targets the heart

While the brain is the number one target for THC, the heart is number two. The [FDA label](#) for pharmaceutical grade THC, dronabinol, includes cardiac toxicity. Patient with cardiovascular disease should be cautioned about cannabis use related to their individual medical diagnosis, [per the American Heart Association](#). High potency THC behaves as a stimulant. There are

associations with heart attack, stroke, and irregular heart rhythms.

## 8. Marijuana can make you scromit

[Cannabis Hyperemesis Syndrome \(CHS\)](#) is associated with long-term cannabis use, typically of smoked products. The symptoms of CHS have been described as "scromiting," screaming, and vomiting. There are reported deaths with CHS caused by electrolyte imbalance. The cure for cannabis hyperemesis syndrome is the cessation of marijuana use, which is easier said than done since people with this disorder most likely have an addiction.

ago, but today's pot is more potent and acts as a stimulant. Traffic fatalities involving cannabis are often associated with high speed.

Drugged driving is a public health issue that is growing. [A study of 191 regular cannabis users](#) tested their driving ability in a simulator after smoking marijuana. It took 4.5 hours to return to baseline, although the driver perceived that they were not impaired.

Overall, [marijuana users were about 25% more likely to be involved in a crash](#) than drivers with no evidence of marijuana use. Marijuana legalization resulted in a [5.8% increase in injury crash rates and 2.3% increase in fatal crash rates](#).

If you smoke marijuana, wait at least 4.5 hours before getting behind the wheel. Like with alcohol, refuse to be a passenger of an impaired driver.

## 14. Babies and Seniors are being poisoned.

Sadly, [the number one poisoning in children under the age of six is marijuana](#). Marijuana poisoning for this age group [has increase 13.3 fold](#) from 2004 to 2018 with 15% requiring ICU care. Two babies a day are being treated at the San Diego [Children's Hospital](#) for marijuana poisoning. The most common culprit is marijuana gummies.

Adults over 65 have suffered an [increase of 1804%](#) in emergency visits related to marijuana poisoning between 2005 and 2019. Older adults tend to be on medications that have drug interactions with cannabis products or have impaired renal or liver function that slows metabolism. People have suffered hemorrhages because of cannabis interaction with their blood thinners. Check out [Drugs.com](#) drug interaction and enter cannabis for THC or cannabidiol for CBD to learn of the hundreds of drug interactions.

## 15. Weed whacks your DNA

Marijuana is genotoxic, meaning it can damage your DNA. Several studies have shown that cannabis can [alter male sperm DNA](#) which is associated with autism. Cannabis has been linked as a [teratogen](#)

[causing congenital abnormalities](#) to exposed fetus. It is also associated with [a rise in pediatric cancers](#).

For the protection of the next generation, you may want to abstain from cannabis for 3 months before conceiving.

## Treatment

Substance use disorder is a treatable chronic relapsing disease of the brain. If you or someone you know is struggling, please reach out for help. Treatment is possible.

\*Excerpts from [Aish.com](https://www.aish.com) article by [Dr. Roneet Lev, FACEP](https://www.aish.com)

March 26, 2023 <https://www.campusdrugprevention.gov/15-things-cannabis-industry-doesnt-want-you-know>



Wellness for Families Series



Mindful Art Practices for Navigating Anxiety, Stress and Fear  
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### Free Creativity and Art Workshop

"When life is uncertain our imagination can make the unknown the great adventure of our lives." - Edvique Shaver

Saturday, June 17, 2023, 9:30 am-12:00 pm  
608 Veterans Memorial Boulevard Cumming, Georgia 30040

Space is limited, register here: <https://form.jotform.com/231383592174156>

470-253-8564  
[theconnectionforsyth.org](https://www.theconnectionforsyth.org)

## Foundations for a Drug-Free World

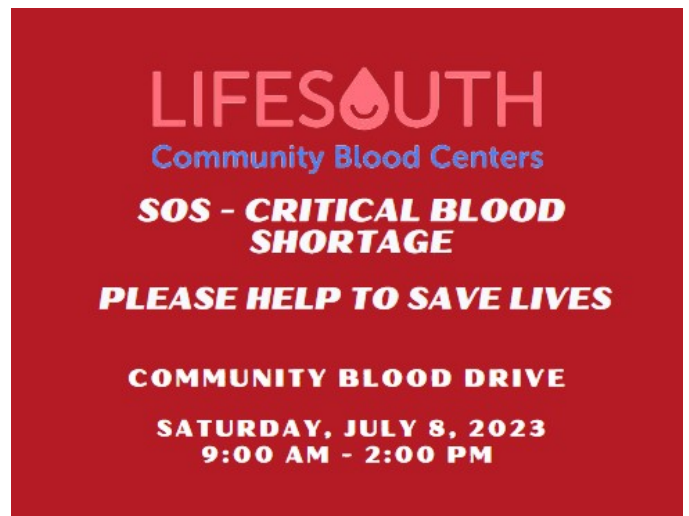
Are you ready for a free interactive online course? This series of interactive Truth About Drugs courses have been designed so you can learn the truth about drugs at your own pace. Find out what drugs are, what they are made of, their short- and long-term effects, and view real stories from real people about each of the most popular drugs of choice.

[CLICK HERE TO BEGIN!](#)



THE CONNECTION

# 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY



**LIFESOUTH**  
Community Blood Centers

**SOS - CRITICAL BLOOD SHORTAGE**

**PLEASE HELP TO SAVE LIVES**

**COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE**

**SATURDAY, JULY 8, 2023**  
**9:00 AM - 2:00 PM**



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CUMMING, GA

# THE CONNECTION

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE CONNECTION @ 470-253-8564

# YOU MATTER

# BACK TO SCHOOL

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES GIVEAWAY

 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.

**VP VOICES**  
FOR PREVENTION

2023  
**YOUTH**  
Advocacy Summit

Substance Abuse Prevention | Suicide Prevention  
Mental Health Promotion

**FREE Event for youth ages 12-18**

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

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

Visit our Website

On the Calendar

# On the Calendar



## June

- National Safety Month
- Men's Health Month
  - Flag Day, June 14.
- Connection Art Workshop, June 17, 9:30-12 pm.
- **Father's Day**, Sunday, June 18.
- First Day of **Summer**, June 21.

## 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



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

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