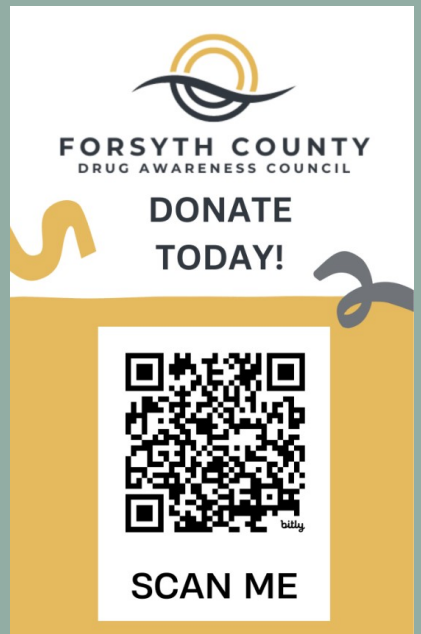




EDUCATE.
ADVOCATE.
EMPOWER.

Strategizer

Leading the way to a
healthier Forsyth County



Give Thanks!

November 2025 Volume 5 Issue 7

[Donate Here](#)

Kayden's Korner

November—the season of
gratitude—is here! I am so

the flyer I sent you by email before and
after the meeting? Please share it with



grateful and proud of all of YOU, FCDAC members. Our coalition is making a difference in our community. We have made great strides in our schools over the last few years.

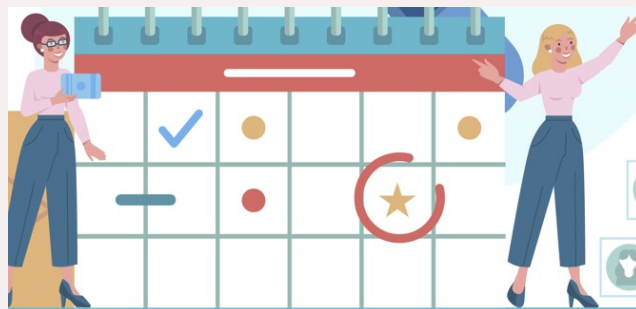
We are pleased to have five schools with Drug Prevention Coaches, one school receiving visits from the coaches to meet with a small group, and two high schools have started **One Day At A Time (ODAT)** student organizations. The ODAT club at East Forsyth High is mentored by FCDAC member Kirsten Banks, Director of the Therapeutic Recovery Network.

We have a strong, active, and **AWESOME** Youth Council. I am thankful and so proud of their initiatives. I am especially proud that our Youth Sector leader, **Sharmada Venkataramani**, is CADCA's 2026 National Youth Leader (see the story below)! **Wow! Congratulations Sharmada!** Actually, Sharmada is the second FCDAC Youth leader to receive this recognition for outstanding youth drug-prevention leadership. The first was Vinayak Menon in 2022! **Congratulations to Sharmada!**

Giving Tuesday is December 2; please take a look at the story below. This day is an opportunity to increase community awareness for FCDAC and our mission to reduce drug misuse and help create a healthier Forsyth County. **Can you help get the word out by printing and sharing**

those in your sphere of influence. Think about your church, parent groups, book clubs, community events board, and don't forget your FB page—post our flyer, please! **YOU ARE THE BEST!**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Our next FCDAC Council Meeting is on
Wednesday, December 3
8 a.m.
United Way Offices



FCDAC Council Meeting, Work and Programs Round-up

Council Meeting Highlights

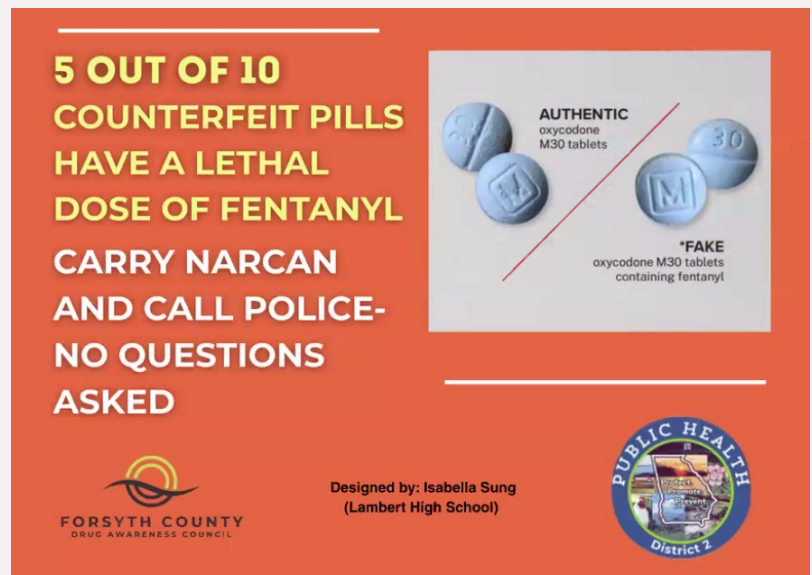
Director Rachel Kayden opened the 8 a.m. monthly council meeting by welcoming everyone, introducing attendees, and making announcements.

Announcements:

- Check out the **new flyer** (below) to increase awareness about the **dangers of Delta 8**. The council is now able to collaborate more closely with Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy on marijuana and Delta-8 policy issues.
- We are so proud of our Youth Council: **Sharmada Venkataramani**, named CADCA National Youth Leader, **Keertana Uppala's** project to launch "Break the Silence: TALKS," an online virtual meeting space via Zoom. **Eshawnvie Kallu and Sahasra Tatavarti** took their **Fentanyl Awareness Curriculum**

into Lakeside Middle School. Eshawnvie and Sahasra also announced the Opioid Awareness Billboard winner, Isabella Sung, and that it will be displayed soon.

- Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy's 2025 Annual Policy Summit will be held on November 12, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- **Annual Drug Summit — Mark your calendars: February 11, 2026.** Lindsey Simpson, FC Schools prevention specialist, announced the annual Drug Summit, scheduled for February 11th at FoCAL Center.
- **Jingle Jog 5k and Fun Run:** Sarah Pedarre from Forsyth County Family Connection announced the Jingle Jog event on **December 14th at the Cumming City Center**, with proceeds benefiting the Forsyth County Community Connection, which works to aid foster children and their families, as well as unhoused and unaccompanied youth ages 18–24.
- **PALS Support Group:** Maureen Bixler shared that the free Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PALS) support group meets every **Monday at 6:30 p.m. at Live Life Counseling**.
- **Giving Tuesday is December 2.** FCDAC is participating. Our Flyer is below, and you will also receive one by email. Please copy and share widely, especially on your social media accounts.
- **Clair Holbrook, Opioid Public Health Analyst for Public Health District 2,** reported that Forsyth County was number 2 in District 2's 13 counties for Fentanyl Overdose deaths. Overdose often comes through fake, pressed pills that look identical to medications prescribed in the Medical community. FCDAC's Youth, Eshawnvie Kallu and Sahasra Tatavarti, worked with Ms. Holbrook on the Opioid Awareness Billboard Challenge Contest. The winner, Isabella Sung, a senior at Lambert High School, presented her billboard design to the Council. The final design is pictured here. She said her goal with the design was to "make it stand out immediately — something bold and simple enough that drivers could notice the message right away." She explained that entering the contest felt like a chance to increase potentially life-saving awareness in our community.



Congratulations to Isabelle Sung (center) for her design, and to the hard-working FCDAC Youth, Eshawnvie Kallu (left) and Sahasra Tatavarti (right), who organized and promoted the contest across all Middle Schools and High Schools. Our thanks to Clair Holbrook from Public Health District 2 for their sponsorship. The location of the proposed billboard is currently under consideration. Please watch for a future update.

More Opioid Crisis Data:

- Opioid-involved overdose deaths in Georgia rose 302% from 2010 to 2022.
- Fentanyl overdose deaths increased 308% from 2019 to 2022.
- In 2024, nearly 1,300 opioid-related overdose deaths occurred in Georgia, with opioids accounting for about 75% of all drug overdose deaths.
- Forsyth County saw fentanyl deaths rise from 10 in 2020 to 34 in 2022, but numbers have since declined to 16 in 2024, mirroring a hopeful national trend.
- Demographics: Most overdoses occur among white males aged 25–39, but all races and ages are affected.

Welcome to this month's speaker, **Kerry Hobbs**. Kerry is the Manager of Clinical Pharmacy Services at **Northside Hospital**. We will learn about all things Pain Management in the Hospital setting, and a new non-opioid pain medication.

Healthcare Innovation: Non-Opioid Pain Management

- A new FDA-approved medication, **Jornavix (navacaprant)**, offers a non-opioid option for managing acute post-surgical pain.
- **What to know about Jornavix:**
 - Works by blocking pain signals before they reach the brain.
 - Intended for short-term use (up to 14 days), primarily in outpatient settings.
 - Comparable effectiveness to hydrocodone in trials, but without opioid-related risks.
 - Cost remains a challenge (\$15 per tablet), though coupons are available for some patients.

Hospital Pain Management:

- Hospitals are adopting multimodal pain strategies—combining acetaminophen, NSAIDs, muscle relaxants, nerve blocks, and physical therapy to minimize opioid use.
- *Opioids are reserved for breakthrough pain only.*
- For individuals in recovery, hospitals increasingly document recovery status in charts to avoid opioid prescriptions and offer safer alternatives.

Safe medication disposal options and education are available for the community.

Community Outreach, Youth, Members, and Partners

Community Outreach

New FCDAC and GRMP Flyer for the Community

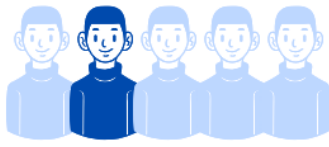
What You Need to Know about Delta 8

**Understanding
Delta 8**

What is Delta 8

**Negative Effects
of Delta 8**





Understanding Delta 8

SYNTHETIC THC CANNABINOIDS

Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council + Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy

- Delta-8 THC is a psychoactive compound found in small amounts in the hemp plant.
- Most Delta-8 THC is produced in labs by chemically converting hemp-derived CBD.

Identification Forms

How To Identify Delta 8 Forms

- Vape Cartridges & Pens: Inhaled through vaping devices; effects occur quickly but can harm lung health.
- Gummies and Candies: Sweet-flavored edibles that look like regular candy, making them especially dangerous for children.
- Edibles
- Tinctures and Oils



- Impaired memory, attention, learning especially harmful for adolescent brains.
- Increased anxiety, paranoia, panic attacks
- Mood disturbances: depression or irritability
- Loss of coordination, delayed reaction time, increased risk of accidents
- Possible dependence or withdrawal symptoms with repeated use.

Farm Bill & Delta 8

- The 2018 Farm Bill legalized hemp and its derivatives (so long as $\Delta 9\text{-THC} \leq 0.3\%$) by removing hemp from the Controlled Substances Act.
- That legalization opened a "loophole" that allowed the manufacturing and sale of intoxicating cannabinoids like Delta-8 (converted from hemp-derived CBD) under federal law.
- However, this legal status is contested: some federal proposals aim to close that loophole by redefining hemp to exclude intoxicating cannabinoids.

GA Policy on Delta-8

- Hemp products are legal in GA if $\Delta 9\text{-THC}$ stays

What We Hope To Accomplish & What Can You Do

- Raise awareness among youth, parents, and educators about the

Contact Us

Have any Questions?

- Want to help raise

in GA it is 0.1% says less than or equal to 0.3% but SB 494 now limits sales to those 21+ and requires new testing and labeling rules

- parents, and educators about the harms of Delta-8
- Promote safer alternatives and prevention education
- Support legislation at state and federal levels to close the Delta-8 loophole



Our Previous Successes

- Establishment of SR 427: Study committee to study the effects of Delta-9 and medical marijuana
- SB 494: Restricts sales of consumable hemp products (e.g. edibles, vapes) to those 21 and older, more rigorous testing for marijuana products

Data

- A 2024 University of South Carolina study found that 11.4% of 12th graders nationwide reported using Delta-8 and rates were even higher (about 14%) in the Southeast.
- According to the Georgia Poison Center, calls related to hemp-derived Delta-8, Delta-9, and similar products have risen sharply over the past three years, with the majority involving youth — 71% of 2,719 cases were in individuals under 19, and 83% required or resulted in ER treatment, including nearly one-quarter of all cases involving teens ages 13–19.

- Want to help raise awareness?

 **CONTACT US**

Email us at
info@GaMarijuanaPolicy.org



info@GaMarijuanaPolicy.org

Follow us at [fcdacouncil](#) & [gamjpolicy](#)

Join the newsletter and emailing list

Reach out and get involved!

Youth Outreach

Youth Council's

Sharmada Venkataramani CADCA 2025 National Youth Leader! Congratulations!



Sharmada Venkataramani, FCDAC's Youth Sector Leader, senior at South Forsyth High School, podcaster, and youth board member of Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy, has been named **CADCA's 2026 National Youth Leader!**

Sharmada received notice of her selection from CADCA's Sierra Brown Associate, Youth Leadership. In part, the October 14th letter read, "Good morning, Sharmada!

It brings me great pleasure to share that you have been selected as CADCA's 2026 National Youth Leader ☐, an honor that will be formally recognized at our National Leadership Forum in February 2026. Your dedication, leadership, and impact within your community truly exemplify what this award represents, and we are so excited to celebrate you at Forum!"

The prestigious National Leadership Forum takes place February 2nd-5th, 2026, at the Gaylord National Harbor in Maryland. This invitation includes a scholarship award that provides for Sharmada's travel, lodging, and complimentary registration for the conference.



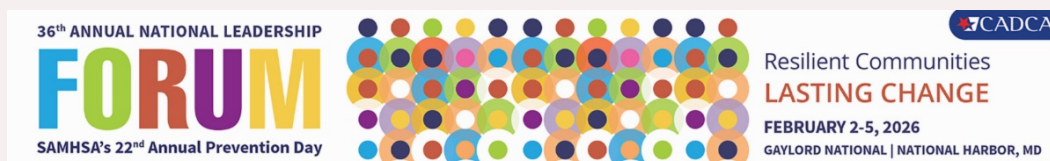
Sharmada will be recognized during the Closing Award Luncheon on Thursday, February 5th, at 12 pm, when she will be presented with the award and invited to deliver a brief speech.

Sharmada will highlight her community work and experiences as a youth leader within FCDAC, as well

Sharmada will highlight her community work and experiences as a youth leader within FCDAC, as well as how prevention has shaped her goals and future aspirations.

Sharmada is the second FCDAC Youth Council Sector Leader to be recognized by this prestigious award! Vinayak Menon was the 2022 CADCA National Youth Leader.

Congratulations to Sharmada Venkataramani! FCDAC looks forward to hearing all about your experience at CADCA's National Leadership Forum!



[Registration](#)

Youth Initiative "Break the Silence: TALKS" Brings Young People Together for Mutual Support

Keertana Uppala,
FCDAC Youth
Council member
and a sophomore
at West Forsyth
High School,
announced a new
initiative to reach
youth.



Working with the Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy, Keertana is launching "**Break the Silence: TALKS**" (which stands for **Teens Advocating for Listening, Kindness, and Support**), an online virtual meeting space via Zoom. Youth who attend can open up, connect, and be heard in a safe, non-judgmental space to discuss the impact of stress, school pressure, family struggles, and friendship through listening, kindness, support, and peer-to-peer advice.

"To make this happen," Keertana says, "I want to create **peer-led Zoom**

workshops where I, along with other teenagers, can lead open discussions



Silence

INTRODUCING T.A.L.K.S

Break the Silence: T.A.L.K.S. is a virtual space where teens can open up to other teens, connect, and be heard. It's a judgment-free zone for sharing what's really going on whether it's stress, school pressure, friendships, or family struggles. We'll talk, listen, give each other advice, and find ways to make it better for one another.

Date: Tuesday, November 25th
Time: 6 PM - 7PM on Zoom

What is T.A.L.K.S.

Teens Advocating for
Listening, Kindness, and
Support, because talking is
the first step towards healing.



Text At 813 340 1209

Email: keertanauppala@gmail.com



Scan To RSVP

about stress, pressure, and healthier coping mechanisms. The workshops could reach teens across Georgia, especially those who might not have access to local programs or feel comfortable opening up in person. The workshops would focus on emotional intelligence, resilience, and showing how music, art, volunteering, nature, and friendship can all give us that same feeling of joy, only real, lasting, and healthy."

According to John Bringuel, Prevention / Intervention Program Manager of The Council on Alcohol and Drugs, "The research and data support, that the Foundational SOLUTION to our Substance Misuse, SUD, and virtually all Mental Health conditions is through building Emotional Literacy (Emotional Intelligence) starting in Elementary, Middle, and High School building resiliency in our communities while using expressive outlets like music, art, volunteering, nature, and connectedness to create a "Natural High" with no Side Effects."

Way to go! Keertana!

Sharmada Venkataramani Launches New Podcast, "Prevention Policy with Youth Voices"

"Prevention Policy with Youth Voices" is a podcast that spotlights young leaders shaping the future of prevention policy!



Hosted by Sharmada Venkataramani, a youth advocate, this show amplifies the voices driving meaningful change in prevention and public health.

In our very first episode, we're joined by Alana Barr, a Policy Analyst at Chanin Hall whose work centers

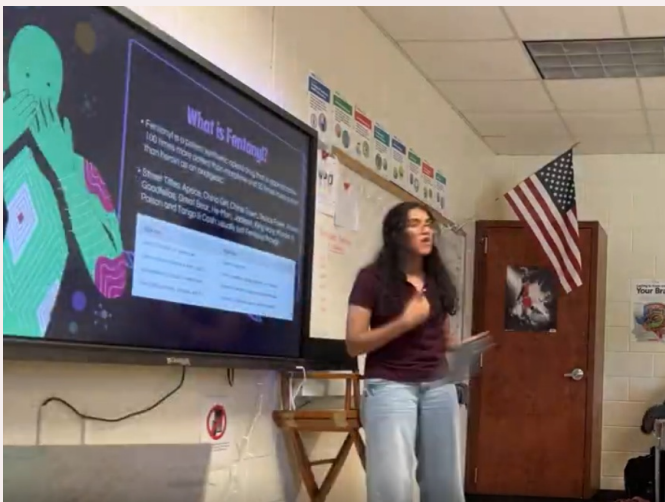


Alana Barr, a Policy Analyst at Chapin Hall whose work centers on child welfare and behavioral health policy. With Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Public Policy from Georgia Tech, Alana brings deep insight into how research and analysis fuel effective policy design. Her

The Prevention Policy Podcast,
Episode 1
Guest, Alana Barr

journey has already taken her across the globe — from leading the ESG Frameworks for Public Officials course at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in Geneva, to coordinating projects with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and contributing to child welfare initiatives with CAI and the CDC. In this episode, Alana shares her path, lessons learned from international policy work, and advice for young professionals passionate about prevention and public impact.

Eshawnvie Kallu and Sahasra Tatavarti Present a Fentanyl Awareness Workshop at Lakeside Middle School



In October, Eshawnvie Kallu and Vedant Mehta, both Seniors at Lambert High School, presented a Fentanyl Awareness workshop in two 8th-grade classes at Lakeside Middle School.

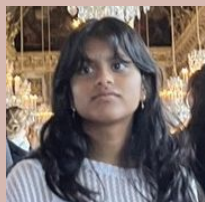
Eshawnvie Kallu, Sahasra Tatavarti, and Vedant Mehta developed the Fentanyl Awareness curriculum. Kallu and Tatavarti, both members and founders of a campus club called **SAFE** (Students Against Fentanyl Epidemic) worked with Vedant Mehta, a member of **HYPE** (Healthcare, Youth, Poverty, and Education), another campus club, and adult mentors, **Coach Lyerly**, the Assistant Principal of Forsyth Virtual Academy (FVA), and

Mr. Daniels, the Health/PE teacher at FVA to develop the curriculum during the 2024-25 school year.

Kallu told the *Strategizer*, "Our workshop focused on identifying environments in which students might encounter opioids and how to protect themselves from being sucked into drug experimentation or use. In addition to informational slides on the dangers and the evolving nature of Fentanyl, we did three interactive activities with them in which they were given multiple safe and unsafe situations that they had to identify and brainstorm appropriate responses to."

"The students really enjoyed the hands on aspect of the presentation!" Kallu added.





Sahasra Tatavarti is a senior at Lambert High School. The impact prevention activities has inspired Sahasra to join the Youth Council. Sahasra heard about FCDAC and the

work of former Youth Council Member Vinayak Menon. "It intrigued me because of the up-close impact his involvement was having on people's lives, and I wanted to do as much as possible." My interests include reading, listening to my favorite music artists, and going out with my friends.



Eshawnvie Kallu is a senior at Lambert High School. My passion for helping others was sparked when I heard about the prevention work the Council was doing. I want to

contribute to building a more robust solution for **early drug abuse prevention**. By being involved in **Project SAFE at Lambert** and this **amazing council**, I can help start small ripples of change in drug prevention. You can usually find me trying different types of food or playing volleyball in my free time.

FCDAC Youth, Saismaran Vummadi, Launches YouTube Channel, Pulse of Prevention



Saismaran Vummadi

launched a YouTube Channel called Pulse of Prevention for FCDAC. It provides short videos on drug abuse and prevention.

Pulse of Prevention is part of the **Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council** and its **Youth Council**. We hope the channel will empower youth and communities through impactful, real, and relatable short videos that raise awareness about substance abuse, mental health, and making smart choices—one heartbeat at a time.



Saismaran Vummadi is a junior at Alliance Academy for Innovation.

I joined the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council because it provides a meaningful opportunity to actively prevent substance abuse through school programs, community education, and youth-led initiatives.

I'm passionate about spreading awareness on substance misuse prevention and helping make resources like Deterra Drug Deactivation Kits and Naloxone more accessible to the community. I enjoy involvement in projects that allow me to connect with different groups in Forsyth County

and make a positive impact through small, meaningful actions.

I enjoy playing basketball, working out at the gym, and spending time with friends.



<https://youtube.com/@pulseofprevention?si=TQ-En-rszvkHykdh>



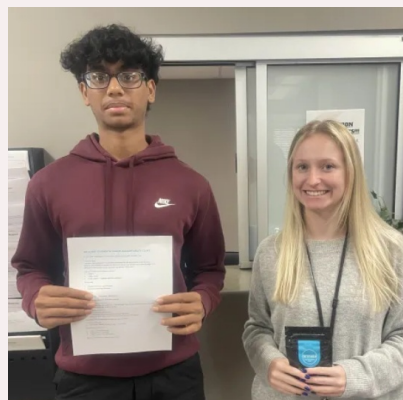
There is
Always
something
to be
Thankful
for

Sai's Other Youth Council Activities



In October, I focused on distributing drug prevention and safety materials across different areas of the community. I delivered over 50

Deterra Drug Deactivation Kits and several Naloxone nasal sprays to locations including Central High School, various courts such as DUI Court, local pharmacies, hospitals, and a few senior living homes.



Delivering Deterra Drug Deactivation kits to the DUI Court. Here Sai is pictured with Kylie Klask a case manager at the DUI Court.



My goal was to ensure that more people — including students, seniors, and families — had access to resources that help prevent drug misuse and promote safe medication disposal. It was an uplifting experience visiting these places and talking to people about why these tools are so crucial for keeping our community safe.

Finally, the Connection Coat Drive caught my eye, and I collected three boxes of winter wear! Sai met up with Jeremy at the Connection for drop-off in the picture left.

Thank you, Sai, for your generous spirit of volunteerism!

School News



Emily Ennis, Gateway and



Ainsley Miller, Prevention Coach,
North Forsyth High School



Lauren Hairston, Prevention



by Ainsley Miller



This past month has been hectic and good!

Currently, we have three students attending the group sessions at North, 10 at Gateway, and 11 at Forsyth Academy. Lauren Hairston, our new Prevention Coach at East High, is waiting to receive one more permission slip before she can set up a group session with two students!

On September 16, Emily hosted a parent information night, speaking with 17 parents. Her next parent information night is on November 11 at Gateway!

Emily's sober recreational activity at Gateway was an Iron Chef Pizza Contest, woo! She had seven students compete!

Emily, Lauren, and I presented in six health classes at East Forsyth High School on October 22nd and 23rd, and had a total of 123 students, two of whom signed up to participate in the Group Sessions Lauren will offer at East.

October 23, Lauren and I attended the Trunk or Treat at East Forsyth High School. We set up a game (white game board in the picture, top right). It was a game where you put a chip in one of the slots, and whatever number it landed on at the bottom was how many pieces of candy you got. The kids loved it!

The Trunk or Treat for North Forsyth High School was on October 28. We interacted with many people and handed out our FCDAC Resource flyers.

Emily and I attended the **Sophomore Educational Night** at Lambert High School on October 30 and helped **Todd Weise at FCDAC's Information Table**. The three of us spoke with several parents and handed out flyers. We had one

parent sign up to receive more information and possibly attend upcoming meetings. Another parent expressed interest in joining FCDAC! It was a great night! The more often we are seen and heard at school events, the more open and accepting parents are of information.

Lastly, the three of us have been going to Lambert High School weekly to facilitate a group session, which currently consists of four students who have continued to come and meet with us for several weeks.



Lauren Hairston and Ainsley Miller, TRUNK OR TREAT at East Forsyth High School, on Thursday, October 23. "We ran through A LOT of candy with our game!"



There are many different tools students use to help maintain continued sobriety; many are not physical tools but mental. I encourage all my students to **utilize honesty** so that their peers and I can help. It is hard to help when we don't know what is going on.

Secondly, learning how to have fun while being sober is one of the most essential tools for successful sobriety and addiction recovery.

Another tool we encourage is getting back into a sport or club they enjoyed before using substances.

Having a positive peer group is very helpful, especially for communication, honesty, and building self-worth. We encourage students to talk with their peers when they are struggling and to make sure they are positive influences that help push them toward their recovery. When I am around positive and encouraging people, I feel uplifted, and the same is true for teenagers.

Lastly, we encourage them to take actions they will feel good about; not only does that help distract them from substances, but it also builds their self-worth. When I take care of myself and take positive actions like picking up trash, doing dishes, doing laundry, or providing support to another peer, it always feels good!

Emily Ennis, left, and Ainsley Miller, center and Todd Weise right, host an information table at Lambert High School Sophomore Information Night in October.



Lauren and Ainsley at North Forsyth County High School Trunk or Treat!
Brrr...It was a freezing night, and we were grateful that people kept showing up to talk! We had one family take a sticker and a pen from the Council's resources, and I spoke with two parents about Substance Prevention and Education and the services I offer at the school.

Members teaching Members



Get Ready for GivingTuesday, December 2, 2025!

By Dana Bryan



EDUCATE.
ADVOCATE.
EMPOWER.

Support Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council

Join Us for Giving [Tuesday, December 2, 2025!](#)

Giving Tuesday: Make a Difference!

This Giving Tuesday, join Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council (FCDAC) in organizing to build a safer, healthier

GIVING
TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday takes place each year on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving. It is a movement that was created in 2012 by a group at the 92nd Street Y and its Belfer Center for Innovation and Social Impact in New York City. At a time of year when so much money and attention are devoted to consumerism, this day is designed to make us aware of the nonprofit

Council (FCDAC) in our mission to build a safer, healthier community. We are a coalition of community organizations, professional groups, and interested citizens who, with your support, bring vital drug education, prevention programs, and recovery resources to those who need them most.

Why Give to FCDAC?

- Empowerment of youth through education to prevent drug misuse—FCDAC Youth Council provides workshops in public schools, and we want to do more!
- Support families affected by addiction—FCDAC is Forsyth County's Resource Hub for Helpful Information.
- Expand Community Outreach and Awareness Events—Annual Drug Summit, Annual Walk for Recovery, and Opioid Awareness Billboard Campaign, Podcasts like "Prevention Policy with Youth Voices," FCDAC YouTube Channel, Pulse of Prevention,
- Help fund Prevention Coaches in our schools, recovery services, and support groups

How You Can Help

1. Donate: Any amount makes an impact. Visit our website or scan the QR code below.
2. Volunteer: Join our efforts and make a real difference in Forsyth County.
3. Spread the Word: Share this flyer and invite friends to participate.



organizations in our community and worldwide that can benefit from our contributions, both monetary and with our time. In the past 13 years, Giving Tuesday has resulted in the generosity of hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

If you are reading this newsletter, you are already aware of the many ways in which the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council works to prevent addiction by supporting organizations, programs, and initiatives that educate, counsel, and empower our citizens, particularly our youth and their parents, through its leadership.

Our Drug Awareness Council is recognized both statewide and nationally as a model for others.

We are a nonprofit with limited funds and benefit greatly from all donations. Please read the Giving Tuesday flyer above and consider donating to FCDAC as your participation in the 2025 Giving Tuesday program. Your contribution, whether large or small, will be greatly appreciated, and I can assure you it will be used responsibly.



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!

Parent Partners Corner

Helping Our Kids Starts With Our Own Phone Habits



Delaney Ruston, MD



Lisa Tabb

October 21, 2025



I hear from so many parents who feel conflicted about their own phone habits when it comes to modeling healthy use for their kids.

They'll say, "I tell my kids to get off their screens, but then I'm on mine all the



[Read Blog Post Here](#)



Our Partners in Prevention
More Great Community Events and Resources...

FREE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

For families of adult/teenage children dealing with substance addiction

Participants must be 18 or older

Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL) PROVIDES HOPE

through education and support



PAL

PARENTS OF
ADDICTED
LOVED ONES

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

10/6 6:30pm

Live Life Counseling

1435 Haw Creek Cir E. Suite 403

CONTACT: Wendy Cates-678-371-6953
wcates@Livelifc-Counseling.com

FREE weekly meetings feature:

- Education
- Peer-to-peer support

TOPICS INCLUDE:

The addiction cycle • Enabling behaviors • Delayed emotional growth

Role of the family • Setting realistic boundaries • Emotional detachment

Financial strings • Steps of recovery • Recognizing relapse

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT PAL:

www.palgroup.org



Help support children in care and their foster, adoptive, kinship and bio families! Help improve our county's child & family wellbeing! Support our NEW resource center for youth facing homelessness!



Community Connection
133 Samaritan Dr
Cumming, GA 30040
404-985-7796
sarah@forsythconnection.org
Forsyth.gafcp.org AND
theDROPFoCo.com

Sunday, December 14th, 2024

Title Sponsor \$5000 Santa's Sleigh PLUS recognition at Start/Finish & Water Station

Star OR Bow Sponsor \$250 (only 1 each!!)
Santa's Sleigh Sponsor gets logo on shirt & bow tie (commit by 11/4)

Stocking Stuffer \$250

- *Table at event & bag stuffer
- *Logo on shirt
- *1 runner (or t-shirt)
- *Listed on race site



Mistletoe \$500

- *Table at event & bag stuffer
- *Logo on shirt & banner
- *2 runners (or t-shirts)
- *Listed on race site
- *Yard sign on course & FB post



Santa's Sleigh \$2500

- *Table at event & bag stuffer
- *Logo on shirt & banner
- *Yard sign on course & by water
- *Announced during event
- *Link on website and FB post
- *6 runners (or t-shirts)
- *Thank-you plaque



Reindeer \$1000

- *Table at event & bag stuffer
- *Logo on shirt & banner
- *4 runners (or t-shirts)
- *Yard sign on course
- *Announced at event
- *Logo on website and FB post



Name of Organization: _____
Contact Person: _____
Contact email: _____
Contact phone: _____
Sponsor Level: _____
T-shirt Sizes: ___ S ___ M ___ L ___ XL ___ XXL

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— FORSYTH COUNTY —
COMMUNITY CONNECTION
family connection

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family connection

We envision a Forsyth County where all children are healthy, primed for school, and succeed when they get there; where families are stable, self-sufficient, and productive; and where communities are vibrant, robust, and thriving.

Connecting Children & Families to Resources

Working strategically with our partners, we will eliminate duplication of services to deepen each other's impact and reach more of the community in need. We work with partners to increase awareness, provide training, increase support and enhance services for children and families to improve youth & family well-being. Child & Family Welfare Collaborative, Council on Homeless Youth, Drug Awareness Council, Local Interagency Planning Team (LIPT), and Forsyth County Nonprofit Partnership, [the DROP](#)



Protecting our Children

Our community coalition will work to spread awareness and education and recruit partners in prevention to make Forsyth County the safest place to raise children.

Forsyth County Family Violence Taskforce, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Council, CSA prevention training, ACEs training, Youth Mental Health First Aid

Children in Care Support

Provide training and support for local foster families while recruiting new homes, support Adoptive and Kinship care homes and decrease the number of children being placed outside of the county.

Foster Parent Trainings, Fostering Hope Support meetings, Care Portal, TBRI trainings

Promoting Partner Engagement

To help promote partner and community engagement, FCCC participates and supports as many local taskforces, coalitions and councils as possible.

DFCS County & Regional Board, FC Schools Prevention Workgroup and Mentoring Program, Family Connection Regional Board, Georgia's Family Strengthening Network, Lanier Forsyth Rotary Club, Leadership Forsyth, Resilient Georgia and the Unify North Ga Collaborative.

Volunteer Opportunities: www.justserve.org

Community Awareness Events and Fundraisers

To sustain our work and spread awareness we hold charity events that engage the entire community and further strengthen our children and families.

Blues & Q Charity Event: www.BluesandQ.com

Cumming Jingle Jog Charity 5k and Fun Run: www.CummingJingleJog.info

Tax ID #: 58-2099754



Attention CARES!!!

There is currently 1 In-Person CARES Connects remaining in 2025.

LAST In-Person CARES Connects remaining in 2025

Friday, November 14th, 2025,
9 AM - 4PM,

Cary W. Martin Conference Center,
233 N Houston Rd, Warner Robins, GA
31093.

Topic: TBA

All CARES are required to attend 1 CARES Connect annually.
All CARES Connects have a \$40 training fee.

[Click Here to Register](#)

LAST Virtual Care Connect in 2025!

November 14th, 2025

Time: 9 AM to 4 PM

Virtual

Training Fee \$40

Training Title: Foundations of Healing & Belonging: Building Respect, Safety, and Connection

Description: This 6-hour interactive training strengthens the core values of belonging, respect, safety, and connection within peer-led and recovery-oriented environments.

[Click Here for more info](#)

The Topic for November 20 Webinar is



Register now for the CARES November Webinar!

Join us on Thursday, November 20th, 2025: 05:00 PM - 06:30 PM

Making Mindfulness Make A Difference

Register

FCHS GRAND CENTRAL PRESENTS
5th ANNUAL

Free Thrifting Extravaganza!

Please consider donating:

- Coats
- Hoodies
- Jackets of All Sizes
- Winter Accessories

Donations accepted through
December 5th
at the FCHS Front Office

Last Year, over 1300 items were donated.



Services

Onsite and Online Therapy Services
Individual • Family • Couples Counseling
Walk and Talk Therapy
Eye Movement Desensitization (EMDR)
Hypnotherapy
Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
Play Therapy

Specialties of Care

Depression • Anxiety
Grief and Loss
Stress Management
Chronic Pain • Illness
Gender Identity • LGBTQIA+

About Us

At Focus Forward Counseling, we take pride in our commitment to giving individualized, compassionate care to our clients and to forming caring relationships between counselors and clients. While counseling can combine many different, impactful techniques to help clients feel better, we understand at the core, building strong relationships results in more successful treatments and favorable outcomes for clients.

We invite you to take a closer look at our counseling services available in both our locations: Alpharetta and Cumming, GA and our unique Focus Forward Difference makes us stand out among other counseling centers.



BOOK AN
APPOINTMENT
TODAY!

Visit us at
FocusForwardCC.com
(404) 388-3909

- 5975 Parkway North Blvd., Suite D
Cumming, GA 30040
- 3060 Kimball Bridge Rd, Suite 110
Alpharetta, GA 30022
- 5971 Parkway North Blvd., Suite C
Cumming, GA 30040

News For You

Local News



In Cumming, GA, Veterans Day 2025 events include the City's Annual Veterans Day Ceremony at the Lou Sobh Amphitheater on November 11th at 11 a.m., presented by Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1030, and the AboutFace-USA Salute to Service Celebration, which includes a reception and keynote remarks on November 11th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Thank a Vet Every Day in November!

Advocacy Victory!

Victory for Prevention



CLOSE THE LOOPHOLE

Prevention only works if dangerous, unregulated products are kept out of reach. Because of support by prevention advocates' letters, petitions, and phone calls, Congress is taking action to close the loophole that allowed synthetic hemp products — like Delta-8 — to be sold unregulated and often marketed like candy, making them appeal to kids.

The U.S. Senate has now added this fix to the new bipartisan budget bill that will end the government shutdown. The House should pass the bill soon, and the President is expected to sign it into law.

This is a **significant victory for prevention** — and for every parent and person who wants to protect young people from dangerous products that should never have been on store shelves. Together with the Partnership to End Addiction, Shatterproof shared our call for this change in a [Washington Post op-ed](#) — and today that message is turning into real change.

Your voice made this possible. Thousands of Shatterproof supporters and community coalitions took action by signing our petition, writing letters, and making phone calls to make sure lawmakers heard how important this issue is.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO MADE YOUR VOICES HEARD!

FYI

Beware of "Gas Station Heroin" KRATOM

Kratom is a dangerous new opioid-like product called 7-hydroxymitragynine (also known as 7-OH). These products come from the kratom plant, and it was brought up as a drug of concern at the last FCDAC Council Meeting.

In her October 28 Tech Tuesday Blog post, Dr. Delaney Ruston discusses the dangers of this unregulated opioid like drug. Dr. Ruston writes, "...(**Kratom**) acts on opioid receptors in the brain, causing addiction and, tragically, leading to many recent deaths, especially among young adults."



"Here is what to know and share with youth in your life:

When a product says "kratom," it may be the natural plant powder with low levels of active compounds, or a concentrated version packed with far more 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), the powerful and dangerous ingredient linked to addiction and overdose."

- sold online and even in gas stations and convenience stores
- Illegal in several states, it's still easily accessible
- federally unregulated
- marketed as "herbal supplements," "plant-based," or even "energy/mood support" despite being

- marketed as "herbal supplements," "plant-based," or even "energy/mood support," despite being much more potent and risky
- sold as powder, capsules, or tea
- Narcan can be an effective treatment for a Kratom overdose
- Mixing with other substances, like alcohol, is particularly dangerous

Risks include:

- Addiction and withdrawal symptoms similar to opioids
- Nausea, vomiting, and liver damage
- Seizures and hallucinations
- Respiratory depression (slowed breathing), which can be fatal

Spread the word about this danger!

On the Calendar



November

- Healing from Grief and Loss, November 8, 2025

2025

- Tuesday, November 11
- GRMP 2025 Annual Policy Summit, November 12 10:30-12
- Tranq 2025, November 13, 2025 9-3 Virtual Conference
- National Smoke-Out, November 17, 2025
- Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 2025

December



- Giving Tuesday, December 2
- FCDAC Meeting, Wednesday, December 3, United Way Office 8 am
- Donating to Central High's Thrifting Extraganza Ends December 5
- Jingle Jog, December 14, Cumming City Center
- Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25



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