



The FCDAC STRATEGIZER

Leading the way to a
healthier Forsyth County

JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER LIST

September 2022 Volume 2 Issue 5

On September 11, 2001, the terrorist group al-Qaeda attacked the US commandeering four commercial airplanes, striking the World Trade Center's twin towers in New York City and the Pentagon. The fourth plane crashed into an empty field in Pennsylvania before reaching its target in Washington, DC.

We call it September 11 Patriot Day, and we honor and remember the 2,996 people who died in the attacks, including firefighters and police officers trying to save the lives of others.



SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION
AWARENESS MONTH

September 10, 2022,
BE THE LIGHT

BRINGS SUICIDE AWARENESS
TO FORSYTH





TO FORSYTH

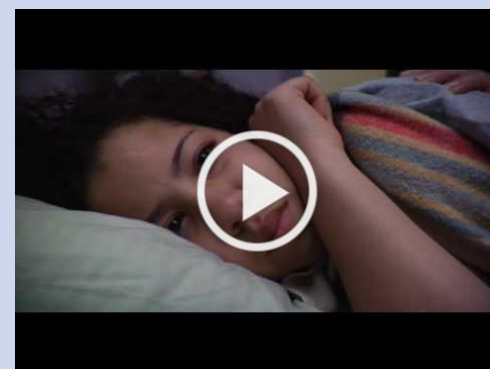
BE THE LIGHT is a partnership with Commissioner Cindy Jones Mills, The Forsyth County Community Connection, East, and North Forsyth High Schools and Forsyth Central High School, and North Georgia Running Company increasing awareness in Forsyth County about mental health issues facing our community. The event took place Saturday, September 10 at East Forsyth High School, 8910 Jot Em Down Road, Gainesville, GA.

Many FCDAC members and partnering organizations volunteered including Sarah Pedarre, Gabby Breiten, Lindsey Simpson, Emily Ennis, and Polly Sarno. Gabby reports, "The walk was awesome! What a turnout, with over 300 registered runners, and even more who attended to support! There was a DJ booth, cornhole, badminton, face painting, and spike ball that participants could play. There were also several booths and tables for local community resources, such as The Place, Family Ties, Full Circle, and other organizations. Emily Ennis and I represented the Drug Council."



The event began with a **student rally** at 4:30 p.m. with speakers addressing mental health issues faced by so many. **Anna Padgett** of the Suicide Awareness Means HOP debunked myths surrounding suicide. For example, asking someone if they have suicidal thoughts does not increase their chances of committing suicide. Another speaker, **Robin Watson**, East Forsyth High School Nurse, gave testimony surrounding her

experience with the suicide of two family members. She discussed the stages of grief and encouraged students to educate themselves and



American Foundation for

speaking up. A parent of a Forsyth Central High School student who did take their own life last year, Raquel Cooke, spoke. She encouraged those listening to increase their knowledge of depression, drug use, and signs of suicide and provided resources. The final speaker was North Georgia Running Company co-owner **Fe Rodriguez**, whose life has been affected by suicide and encouraged everybody to "be the light" in other people's lives.

Event organizers provided **glow sticks to participants to help shine awareness on suicide prevention and to focus inward on the issues some may be facing.**

At 6:30 p.m., the racing began.

Commissioner Cindy Jones Mills, Forsyth County Board of Commissioners, District 4, and founder of the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council, has championed education and awareness about the Suicide Crisis plaguing our World and Community.

"Over the past six years, I have hosted programs centered around World Suicide Prevention Day. This year we're expanding to bring more awareness to our schools by partnering with East Forsyth, North Forsyth, and Forsyth Central High Schools. Along with the North Georgia Running Company and Forsyth County Community Connection, we held the "Be the Light" event on September 10, 2022," said Commissioner Mills.

"I want to shout out to **Miss Ali Norris**, now a freshman at Wake Forest University. Ali organized a **Suicide Awareness Walk** last year at Forsyth Central High School. Because her light shines so brightly, others are inspired to follow her path in raising awareness for suicide prevention and mental health wellness. **Thank you, Ali!**" said Commissioner Mills.

[Click to WATCH Commissioner Mill's full interview with Ali Norris](#)

FCDAC Work and Programs Round-up

Kayden's Korner

Program Coordinator Rachel Kayden



This month we pause to remember the painful blow we, as a nation, suffered and the tragic loss of life because of the 9-11 attack.

Any loss of life is tragic, but those lost to **Substance Use Disease**, particularly by **Fentanyl** coming illegally across our Southern

Border, is an attack too. See the national news section. Fentanyl is becoming the **drug of choice** for those addicted to opioids.

Suicide Prevention It's Mission is to Save Lives and Bring Hope to Those Affected by Suicide.

AFSP GA CHAPTER CONTACT

Kristen Petillo & Chelsea Piatt
Area Director, Georgia & Associate Area Director, Georgia
kpetillo@afsp.org

(404) 275-3316 & (470) 514-7667

Shatterproof will be an important event for FCDAC and all of Forsyth County. As a drug-free community collaborative, we need "all hands on deck" to make this a successful event. Please share and invite all the organizations you're connected with to join the effort to 'Shatterproof' our community!

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
for
OCTOBER'S COUNCIL MEETING!**



As we learned last month from Sgt. Chatham, **Synthetic Marijuana** is still the most widely used drug. According to him, Marijuana products- oils used in vaping and wax or shatter used in dabbing are readily available, and many don't consider them dangerous. Please take a look at our story about *Johnny's Ambassadors* and Johnny Stack's tragic story.

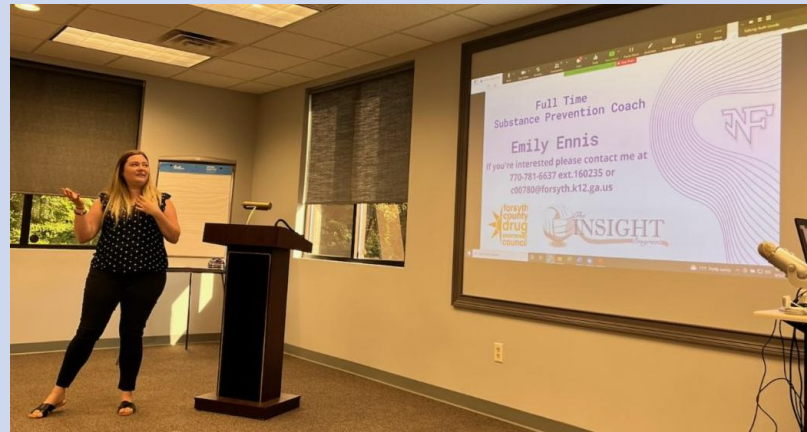
Besides our fight to educate about its dangers, we now must use our voices to fight the efforts of some to normalize, legalize and commercialize this drug in our state and federally. See the article, "What Georgians can expect if Marijuana is Legalized."



**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2022,
8-9 A.M.
UNITED WAY OFFICES**

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

Wednesday, September 7, FCDAC held a joint monthly meeting with the Mental Health Council. This month's guest speakers reported on our students' mental state in three community schools: North and East Forsyth High Schools and Forsyth Central High School. Representing North were **Emily Ennis** and **Amy Dykes**; from East Forsyth High, **Gabby Saenz**, and Forsyth Central High School Assistant Principal **Angela Hurt**.



Emily Ennis, North Forsyth High School Drug Counselor, presented at September 7th Council Meeting.

Research has shown that students can not achieve academic success unless they are supported in their

1. Social and Emotional Well-being,
2. Academic Achievement,
3. Essential Needs of students and their families.

Each Community School will look slightly different based on the needs of their community's assessments. What the schools held in common was that each saw the desperate needs of their students and their families. The students and their families needed a safe environment to get food, toiletries, clothing, medical care (like eye exams and glasses), and mental health care.

FOUR PILLARS OF SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ARE WORKING TO FULFILL FOR STUDENTS



AND OPPORTUNITIES ACTIVE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP AND PRACTICES

Council Guest Speakers: the State of Our Schools Mental Health

Angela Hurt outlined some initiatives at Forsyth Central High School.

- **Boxes of Love**- food from their food pantry sent home on the weekends
- **The "Well" Room** is for students and teachers who need a "brain break" and where **Karen Cole** holds relaxation sessions.
- **Power Hours** held Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.
- **Big dog/Little dog** Mentoring program
- Connecting with Community partners for **outside counseling**
- **FCDAC** presenting drug prevention program
- **Better Time** allows students with transportation issues to be involved with extracurricular activities during the school day
- **Thrifting Extravaganza**

Gabby Saenz, Community and Family Engagement Coordinator, presented some of their initiatives.

- **The Coffee Shop**
- **Mentor Me/Wellness Room**
- **The Place Forsyth** supplies the food and clothing pantry
- **Be Better Support Services** - Counselors, Social worker, Student Advisory Specialist, Student Support Administrator

- Community Partners include **Family Ties, Mentor Me, and The Place Forsyth.**

Amy Dykes and **Emily Ennis** from North Forsyth High School

- **Be Better Time: Connect, Collaborate, and Care** values set the school's tone and culture. It includes student participation, involvement, and outreach, expanded opportunities, wellness activities, clubs, and connection time.
- **Emily Ennis**, Substance Prevention Coach, works full-time with students individually, in small groups, and in parent groups. She will sponsor fun school-wide events to build even more relationships with students.
- **Career development** through **Sheriff's Office** for graduating seniors to learn to work as jailers in Forsyth County and another program through **WorkSource Georgia**, a welding program, leads to work offers for students completing the program.
- Program Partners: The Place of Forsyth, FCDAC, Sheriff's Office, Family Ties, and WorkSource Georgia

Rachel Kayden closed the meeting after the announcements of the upcoming events:

- **Be the Light** September 10, 4:30 pm East Forsyth High School
- **Recovery Rocks**, September 18 (SEE BELOW)
- **Shatterproof** is coming to Forsyth! The Shatterproof mission is increasing public awareness that recovery is for everyone and reducing the stigma associated with substance use disorder through a walk/ running event. The Committee is working now; PLEASE JOIN US! We need partner organizations to collaborate. **FCDAC's Mission is to bring about COMMUNITY COLLABORATION. WE EDUCATE, ADVOCATE AND EMPOWER OUR COMMUNITY TO PREVENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE ACROSS THE LIFESPAN IN FORSYTH COUNTY!**

Forsyth County Schools Updates



Meet Emily Ennis North Forsyth High School's First On-site Full-time Substance Prevention Coach

Emily Ennis is the new **Substance Prevention Coach** at North Forsyth High School. "Emily's position is brand new, created through a grant, and for the first time, North Forsyth High School has a staff member dedicated to Substance Prevention," said Amy Dykes, Student Support Counselor at North. Emily has worked with teens and young adults in drug and alcohol recovery for the past three years in Arizona, North Carolina, and now her home state in Georgia. Emily grew up in Marietta. Currently, she is working towards a certification as a Drug/Alcohol Counselor.

As was previously reported, a grant was applied for and acquired by Principal Drew Hayes that is funding Emily's position. North Forsyth is the school our FCDAC Drug Counseling Team (Counselors Mitch Durdle, Mike Cowan, and Jaxon Savajian) brought weekly small group sessions formed after the team spoke to health classes. With this opening and seeing the need, **FCDAC played a significant role in helping to acquire the full-time drug counselor.**

Emily says of her first few weeks on the job, "It's been a mixture of getting the word out to teachers, parents, and students that I am available to meet with students previously in the groups started by Mitch. I will lead groups, meet with students individually, host parent nights, and organize fun student events. Fun and thriving, full lives are really living. It is possible for everyone. **High school can be a vulnerable time for kids, and many start experimenting with drugs/alcohol. I want to support them and show there are better ways to deal with stressors and better things to do in their free time.** I have met with a handful of students, and it has been great!"

"**How do I go about developing a relationship with a student?** There's not just one way to do it," Emily says, "but to simplify the answer, **I show that I care, I listen to them, give them a voice, ask them fun questions about themselves and trust my gut with it, then, I give them my experience, strength, and hope.**"

"**I have seen many lives lost or ruined by drugs and alcohol, and I want to do my part in helping prevent this,**" she said. "That's why I got into this line of work and why I continue. I look forward to working with **Gabby Breiten** at Forsyth Academy. She spoke of the fentanyl crisis in her article (**August, Strategizer**), and she's spot-on. Naturally curious teenagers are affected by this crisis and should know the risks. I, too, will be talking about the risks of fentanyl," Emily said.

"I have been sober for five and a half years, and it still amazes me how much my life has changed. The hope I experienced through sobriety leads me to want to give that back to other teenagers," Emily said. "I am grateful and excited to work with the students at North Forsyth High School. I want to share what I received through recovery with them."

Thank you, Emily! Welcome to our community and council

FORSYTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

FCDAC SCHOOL OUTREACH TEAM, Gabby Breiten, Jaxon Savajian, Kevin Kayden, Sophia Cook, and Emily Ennis made a substance prevention presentation for Health Classes at Forsyth Central High School on August 30.

FCDAC's former interim director, Mitch Durdle, and staff from the Insight Program and Fullcircle have been working towards presenting in area high schools since Mitch worked as the drug counselor at Gateway Academy.

Gabby said, "I try to leave the students with the message of speaking up when they see something they are concerned about, regardless of the outcome. When I think about my experience, I can see where people like that were the friends in my life who truly cared for me."

"We spoke to seven periods of health classes, 100 plus students, I imagine," said Gabby.

"At the end of the presentation, we left time for a Q and A. We still have three classes to present to, and Mike Cowan and I plan to go back soon and finish," she said.

"Students completed the 2022 Forsyth Youth Prevention Survey for the Council," Breiten said.

NORTH FORSYTH HIGH SCHOOL

FCDAC member Emily Ennis, the new Substance Prevention Coach at North Forsyth High School, and Gabby Breiten, Drug Counselor at Forsyth Academy, will present to the Freshman Health classes during September at North's Freshman Health Classes. As a way to introduce herself and share some of her story with the students, Emily says, "I want to impart what to do if they know someone struggling with substance use or addiction."

Community Outreach

SHATTERPROOF COMMITTEE

FCDAC Shatterproof Committee is committed to the Shatterproof action pillars:

- Transforming addiction treatment
- Ending addiction stigma
- Educating and empowering our communities
- Advocating for change



Addiction in America

40 million Americans struggle with addiction, but many don't get the treatment they need.

It doesn't have to be this way.

Effective addiction treatment is hard to access and rarely covered by insurance.

Only 1 in 10 people who need treatment ever receive it, and even fewer receive high-quality care rooted in scientific evidence.

It doesn't have to be this way.

That's why our Shatterproof Committee NEEDS YOU! With your help, we are hosting

Rise Up Against Addiction Walk in Forsyth County.

Walk alongside friends and neighbors across our county to support those impacted by addiction.

We are looking for sponsors and many more partnering organizations to participate in this important event. **Shatterproof** is trying to open up to smaller communities. In the past, they have held Walks in larger cities around the country. **PLEASE JOIN US!**

TO JOIN US CONTACT RACHEL HERE

YOUTH COUNCIL

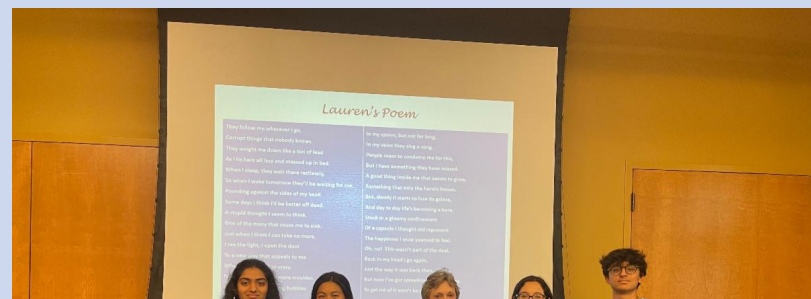
What You Need To Know About Drugs An Educational Experience for Middle and High Schoolers

FCDAC Youth Council's "Educational Experience for Middle and High Schoolers, **What You Need to Know About Drugs**" was held on August 28 at the Post Road Library.

Dana Bryan was the featured speaker and presented "**Lauren's Story, The Truth About the World of Drugs.**"

Dana's daughter, Lauren, and her involvement with drug experimentation ultimately led to Lauren's death. On the day of Lauren's burial, Dana found a poem Lauren had written describing her entrapment by drugs and her pain. Dana shared the poem to close the presentation. Dana shares the poetry in this month's *Strategizer* in her **Members Teaching Members** column (see below).

Of the presentation, Dana said, "I include information that is different from facts the students learn in their health classes. I present how drugs affect the person and their family relationships. I do this from a mother's perspective, and I hope my audience of young people and the parents in attendance gain new insights."



Saasha Kapoor, South Forsyth High School Senior, and FCDAC Youth Council President. Saasha's passion for getting the message out to her peers is evident in her dedication to providing educational events. Education and empowerment of the community are impacting Forsyth County by hosting youth-centered information and awareness events.



Dana Bryan and Saasha Kapoor with some of the program attendees.



Dana Bryan, retired school teacher, and FCDAC Council Member is a gifted speaker. Speaking from experience she knows the heartache and has a deep desire to save others from what her family experienced.



September Is NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE!

The Recovery Month theme, "Recovery is for Everyone: Every Person, Every Family, Every Community," reminds people in recovery and those who support them that recovery belongs to all of us. We are all called to welcome everyone to recovery by lowering barriers to recovery support, creating inclusive spaces and programs, and broadening our understanding of what recovery means for people with different experiences.



FCDAC COUNCIL MEMBER, ALEX MARTINEZ, "MY JOURNEY TO SOBRIETY AND RECOVERY"

by Alex Martinez

Alex Martinez joined FCDAC's Community Outreach Committee at Mitch Durdel's invitation over a year ago. He has

My name is Alex, and I am a recovering substance abuser. I abused drugs for over ten years, using everything from alcohol and marijuana to pain pills and, finally, heroin.

I didn't understand that addiction is like any sickness, and sickness can spread whether you want it to or not.

volunteered at FCDAC's information tables at many of the running events. Alex has been in recovery for three years.

I don't think my family understood that initially. I have tremendous parents. My father was a nurse, and my mother was a teacher. My childhood was great, but that doesn't mean I was safe from the life of addiction. My friends introduced me to marijuana when I was 18. I was prescribed pain pills when my wisdom teeth were pulled. I liked how they made me feel; finding more in friends' medicine cabinets wasn't hard. I continued getting a supply and started to depend on them almost immediately. Soon I found myself using heroin. I stole from my family; I lied constantly. I turned into someone I hated.

I couldn't keep it together. After crashing four different cars and facing multiple criminal charges, I knew I had to change, but I couldn't figure out a way to do it by myself.

I overdosed on heroin three times. Narcan brought me back each time. The first time my friend administered it to me. The second and third times, Narcan was given to me by a paramedic. You remember your first breaths when that drug is administered, or at least I do. You hear the paramedic saying, "You're ok; you're going to be ok." The worst part of waking up was knowing I would use it again, regardless of how many times I overdosed. My next thought was, "Yeah, I'm ok, but only in the worst possible way. I couldn't escape from this drug because the urge to use it was so strong." I felt helpless.

I was at a crossroads: I was headed for death or jail. A life-long friend in recovery at the Insight Program threw me a lifeline. He'd heard about my situation, and when I listened to his voice, I heard the hope I needed. I couldn't believe the change that had taken place in him. I saw him as happy for the first time in my life. I wanted that too. He came and picked me up. I left with the clothes on my back and a few thrown in a grocery bag. I never looked back. I entered the Insight Program.

After years of failed attempts at getting clean, I began my recovery journey with the help of my friend and the counselors at the Insight Program. Though the numbers and statistics were not in my favor, this didn't stop my outpatient counselor, Rachel Kayden, from helping me. I was nothing short of blessed to have her as my counselor. I was taught how to think differently about life. I was taught a different way to live, a better way. I wouldn't trade the way I feel now for anything. I built a life, a comradery with the residents and staff. If it weren't for the professionals that work there and my fellow alcoholics, I wouldn't be where I am today.

I believe that gratitude contributes a lot to a person's recovery. I'm grateful for the chances I've been given and the ongoing support I receive. After three years in recovery, I meet with my group often and help out where I can. Mitch invited me to get involved with FCDAC, and I jumped at it. I love talking to people at the FCDAC information table at the 5k races around the county.

The opioid epidemic is a real issue, and everyone is affected by it. If I could offer advice to anyone in the same situation I've been in, I would tell them to reach out to someone in recovery. That's all you must do. It is never too late to change your life. There is always someone willing to help, **always**.



From our friends and collaborators at The Connection!



Sunday,

September 18, 2022, Cumming Fairgrounds

A Rockin' Concert and Sober Social Festival in Cumming, GA.

Recovery Rocks is an annual day of family-friendly fun, including:

- Live Music
- Stories of Hope
- Kids Activities
- Food Trucks
- Recovery-Related Resources...And More!

Join the fun for the entire family. Show your support because **NOT ONLY IS RECOVERY POSSIBLE; RECOVERY ROCKS!**



A ROCKIN' CONCERT AND SOBER-SOCIAL FESTIVAL
A FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENT FOR EVERYONE!

KEN BLOCK & DREW COPELAND FROM SISTER HAZEL
• MAMA JAN SMITH • TONY LUCCA • TOWNSEND • AND MORE

•INSPIRATIONAL STORIES •FOOD •VENDORS
•RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE AND FAMILIES IN RECOVERY

ALL EVENT PROCEEDS BENEFIT **CONNECTION** FOR TICKETS AND MORE INFORMATION: **RECOVERYROCKS.NET** WITH LOVE AND SUPPORT

Two New Offerings From The Connection's

Wellness For Families Through Recovery



Equine Therapy Program

Saturday and Sunday Appointments Available

11:30 am - 5:00 p.m.

Special Equestrians of Georgia, 13185 New

Providence Road, Milton, GA 30004

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
KAYLA BERGERON [HERE](#)
Or PHONE: 561-308-8104

Working with horses requires concentration.

Parenting the Nurturing Way



Parenting the Nurturing Way is an evidence-based program that helps families in need of support to:

- Learn about the philosophy and practices of nurturing parenting
- Identify their personality traits and how they relate to parenting
- Connect with other parents who experience similar challenges and are on the road to recovery

Classes meet on **Wednesdays**
beginning **September 7**
at **The Connection**
from **6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**

The 12-week program will run for 12 weeks and

...selflessness, and teamwork. Equine-assisted therapy is an evidence-based program shown to help people improve self-esteem, self-awareness, confidence, and empathy. **Equine therapy** is another tool to aid mental health recovery and wellness.

...culminates on Wednesday, November 30, 2022.

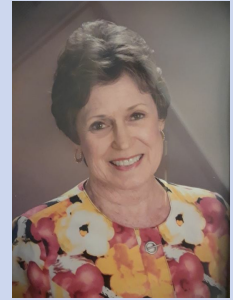
Parenting the Nurturing Way
is open to Forsyth County parents at **no cost**.

Sandwiches and beverages will be provided

[Register Here](#)

MEMBERS TEACHING MEMBERS

Sunday, August 28, I gave my first Drug Awareness presentation as an FCDAC Speaker since the COVID shutdown. **Saesha Kapoor, FCDAC's Youth Council President,** initiated and organized this youth education event at the Post Road Library. She did an outstanding job. My presentation was entitled "**What You Need To Know About Drugs.**" My daughter, Lauren Bryan, died from a heroin overdose two weeks before her 16th birthday. We found this poem on the day Lauren was buried. It was probably written about six weeks before she died. I share it to close my presentations because it shows the internal torment drugs brought into her life and how trapped she felt. I share it with the hope that it will influence others to understand how drugs destroy and control the lives of those who use them.



Dana

Bryan, FCDAC Speaker Bureau member, retired middle school teacher and mother whose loss of a child to drugs impels her to tell Lauren's story.

LAUREN'S POEM

They follow me wherever they go,
Corrupt things that few people know.
They weigh me down like a ton of lead
As I lie here all lazy and messed up in bed.
When I sleep, they wait there restlessly
So, when I wake tomorrow they'll be
waiting for me.

Pounding against the sides of my head.
Some days I think I'd be better off dead.
A stupid thought, I seem to think.
One of the many that cause me to sink.
Just when I think I can take no more,
I see the light; I open the door
To a new way that appeals to me
Where I don't feel so crazy.

No more burdens, no more troubles,
Just the way it was back then.

In my veins, they sing a song.
People seem to condemn me for this,
But I have something they have missed.
A good thing inside me that seems to
grow.
Something that only the heroin knows.

But, slowly it starts to lose its galore,
And day-to-day life's becoming a chore.
Stuck in a gloomy confinement
Of a capsule, I thought did represent
The happiness I once yearned to feel.

Oh, no! This wasn't part of the deal.
Back in my head, I go again,
Just the way it was back then.
But now I've got something else after

Just tiny, delicate boiling bubbles
In my spoon, but not for long.

me.
To get rid of it won't be quite so easy.

by Lauren Bryan

NEWS FOR YOU

LOCAL NEWS

Forsyth County Board of Commissioners Proclaimed August 31, 2022, Overdose Awareness Day

On Thursday, August 18, at The Forsyth County Board of Commissioners Meeting, Commissioner Todd Levent read a proclamation declaring **August 31, 2022, Overdose Awareness Day**. According to the Georgia Department of Public Health, the declaration cites their horrific statistic: **all drug overdose deaths in Georgia increased by 55.9% from 2019 to 2021, with Fentanyl-related overdose deaths rising in Georgia by 106.2% between May 1, 2020, and April 30, 2021.**

The county lit its buildings purple in observance to increase awareness and memorialize those lost to a drug overdose.



Left to right: Molly Cooper, Todd Levent, Nancy Pugmire (Heather R. Hayes & Associates, Inc.) Cindy Jones Mills, Alfred John, and Laura Semanson.

A PROCLAMATION BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF FORSYTH COUNTY, GEORGIA

- **WHEREAS**, addiction is defined by the American Medical Association as a chronic medical disease that must be addressed to prevent drug poisoning, also known as **OVERDOSE**; and,
- **WHEREAS**, overdose is the number one cause of injury deaths in the nation, surpassing deaths from motor vehicle accidents or gun homicides with 108,000 attributed deaths in the United States, or 296

- people per day, during 2021; and,
- **WHEREAS**, according to the Georgia Department of Public Health, all drug overdose deaths in Georgia increased by 55.9% from 2019 to 2021 with Fentanyl-related overdose deaths increasing in Georgia by 106.2% between May 1, 2020, and April 30, 2021; and,
 - **WHEREAS**, the 2021 Georgia Student Wellness Survey indicates that of 1,208 Forsyth County students surveyed; 12 students used marijuana, 9 used methamphetamines, 9 used heroin, 12 used opioid pills, 12 used benzodiazepine pills, 11 used Adderall, 14 used pills not prescribed to them, 9 had been in the car with a peer under the influence, 15 have been offered illegal drugs on school property and 173 thought about harming themselves; and,
 - **WHEREAS**, by acknowledging all those who have been affected by prescription OVERDOSE, we help the public understand the impact on the community. Forsyth County remains committed to raising awareness in order to combat stigma and to educating our community about prescription OVERDOSE prevention.
 - **NOW THEREFORE AND BE IT RESOLVED**, the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners proclaims August 31, 2022 as **OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY** and urges all residents to learn about this disease as well as to aid and support those that are affected by it.
 - **IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF**, we have hereunto affixed the SEAL of the County of Forsyth, State of Georgia, and signatures of the members of the governing body thereof. Given at Cumming, Georgia, on this 18th day of August 2022.

FORSYTH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Alfred John, Chairman, Molly Cooper Vice-chairwoman, Todd Levent, Secretary
 Cindy Jones Mills, Member, Laura Semanson, Member
 Rhonda P. Hansard, County Clerk, Attest



**Acts of Routine Kindness
 Forsyth County Schools Initiative**

This school year, FCS classrooms received one **yellow ARK**, representing ALL in Forsyth County sailing in the same boat. This project aims to **turn kindness into a daily ROUTINE habit**, thus changing the lives of both the person giving and receiving. FCS will post 180 daily kindness messages on district social media accounts. Schools are encouraged to share kindness messages daily with students and staff and to post photos on

social media using #ARK180Project.

STATE NEWS

News shared by our collaborator, Katy Freund, MPH, Public Health Analyst, Overdose Response Strategy | Atlanta-Carolinas HIDTA:

"I recently received some excellent infographics from the National Institute for Health Care Management (NIHCM) and CDC's Statewide Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS), which may help you better visualize the impact of the opioid epidemic on Georgia and the Nation."

[CLICK HERE](#)

NATIONAL NEWS

National Trend: Fentanyl once feared is now many opioid addicts drug of choice

As drug users are building a tolerance to the potent fentanyl they use, some users who once avoided fentanyl now seek it out.

Read more about this dangerous drug trend.

[CLICK HERE](#)

A survivor of fentanyl overdose shares her story. This *ABC Frontline* story, April 6, 2022, tells Sofia Christoff's near brush with death. Sofia said she considers herself one of the lucky ones.



New Drug Threat Enter Street Drug Scene: "Tranq"

Xylazine is an animal tranquilizer. It's not approved for humans but is showing up mostly in the illegal fentanyl supply but also in cocaine, according to a Kaiser Health News article. Its known as "tranq" or "tranq dope," and was first seen in Puerto Rico and then in Philadelphia, "where it was found in 91% of opioid samples in the most recent reporting period."

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

"Rainbow" Fentanyl?



In August 2022, DEA and our law enforcement partners seized brightly-colored

fentanyl and fentanyl pills in 18 states.

"Rainbow fentanyl—fentanyl pills and powder that come in a variety of bright colors, shapes, and sizes—is a deliberate effort by drug traffickers to drive addiction amongst kids and young adults," said DEA Administrator Anne Milgram. **"The men and women of the DEA are relentlessly working to stop the trafficking of rainbow fentanyl and defeat the Mexican drug cartels that are responsible for the vast majority of the fentanyl that is being trafficked in the United States."**

Check out this "new" look for deadly fentanyl!

According to *USA Today* reports "rainbow colored" fentanyl has found its way to Arizona, Oregon, California, and Washington, D.C., during the week of August 14. The lethal drug has been seized in pill form, looking like candy or powdered blocks that resemble sidewalk chalk. Experts in the field think either they are using this rainbow fentanyl to attract young people/ kids or labeling the fentanyl produced by certain gangs.

[Click Here and watch the report USA Today](#)

What can Georgians Expect IF Recreational Marijuana is Legalized?

ONE WORD: HEARTBREAK!

"I want you to know you were right. You told me marijuana would hurt my brain. It's ruined my mind and my life, and I'm sorry. I love you." — Johnny Stack to his mother, 3 days before he died by suicide.

WHO IS JOHNNY STACK? He is one of the many young people who have been harmed or have lost their lives because of **MARIJUANA**.

Laura Stack, the founder of Johnny's Ambassadors, said, "We are a normal suburban Colorado family and did normal family things. Our son had a happy life, a 4.0 GPA with a college scholarship, and a family who loved him very much. Unfortunately, Colorado was the first state to legalize recreational marijuana in 2012, when Johnny was 12 years old. Johnny used marijuana for years, starting at age 14 at a high school party, and then he started dabbing as an older teen."

[CLICK HERE](#) to watch Johnny's story.

The Mission of Johnny's Ambassadors is to educate parents and teens about the risks of today's high-THC marijuana on adolescent brain development, mental illness, and suicide. Research shows today's high-potency marijuana causes mental health issues and a higher incidence of suicide when used recreationally and illegally under 21 years of age.

Johnny's Ambassadors has a learning library with research information, webinars, upcoming events, and ways to learn and become involved.

[CLICK HERE](#)



DOES WRITING/CALLING LEGISLATORS MAKE AN IMPACT?

YES!

Writing and Calling your Legislator is impactful! According to John Sides, writing for *Monkey Cage*, "it matters in a more pervasive and specific way than previously thought: letters, email, and phone calls from constituents influence how legislators view their constituency, which in turn shapes their behavior on the Hill." The essential question to someone in political office or running for office is, "How does this impact my constituents?"

Every call or letter received along with the issue is noted and logged. The more you write and call, the more the politician will recognize your name as a concerned citizen.

CONTACT THOSE WHO REPRESENT YOU TODAY!
Remember they work for you!

STATE LEVEL, [CLICK HERE](#) OR [HERE](#)

FEDERAL LEVEL, [CLICK HERE](#)

GOVERNOR KEMP, [CLICK HERE](#)

Identify yourself as a constituent, and be courteous, concise, and consistent in reaching out

about issues you care about and, in the case of Marijuana, a life-threatening issue.

THE FIGHT IS ON, GEORGIA!

Will our state fall the way of Colorado? We can defend our youth and state against the passage of SR 165, Marijuana legalization in the General Assembly, which provides by law legalization and regulation if we make our voices heard!

Call and write now! The bill, SR165, is pending in the [Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee](#).



A Panel Study of the Effect of Cannabis Use on Mental Health, Depression and Suicide in the 50 States.
Drug Free America Foundation, Inc. & Johnny's Ambassadors
June 29, 2022



Here are some resources from the **DRUG FREE AMERICA FOUNDATION** to share regarding this national crisis:

- [Prevent an opioid-related overdose death](#)
- [The dangers of fentanyl and fentanyl analogues](#)
- [Opioid prevention toolkit](#)
- [Fast facts on fentanyl](#)

Thank you to West Virginia's Prevention Empowerment Partnership Youth Leadership Team. Learn more about fentanyl [CLICK HERE](#)

RED RIBBON WEEK OCTOBER 23-31

EASY TO USE FREE RESOURCES using 3-5 minute impactful videos and discussion questions designed for PARENTS, YOUTH GROUPS, and SCHOOLS!

[CLICK HERE FOR HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM](#)



**Cocaine, Meth
& Stimulant Summit**

VIRTUAL

NOVEMBER 2, 2022
EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION AND RATES SEPTEMBER 23

[REGISTER HERE](#)

ON THE CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- Patriot Day, September 11 Never Forget!
- Suicide Prevention Awareness Month
- National Recovery Month
- September 13 National Opioid and Substance Awareness Day
- First Day of Autumn, September 22
- Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
- Blood Cancer Awareness Month

OCTOBER

Fall's coming Y'ALL!



- National Bullying Prevention Month
- Mental Health Awareness Week, October 3-9
- Red Ribbon Week, October 23-31
- National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, October 29