



The FCDAC STRATEGIZER

Leading the way to a healthier Forsyth County

JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER LIST

November 2022 Volume 2 Issue 7

NOVEMBER'S ATTITUDE IS GRATITUDE!



WE'RE THANKFUL FOR PREVENTION!

www.forsythcountydrugawarenesscouncil.com

As FCDAC continues to grow and expand, we are grateful to **YOU**, our friends, and partner collaborators in prevention! As a cooperative team of many people and organizations, parents, teachers, counselors, medical and behavioral professionals, and private and public, local, state, and federal partners, **we work with one goal in mind: to empower the citizens of Forsyth County to live their healthiest lives by avoiding the misuse of drugs.** The *Strategizer* is a tool FCDAC uses to share information valuable to you, your programs, and your families. Please consider sharing it with anyone in your sphere of influence who might risk turning to drugs.



**SAFE (Stop
Addiction
Fatality
Epidemic)
Project** has

developed programs to connect veterans, active-duty service members, and their families to the resources they need to address mental health challenges and substance use disorders.

DID YOU KNOW...

In 2021, over

30K

active-duty service members and veterans died by suicide.

Veterans are

2x

more likely to die from an overdose than any other member of society.

1 in 5

veterans experience mental health problems, including PTSD, major depression, and anxiety.

The **SAFE** programs focus on prevention by addressing these concerns and preparing service members and their families with tools to move from coping to thriving.

For more Veteran Resources from SAFE
[CLICK HERE](#)

Celebrate Veterans Day on November 11



On **November 11**, we remember and give thanks to all Veterans. This day is the anniversary of the signing of the armistice, which ended the World War I hostilities between the Allied nations and Germany in 1918. We honor all service men and women who gave their lives defending our freedoms and all **VETERANS!**

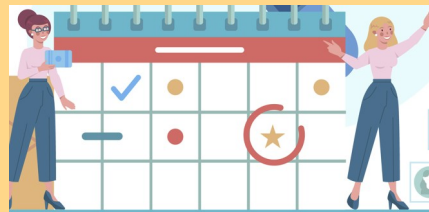
Rachel Kayden Steps into the Role of FCDAC Director

FCDAC Work and Programs Round-up

Kayden's Korner

I was humbled and thrilled when Commissioner Mills approached me for the position of Director of FCDAC. I am excited to be a part of this growing and thriving Council. When I joined as the Program Coordinator, I attended CADCA Academy.

The Academy emphasized that goals are set by



**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS!**
for

DECEMBER'S COUNCIL MEETING!

WEDNESDAY, December 7, 2022,

8-9 A.M.

UNITED WAY OFFICE



community collaboration. This means that under the umbrella of FCDAC, members come and work together to create education and prevention programs, support the efforts of our collaborating partners, and become the go-to place for anyone looking for information or help with drug

misuse. Unified collaboration done well equals strong communities.

My role as director is facilitator and expeditor of the projects this collaboration wants to implement while guiding and synthesizing these projects to reflect our mission of education, advocating, and empowering community members and meet our grant requirements.

I cannot overemphasize my appreciation to you, our council members, and how crucial your involvement is to make a difference in Forsyth County. With your input, we will assess what is working and what needs to change to make our coalition the best it can be.

FCDAC DRUG PREVENTION SPEAKERS BUREAU SEMINAR

At the December Council meeting, there will be a **training seminar** for members representing the Council as **FCDAC DRUG PREVENTION SPEAKERS** in the community.

Our goal is to **develop a group of well-informed speakers** so we can begin implementing action from our Council Meeting discussions.

Coming Soon! Training for Youth who want to support FCDAC's prevention efforts. Dates for the training will be announced soon!

PLEASE JOIN US AT DECEMBER'S MEETING AND TRAINING!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT [RACHEL HERE](#)

Council Meeting Highlights, Community Outreach, Youth Council, Members and Partners

Rachel Kayden, formerly FCDAC's Project Coordinator, has accepted the new role of **FCDAC Director**. **Cindy Mills**, FCDAC Founder and Chairwoman, and member of the Board of County Commissioners, announced the selection of Kayden at the November 2nd Council Meeting.

Our **guest speaker** this month was **Matt Meyer**, CADC, CAC Program Director of the **Insight Program**. Matt is a long-time member and supporter of our Council. He has volunteered as part of FCDAC's School Drug Counselors outreach team, begun by Mitch Durdel. FCDAC's volunteer counselors gained access to Central Forsyth High School and North Forsyth High School, firstly addressing health classes and then establishing weekly small group sessions with students who expressed interest and need. Matt has been a Drug and Alcohol Counselor for over 20 years and has been Insight's Program Director since 2007.

Council Meeting Highlights

- **Commissioner Cindy Mills** introduced **Rachel Kayden** as the new **FCDAC Director**. Mills applauded our Council's growth but highlighted our critical need to demonstrate our value to the community and meet all grant expectations. "We want to be the go-to community resource for education and information on all things related to drug misuse. We are an umbrella organization, meaning we gather and collaborate with all the community, county, state, and even federal-level organizations so that anyone in Forsyth County will find we have every possible resource to assist them in fighting

drug misuse and all its dangers.

- Guest Speaker **Matt Meyer**, CADC, CAC Program Director **Insight Program**

1. **THC poses the highest risk** of addiction to our young adult and teen clients. **The concentration of**

1. The percentage of high school students that are addicted to our young adults and teen alcohol has increased. The concentration of **THC**, the chemical in **Marijuana** that makes you high, has risen to **80 to 90 percent**. That is significantly higher than the 4 to 5 percent THC of Marijuana used in the 1990s. We are seeing kids becoming **THC addicted** within a few weeks through vaping. Along with quickly becoming addicted, there is an increase in mental health diseases, **psychosis**, and **schizophrenia**, among these young **THC users**. Vaping and dab pens are readily available online and easily hidden from parents.
2. **Fentanyl** is and continues to be a huge life and death threat. Accidental overdose deaths are frequent because the synthetic drug is mixed with other drugs and is so potent, with the user frequently not even aware they are ingesting substances containing it. Fentanyl is a drug of choice for opioid-addicted. Still, I see more cases of younger drug users opportunistically accepting a pill at a party, not knowing it contains fentanyl, and overdosing.
3. Cindy brought up the need to **advocate against marijuana legalization** in the state legislature. (See **articles in May, June, July, and August *Strategizer* to learn how to use your voice to advocate.** [CLICK HERE](#)).
4. How can we best reach the parents with much more influence on their children than they think? **Matt** suggested **advancing the Council's speakers bureau** to speak to parent groups at churches and schools but do so at required parent-attended gatherings. **Speaking at teacher in-service meetings** was suggested, emphasizing behaviors teachers can be on the lookout for. Reaching the **principals** at their meetings may help us get into more schools to speak. Cindy wants to have a speaker vetting process to make sure the speakers who represent us are in keeping with our vision and mission.
5. Getting Mental Health assistance through counseling or a therapist is still **stigmatized** by parents. They would prefer help from doctors, who often go to prescriptions to combat depression. This often exacerbates the problems. Parents don't want to admit a drug problem in their child's school. Many teachers don't want to admit it either.
6. It was suggested to start reaching out to students and parents of 5th and 6th graders as they leave elementary school and enter middle school.
 - Rachel closed the meeting after asking for any announcements. She announced that this discussion, while informational, must motivate us to bring action items to the next meeting on Wednesday, December 7. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 am.

Welcome, New Council Member, Adam Miller



Adam Miller is the Director of Outreach at **No Longer Bound**. He told the *Strategizer*, "I want to contribute to the council by being a resource in Forsyth through my experiences and role as Director of Outreach at **No Longer Bound**. This program changed my life and gave me a heart that cares. FCDAC will help me become informed about other resources in the community."

Welcome, Adam!

My name is **Adam Miller**, and I work as the **Director of Outreach at No Longer Bound**. I grew up in St. Augustine, Florida. My addiction journey began following a car accident when I was hit by someone who was texting while driving. After a year and a half in pain and finally back surgery, I became addicted to prescription painkillers. Unable to work led to financial stress in my marriage, and I began taking painkillers to treat physical and emotional pain. Things got worse in my marriage, leading to divorce and the loss of relationships with my stepkids.

My life began to spiral into a pit. My drug use grew, leading me to sell drugs to afford my growing habit. Eventually, that

was not enough, which led to stealing and pawning things. Eventually, that was not enough, and I began robbing other drug dealers at gunpoint. That lasted for a couple of years until Valentine's Day of 2017 when utterly void of any love

NO LONGER BOUND

and Valentine's Day of 2017, which utterly void of any love for myself and lacking any hope for my life to change or improve, I shot up as much heroin as possible. I was hoping to overdose and die a painless death. I did overdose, but I was revived.

I awoke in a hospital handcuffed to the bed. I could see my mom reading my arrest report containing the 13 felonies. The charges were for the drugs I had in my possession and the drugs, my labs showed I had in my system. I was completely exposed, and I wanted to die even more than I did earlier that day. It was the worst day of my life, at least if you had asked me that day, that is what I would have told you.

I detoxed from heroin in jail (I wouldn't recommend that) and found myself in front of a judge. It was by no means the first time I found myself in that scenario, but it was the first drug-related court appearance. The judge said, "Mr. Miller, you

have two options, prison for 3-5 years or a year of treatment at a program called **No Longer Bound**. I didn't think recovery was possible for me, but I didn't want to go to prison, so I quickly elected the 2nd option. I was scared to embark on this journey and was pleasantly surprised to arrive somewhere where people seemed to genuinely care for me even though they didn't know me.

No Longer Bound is a Christian program, and I initially assumed I would be beaten over the head with the Bible. I was wrong; the focus there is a personal relationship with God. This relationship is fostered by having the men journal daily, ending each entry with a question for God. Then, you sit with this question allowing stillness and quietness so you can listen. By doing this, I learned to discern the loving voice of God. I found great comfort in it, particularly in times of struggle. The program was emotionally challenging, and I needed it, even though I didn't want it to be. I struggled to find the discipline within myself to comply with all rules.

Nine months into the program, the staff told me, "We love you, man, but your actions have consistently communicated that you don't want to be here. So we will ask you to leave, but you can return in 30 days if you are ready for what we offer." Like I always did, I called my mom, abusing her love and care for me, using her as a safety net so that I wouldn't feel the full weight of the consequences of my decisions. This time Mom was ready for me. She learned through **No Longer Bound's Family Recovery** valuable insight into what loving me needed to look like in this season of my life. Her response changed the course of my life. Playing the victim when I called her, I said, "Mom, they are kicking me out, but I can come back in 30 days, so I'm going to need to come home to Florida for a month, and then I'll come back." My mom replied, "Adam, we love you very much, but you can't come here. I have to go." She hung up. I imagined she bawled her eyes out because saying those words were extremely hard for her, but they were in my best interest. With no money, no car, no one in the state of Georgia I knew, and a phone still in evidence in the St. John's County Jail, I was left with no options.

I took a one-way Marta ride searching for **The Atlanta Mission Homeless Shelter**. I had never been to Atlanta and needed to figure out where to go with no phone to Google it. I boarded the train with a trash bag of clothes on a freezing October day. I journaled on the train ride and felt God was telling me to pursue Him. I read the map on the train and figured I'd get off at a stop that looked to be in the middle of downtown.

I got off and heard someone playing a moving rendition of "Amazing Grace" on one of the public pianos. It stopped me in my tracks. I broke down into ugly crying. It was freeing. I spoke awhile to the blind gentleman playing the piano, who told me he stayed at **The Atlanta Mission** and gave me good directions

Addiction is chaos. We know. We've been there.

No Longer Bound is a long-term, residential, Christ-centered program for men in addiction. We have a full staff of clinical therapists, recovery specialists, and medical professionals.

The **No Longer Bound Program** has four key components,

1. Long-term treatment
2. Faith-based
3. Graduates learn trades
4. Family Reconciliation.

Rescue, Regenerate, Reconcile.

Find out more by [CLICKING HERE](#)

gentleman playing the piano, who told me he stayed at the Atlanta Mission and gave me good directions and encouragement. I made my way to the Mission and quickly found myself in the minority, a younger white guy. When I found myself in that situation, I was defensive, fearing being victimized, manipulated, or threatened. I did what I'd learned to do and journaled about it. God said, "You are finding what you are looking for. You are looking for differences and are finding them. Look for similarities, and you will find them. People judge by appearance; I judge the heart." I needed to hear that, and I began interacting with everyone I could. I found some beautiful hearts.

After a day or two, I kept noticing an older white gentleman by himself day after day. The best way I can describe this guy- to provide imagery- is a dirty Santa. Disheveled at best, same clothes as the day before, and alone; always alone. I felt a nudge to interact with him, and I did. I quickly discovered he could not speak and began communicating with my journal and a pen. I said, "My name is Adam, and I've seen you the last couple of days; what is your name?" He said, "My name is John." I asked John, "What brings you here?" He said, "I was born deaf and mute, and I was abandoned at birth. I was placed in the foster system, and families would pity me and take me in for a while. Then they quickly discovered my complications were more than they had bargained for, and I would be sent back. I went through 13 families in the system. I have disabilities and health complications and have difficulty keeping a job."

Due to my life of addiction, I was incredibly selfish and self-centered. When John shared his story, I had my first experience with genuine empathy. My heart broke inside. If a heart could cry, mine sure was. I asked John, "Do you believe in God, and can I pray for you?" He read what I wrote, turned his head to the side, smiled, and began writing. Smiling and looking just like Santa, he had a twinkle in his eye when he handed the journal back. What he wrote changed me. He wrote, "I believe God loves me very much." I was floored and felt really convicted. This guy had so many reasons to hate the world, and I could feel gratitude radiating from him. It made me grateful for what I had and hopeful for my future. I learned never to underestimate someone's ability to teach me something and show me God's love.

I returned to **No Longer Bound** and started over on Day 1. I went another nine months and told my counselor that I was done. I was burnt out on keeping a rigid schedule and talking about my feelings all the time. He asked if I got what I came for, and I replied, "ya know what, I really believe I have." He said, "I think you have too, so what are you gonna do?" I said, "I'm going to go back to Florida; it's been my plan the whole last year and a half." He asked, "Have you asked God what He wants you to do?" A bit annoyed and embarrassed by the question, I replied, "No, I haven't." He said, "Take your journal to my office and ask Him." So I did. I asked God, "Do you want me to go back to Florida?" It was crickets; silence. I was frustrated. I told God, "Dude, I talk to you every day, and now, when I need guidance, I get nothing? What the heck, man?" The frustration subsided, and I thought maybe I was asking the wrong question. So I asked Him something else. I asked, "Do you want me to stay?" I quickly and clearly heard, "Grow where you are planted." This clear answer scared me. It was the opposite of what I wanted. It prompted my first out-loud conversation with God, telling him, "Look, man, I'm not gonna B.S. you because I think you already know everything I'm thinking, so I'll just come out and say it. I don't trust you. I love the idea and concept of trusting you, and I've met a lot of guys here that I believe trust you, but I don't."

At that moment, I had an epiphany, like God opened my head, put some wisdom in there, and closed it back up. I didn't trust God because I had never given Him a chance to show me I could trust. I sat at a crossroads, knowing that historically I made bad decisions and that I should not trust myself. Having clear marching orders from God, I said, "All right, man, I'm gonna do what you're telling me and hope that you show up, but I'm scared. I have no money, phone, job, or car, and I only know one person in the state of Georgia who is not currently in this program." God said, "Trust me. Pursue me, and I will always provide for your needs."

I called my roommate from **No Longer Bound**, who had since graduated, and told him, "I'm leaving **No Longer Bound**. God is telling me to stay, and I choose to be obedient. Can you help me?" He said, "Hold on, I'll call ya right back." He got me into a Christian Sober Living Home the same day with no money. The Sober Living Home trusted my word that I would pay them back. I felt touched that someone would trust me when I clearly did not deserve it. I woke up the next day wanting to honor the trust I had received. I

me when I clearly did not deserve it. I woke up the next day wanting to honor the trust I had received. I walked about a mile to the closest business and asked if they were hiring. They said they were, gave me an application, and asked me to return the following day for an interview with the owner. Now I didn't write "Sober Living" on the address portion of the application, I wrote the physical address. The owner read the address and asked, "That's that Sober Living there, isn't it? Would you mind telling me about that?" Everything in me screamed, "lie, lie, lie! Make it not sound bad." At that same moment, I felt the Holy Spirit prompt me to be honest and to trust that prompting. I chose to be honest, vulnerable, and transparent. He was noticeably surprised at the answer. He said, "Man, thank you for your honesty. Look, you applied for a labor position, but I'm also hiring for a manager, and I need someone I can trust. I've never had anyone be THAT honest with me. I feel like I can trust you, and I'd like to hire you for the manager position." I worked that job for about 6 months and was asked by the Sober Living Home to step into a leadership position managing one of their houses, which I did outside of my normal full-time manager position.

A little over a year later, I got a call from **No Longer Bound**. The program director said, "Hey man, we heard you're killing it, and we have a position open that we hope you'll accept. I asked about it, and when they told me the pay, I said, "Bro, that's \$10 less an hour than I'm making now. I just finished paying off debt and am saving for a car." The program director asked, "So, is that a no?" I said, "No, it's not, but let me pray about it and get back to you." I waited an entire week to pray about it because I was afraid of what God might ask me to do. When finally I asked God, "Do you want me to do this?" He quickly and clearly replied, "purpose over profit." I was angry. "You always ask me to do the opposite of what I want to do!" I began listing off reasons why, economically, that wouldn't work. He let me vent and then said, "Trust me." I exhaled, thought about it for a split second, and said, "all right, man." From now on, anything you tell me to do, I'm going to do it. I trust you."

I began working at **No Longer Bound** as a resident technician and taking online counseling courses. I did become a counselor, loving it for about 2 1/2 years. Our executive director called me for a meeting to create a new position for me, with the Mission of rescuing addicts who were still on the street suffering and needing the freedom that was available at **No Longer Bound**. I was comfortable in my counseling position, but God told me He wanted to use me in this position. Here I am. I desire to provide awareness of what we do, how we do it, and why we do it. No one works at **No Longer Bound** for the pay; we do it because we have experienced freedom through a personal relationship with God, and when you have it, you want it for others too. If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, please reach out to me. I'd love to tell you about God's program here and the scholarship that are available.

Thanks, Adam, for your moving story, your mission, and your heart! Welcome to FCDAC. If you want to contact Adam, [CLICK HERE](#).

YOUTH OUTREACH-SCHOOL NEWS

North Forsyth High School

Emily Ennis reports, "I put on a sober recreational event at North Forsyth this week called Flyswatter Hockey. The game is played exactly how it sounds! It's a version of hockey, except for using fly swatters and ping-pong balls. We play in the gym. About **40 students** came to the event and seemed to have a lot of fun! We gave out prizes (goodie bags) to the winners. The volunteers with me were **Gabby Breiten from Gateway Academy, Sophia Cook and Jaxson Savajian from The Full Circle Program, and Matt Meyer from The Insight Program**. This exercise demonstrates in a very hands-on experiential way to kids that sobriety can be fun.



I look forward to more social events with this great bunch of students.

South Forsyth High School's "Be Smart, Don't Start" Club Emphasizes Healthy Choices

at the Trunk or Treat Event on October 27



Be Smart Don't Start Club at South Forsyth High School's Annual Trunk or Treat. From left to right are Anvitha Ryali, Communications officer, Saesha Kapoor, President, and Anika Kwan, Public Relations officer.

Saesha Kapoor, FCDAC Youth Council President and President of South Forsyth High School drug awareness club, "Be Smart, Don't Start," and club officers Anvitha Ryali, Communications officer, and Anika Kwan, Public Relations officer, educated and increased awareness about the dangers of drugs at the school's Trunk or Treat event.

The event held in the school parking lot on October 27 treated approximately 100 Halloween-costumed visitors to their trunk, handing out candy and encouraging trick-or-treaters to stay away from alcohol and drugs.

Saesha founded the "Be Smart, Don't Start Club" at South Forsyth High School as a freshman after joining the FCDAC Youth Council. Saesha is currently a Senior at South.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

SHATTERPROOF

Shatterproof Speaker Series is a resource you can use. Each month, a Shatterproof team member interviews individuals who are working hard to reverse the addiction crisis. Check-out one example from the Shatterproof Speaker Series below.



Mike Majlak was a seventeen-year-old from a loving, middle-class family in Milford, Connecticut, when he got caught up in the opioid epidemic that swept the nation. His life was a wasteland of darkness and despair for nearly a decade.

Today Mike is a social media personality with millions of followers. He is an entrepreneur, marketer, podcaster, YouTuber, and author who hopes to use his voice to shine a light for those whose own lights have grown dim. This interview spotlights his story of escape from addiction told in his book, *The Fifth Vital*.





PARTNERS IN BUILDING DRUG-FREE COMMUNITIES

November Community Events From Our Friends at the Connection



THE CONNECTION

COMMUNITY FAMILY AND DOG-FRIENDLY HIKE

10:30 AM, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2022

Sims Lake Park
Turtle Trail
4600 Suwanee Dam Road
Suwanee, GA

For information contact kayla@theconnectionforsyth.org
470-253-8564

Empowering Wellness for Families Through Recovery

THE CONNECTION
Empowering WELLNESS through RECOVERY

**Thanksgiving
FOOD
DRIVE**

SHOW THANKFULNESS BY FEEDING THOSE IN NEED

THE CONNECTION IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH THE PLACE OF FORSYTH AND FORSYTH ACCOUNTABILITY COURT TO PROVIDE FOOD TO LOCAL FAMILIES IN NEED

Donations are due by Friday, November 18th, 2022.

NEEDED ITEMS:
Canned Corn, Stove Top Stuffing, Gravy Packet, Pumpkin Pie Mix, Evaporated Milk, Ready Made Pie Crust, Canned Yams, Mini Marshmallows, Canned Cranberry Sauce.

DROP OFF AT:
608 Veterans Memorial Blvd.
Cumming, GA 30040.
470-253-8564
www.theconnectionforsyth.org

THE CONNECTION

Thanksgiving
Pot Luck

THE CONNECTION

**HOLIDAY
PARTY**



12 noon - 3:30 pm, Sunday, November 20, 2022
608 Veterans Memorial Blvd., Cumming, GA

470-253-8564

theconnectionforsyth.org

Empowering Wellness for Families Through Recovery

*
18
DEC

*
12PM-
3PM



FESTIVE KARAOKE

& COOKIE EXCHANGE!

608 VETERANS MEMORIAL BLVD, CUMMING, GA 30040
BRING TWO DOZEN OF YOUR FAVORITE COOKIES TO EXCHANGE AND LEAVE WITH AN ASSORTMENT.

MEMBERS TEACHING MEMBERS

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE NOT THINGS

by Dana Bryan



Several years ago, I was looking for the perfect birthday card to send to a dear friend. I chose the third card I opened because of its message:

"THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE NOT THINGS. THEY ARE FRIENDS LIKE YOU."

Thanksgiving reminds us to try to slow down long enough to think of those things for which we are thankful. As I make my mental list, I realize the importance of the friends and family who have added so much to the quality of my life through their gift of love and time. Many of them are no longer living, but they will always be an essential part of my life through memories. These memories have lasted much longer than material gifts I may have received from them.

I remember the day my daughter, Lauren, went back to kindergarten after Christmas. The teacher asked each child to list

their favorite memories from Christmas. I was pleased that the first four things on Lauren's list were times we had spent together: making Christmas cookies, reading books, working puzzles, and watching favorite movies. Only after these experiences were listed did she mention the Christmas gifts she had received. It pleased me that the time we had spent together meant as much to her as it did to me, and I will always remember her list of favorites with a warm feeling. Without Lauren realizing it, her list has become a treasured gift to me.



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

My husband and I will spend Thanksgiving with a group of family members and close friends who are an essential part of our lives. We are not only thankful to have each one in our lives but are thankful that we are not isolated from them as we were in 2020 due to Covid. That year's isolation is a vivid reminder that the most important part of Thanksgiving is the people around our table. My husband and I enjoyed a delicious Thanksgiving meal in 2020, but it felt sad and lonely without our friends and family.

I hope you have many blessings in your life for which to be thankful. Most of all, I hope those blessings include the love of family and friends and the opportunity to spend time with them.



NEWS FOR YOU

LOCAL NEWS



Rachel Kayden Named Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council Director

Board of Commissioners Cindy Jones Mills, founder of Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council, announced the new FCDAC Director, Rachel Kayden, at the FCDAC monthly meeting on November 2. Rachel joined FCDAC as the Program Coordinator in February of this year. She stepped in as interim director after the departure of Mitch Durdel, who had been the acting director since October 2021.

Rachel came to FCDAC from the **Insight Program**, a drug and alcohol treatment center for young people ages 13 – 25. She is a Certified Drug Abuse Counselor (CDAC) and has 12 years of experience in education and Social Work. Rachel worked with teenagers and young adults ages 13-30 with drug and alcohol addiction, social, emotional, adaptive, and other difficulties to improve their ability to succeed personally and academically.

Rachel previously worked as Senior Administration Executive with experience in helping companies compile data through reports and record keeping. Her strengths include organizing and running multi-facet departments and programs, including maintaining and obtaining proper licenses.

Rachel has lived in the Atlanta area since 2012, has been married for seven years, and is a mom to one son.

STATE NEWS

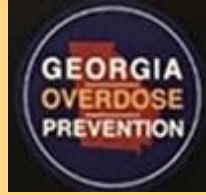
Request a Naloxone Kit
from

IF YOU WITNESS AN OVERDOSE
GEORGIA LAW PROTECTS YOU

Don't Run Call 911!



Our message is simple,
if they're still alive, there's hope.



You can get a naloxone rescue kit and be trained in its use. If you are **high-risk*** you can fill out the form below to get a free naloxone kit while supplies last.

High-risk – actively using street or RX opioids and any other street drug, in recovery from opioids or any street drug, a sex worker, have a lowered tolerance to opioids from a period of not using drugs, on MAT, or a loved one of a person at risk.

If you do not match any of our high-risk descriptions, you can still purchase naloxone at Georgia pharmacies without a personal prescription.

PLEASE DO NOT APPLY FOR KITS THROUGH GEORGIA OVERDOSE PREVENTION IF YOU ARE A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER, LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, FIRST RESPONDER, OR SCHOOL.

[Click Here for more info](#)

NATIONAL NEWS



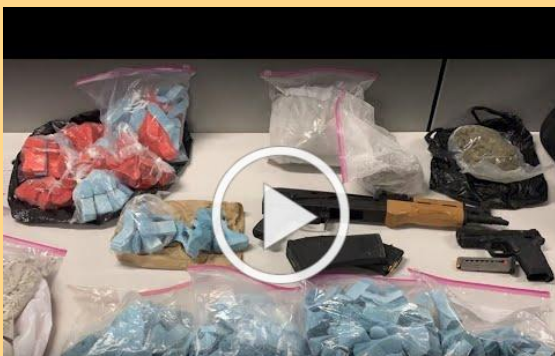
NY CITY "RAINBOW" FENTANYL BUST

Drug Enforcement Administration Press Release, October 3, 2022.

"Rainbow fentanyl is a clear and present danger, and it is here in New York City," said DEA Special Agent in Charge Frank Tarentino.

"Approximately forty percent of the pills we analyze in our lab contain a lethal dose; and in a recent 15-week enforcement operation, DEA New York seized half a million lethal pills. These staggering statistics underscore the importance of **reminding the public that just one pill can kill**, and this operation alone removed the equivalent of 500,000 lethal doses of fentanyl from circulation in the Empire State. In the same reporting period, DEA seized the equivalent of over 36 million lethal doses nationally," Tarentino said in the October 4th press release.

Read the entire press release [HERE](#).



NYC Police make largest fentanyl bust in history



Increase in fentanyl and firearms seized from NYC apartments

According to this ABC7NY report on October 18, 2022, New York City has seen an increase in fatal fentanyl overdoses and the number of illegal weapons coming into the city. The fentanyl comes across the US southern border from Mexico.



Watch this October 13, 2022, report from NBC5 New York City. **9M Dollars street value** worth of fentanyl has been seized in this NYC history-making bust. That's 300,000 rainbow fentanyl pills and 20 pounds of colored powder.

NIDA'S 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN*

On September 21, 2022, NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow's blog post reported the release of **NIDA'S five-year strategic plan**. Using the latest research, NIDA "sets priorities that are ambitious but achievable to advance an Institute's particular mission."

NIDA's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan has **five priority scientific areas**:

1. Understand Drugs, the Brain, and Behavior
2. Develop and Test Novel Prevention, Treatment, Harm Reduction, and Recovery Support Strategies
3. Accelerate Research on the Intersection of Substance Use, HIV, and Related Comorbidities
4. Improve the Implementation of Evidence-Based Strategies in Real-World Settings
5. Translate Research into Innovative Health Applications

The plan describes **seven cross-cutting themes** that apply across the five priority areas:

- Train the Next Generation of Scientists
- Identify and Develop Approaches to Reduce Stigma
- Understand Sex, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Differences
- Identify and Develop Approaches to Reduce Health Disparities
- Understand Interactions Between Substance Use, HIV, and other Comorbidities
- Leverage Data Science and Analytics to Understand Real-World Complexity
- Develop Personalized Interventions Informed by People with Lived Experience

"The rapidly shifting drug landscape and the devastation of the drug overdose epidemic have enhanced public interest and drawn greater investment in our science, and it is our responsibility to help direct that investment in the most effective, equitable, and wise manner to prevent and treat drug addiction and its consequences. **NIDA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan** is a living document and a vital roadmap for our Institute and our field, and I thank all the NIDA staff and leadership who contributed to crafting it," Dr. Volkow said.

Read the [2022-2026 NIDA Strategic Plan](#), or read the [Executive Summary](#).

*NIDA. "NIDA Releases Its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan." National Institute on Drug Abuse, 21 Sep. 2022, <https://nida.nih.gov/about-nida/noras-blog/2022/09/nida-releases-its-2022-2026-strategic-plan> Accessed 12 Oct. 2022.

One Pill Can Kill enforcement surge results



In September, DEA announced the results of the latest [One Pill Can Kill](#)



[enforcement surge](#) resulting in 10.2 million fentanyl pills and approximately 980 pounds of fentanyl powder removed from communities between May and September 2022. More information for parents and families on the dangers of fentanyl and fake pills can be found on DEA's website at- [One Pill Can Kill.](#)

FYI-Resources you can use!

So. . . What's Your Natural High?

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. **We engage influencers, educators, and peer groups to help young people discover those core activities in their lives that uplift, inspire, and motivate them — to find their 'Natural High' rather than use alcohol or drugs.** The research says — that finding a spark, or a passion, can help to engage kids in healthy coping strategies. They find the relief they seek in a natural high that they may otherwise seek in drugs or alcohol. Finding a natural high is a critical coping strategy in preventing drug abuse. We strive to **teach kids that they have a choice and support them in their choice-making skills.**

We provide content and action steps that are easy, fun, and effective. We share materials for free and encourage our community to use us as an ongoing resource with no associated costs.

Natural High founder, Jon Sundt, shares his personal story and why he created the Natural High Foundation with the mission to inspire every youth in America to live naturally high. Listen to his powerful and emotional testimony.



Watch this video and find out how **Natural High** founder, Jon Sundt,

Natural High is easy to use. 1. Watch a video. Explore our Storyteller library and Playlists for educators and parents. We have pre-packaged Playlists, or you can pick and choose your own storytellers, questions, and activities if you prefer. 2. Discuss as a class or family using our discussion guides to facilitate a thoughtful conversation. 3. Go deeper with an engaging activity. Each video has specific activities tied to the story that naturally follow the discussion.



[Click Here](#) to explore the playlist of videos,

High came into being and why Jon Sundt believes the **positive stories of real-life people** can help encourage and inspire youth today to seek and find their Natural High and **GO FOR IT!**

discussion questions, and suggested activities.

MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA YOUTH RESOURCES

The B4Stage4 Philosophy of MHA

Much of MHA's work is guided by its **Before Stage 4 (B4Stage4)** philosophy – that mental health conditions should be treated long before they reach the most critical points in the disease process. When we think about diseases like cancer or heart disease, we don't wait years to treat them. We start before Stage 4—we begin with prevention, identify symptoms, and develop a plan of action to stop and hopefully reverse the progression of the disease. Like other diseases, it is critical to address symptoms early and plan an appropriate course of action for overall health.

Adolescence is already a confusing time without added concerns about social media, safety in schools, staying healthy, family financial security, and loss of loved ones—so we shouldn't be surprised that the rates of anxiety, depression, suicide, and other mental health conditions are on the rise. MHA has resources to help.

[CLICK HERE FOR RESOURCES](#)



10 Tips for Each Stage of Your Recovery Journey

by Marcel Gemme

National Stress Awareness Day, November 2

It is 24 hours of reinforcing the fact that you're not doing yourself a favor by stressing about situations you can't control. In fact, according to science, chronic stress leads to impaired cognitive and physiological functions. Would you want to age before your time? Absolutely not! On this day, let's learn together to hone our ability to choose one thought over another and let the stress ebb away.

Stress affects people of all ages, and it is becoming more widespread and far-reaching. Research shows that it is more prevalent among adults ages 18-47 than those of older generations. Among this age group, stress is perceived as higher than what is acceptable in terms of good health. In addition, as the world changes stress continues to be a large factor on a person's health.

What is Addicted.org?

Addicted.org is also known as **Drug Rehab Services**, is a substance use resource that's completely free. We began our endeavor over 15 years ago, with the goal to educate people about addiction and connect them to the treatment resources they need. We've done this by compiling one of the largest and

1. Overcoming Substance Use Disorder is a process that takes time, effort, routine, structure, dedication, and discipline. It is not without its hurdles, obstacles, and setbacks. Yet, the payoff, in the end, is enormous.

The recovery journey is different for each person in terms of what it takes, the process, and the length of time to achieve lifelong sobriety and move past your addiction. We want to offer some general tips to help you as recovery begins, during recovery, and as you move past your addiction to lifelong sobriety.

2. Beginning Recovery

The recovery process begins after drug rehab is complete, whether this is a long-term or short-term program. Generally, a drug rehab

compiling one of the largest and most complete directories of drug and alcohol rehabilitation services in the US.

Many of us at Addicted.org have personally recovered from substance use, gaining invaluable experience and knowledge that separates us from others in the field. This allows a level of care and compassion that we believe shows in our work.

4. Do not lose sight of your physical and mental well-being:

It is normal to put aside your well-being when other things in life start going well. However, now is not the time to disregard your physical and mental well-being. Do not deviate from the proper diet, exercise, and sleep routine. It takes discipline but is critical for life-long sobriety.

5. Focus on family:

Depending on your current family dynamic, you may have spent some repairing broken relationships. Now is an excellent time to focus on spending more time with family, rekindling old family relationships, or making the family dynamic stronger than ever before.

6. Focus on spirituality:

Everyone is different. Some individuals have a strong spiritual awareness, and others do not, which is fine. If you are someone who once made spirituality part of your life, now is the time to focus on making it a part of your life every day. A complete spiritual awareness brings fullness to life and creates purpose.

7. Continue to give back to the community:

If you are in a close-knit community, do not stop giving back. Strong community bonds are vital to sobriety, as community members come together to help one another.

8. Never stop learning new life skills:

Learning new things will always bring joy, and this is something that should never stop. Learning new life skills

increases your confidence, abilities, and awareness.

Moreover, it can also help you better understand yourself and the world around you.

9. Always maintain your integrity:

It is important to conduct yourself in a professional and caring manner, but never compromise your own integrity. This extends into every aspect of your life as your personal integrity has helped you through recovery and into a sober life.

10. Drop the "in recovery" label.... If you want:

Not everyone will agree with this statement, but you do not have to be in recovery for the rest of your life. You do not have to identify as an addict until the day you die, and you no longer have to wear that label. That being said, it comes down to how you feel and how comfortable you are with

program helps each client establish their aftercare process. Here are ten tips to consider when beginning recovery:

3. Establish routine, structure, and schedule:

The benefit of residential drug rehab is that structure, routine, and a schedule is provided for you. It is good to keep the same routine going for at least the first 90 days until you begin to modify things to fit your life. For example, the time you wake up, eat, exercise, work, attend meetings, counseling, or other therapy. It may also include your time with family and friends, personal growth, hobbies, etc.



Marcel Gemme, DATS, has been helping people

struggling with addiction for over 19 years. He first started as an intake counselor for a drug rehabilitation center in 2000. During his 5 years as an intake counselor, he helped many addicts get the treatment they needed. He also dealt with the families and friends of those people; he saw first-hand how much strain addiction puts on a family and how it can tear relationships apart. With drug and alcohol problems constantly on the rise in the United States and Canada, he decided to use the Internet as a way to educate and help many more people in both those countries. This was 15 years ago. Since then, Marcel has built two of the largest websites in the U.S.

and Canada which reach and help millions of people each year. He is an author and a leader in the field of drug and alcohol addiction. His main focus is threefold: education, prevention and rehabilitation. To this day, he still strives to be at the forefront of technology in order to help more and more people. He is a Licensed Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist graduate with Honours of Stratford Career Institute. Marcel has also received a certificate from Harvard for completing a course entitled The Opioid Crisis in America and a

what you have achieved on your journey. For some, identifying as “in recovery” is a constant reminder of the hard work they have put in and motivates them to continue working on themselves. For others, moving past recovery is important because it begins the next chapter of their life. Ultimately, how you choose to identify yourself should be up to you and should be something that continues to motivate you.

certificate from The University of Adelaide for completing a course entitled [AddictionX: Managing Addiction: A Framework for Successful Treatment](#).

Join The Great American Smokeout on November 17, 2022

Quitting smoking isn't easy. It takes time. And a plan. You don't have to stop smoking in one day. Start with day one. Let the Great American Smokeout event on the third Thursday in November be the day to start your journey toward a smoke-free life. You'll be joining thousands of people who smoke across the country to take an important step toward a healthier life and reduce your cancer risk. The American Cancer Society can also help you access the resources and support you need to quit.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

On the Calendar

November

- Stress Awareness Day, November 2
- **Election Day November 8**
- **Veterans Day November 11**
- Anti-bullying week November 14-18
- **Connection Thanksgiving Pot Luck, November 20 Noon- 3:30 PM**
- **Thanksgiving, November 24**
- National Methamphetamine Awareness Day, November 30

December

- National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month
- **GA Rx Drug Abuse Prevention Initiative Collaborative Mtg December 8, 10 AM-2 PM Norcross at the AC-HIDTA Training Center**
- **Central High School Thrifting Extravaganza, December 12 and 13**
- **Connection Christmas Party and Cookie Exchange, Dec 18, Noon-3 PM**
- **Christmas, December 25**
- **Connection New Year's Eve PJ Party, December 31, 9 PM**

