

HC DrugFree: Keeping Howard County *in the KNOW!* ...knowledge is power, so just say KNOW

**I walk down memory lane
because I love running into you!**

- Anonymous

Save the Date: Upcoming Events

- **February 6:** [Teen Advisory Council meeting](#)
- **February 7 - March 28:** [Life Skills Classes](#) (Grades 6-9)
- **March 6:** [Teen Advisory Council meeting](#)
- **April 22:** [Drive-Thru Medication & Sharps Disposal Event](#)
- **May 5:** [HoCo Student Film Festival](#)

Remembering Tyler Johnson

Today marks the 9th anniversary of losing a treasured member of the HC DrugFree family. Tyler Johnson was only 25 years old when he was killed during a shooting event at the Mall in Columbia on Saturday, January 25, 2014.

As a frequent speaker at HC DrugFree programs, Tyler shared his experiences of teen drug and alcohol use. While he spoke openly of his journey with addiction and what it was like to live in recovery, his story highlighted hope and excitement at the possibilities ahead. He gave freely of himself so that others could avoid the path he traveled as a teen.



Yet Tyler's impact wasn't only felt by the students and parents he spoke to. He was quick to offer his assistance to HC DrugFree staff or anyone in need. He had an infectious smile and greeted everyone with a warm embrace, which we affectionately referred to as "Tyler hugs."

We, at HC DrugFree, miss Tyler, continue to share his story, and work to prevent drug and alcohol misuse. On behalf of Tyler, we ask you to intervene quickly and often when you suspect a teenager is illegally using drugs or

alcohol, give a "Tyler hug" to your loved ones to let them know that you are a safe place, and most of all, remember, there is hope and help for drug and alcohol addiction.

HC DrugFree would like to thank Tyler's family for their continued support and the recent donation from the **Tyler Johnson Memorial Fund at the Community Foundation of Howard County**. Our hearts are with Tyler's family today and always.

Free Life Skills Classes for HoCo Students



WHAT?

Life Skills is an evidence based program for Howard County students in **grades 6-9** to enhance decision making, self-management and communication skills essential to physical and emotional health and safety.

WHEN?

Weekly for 8 weeks from 5 to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays beginning February 7 and ending March 28

WHERE?

Life Skills sessions are currently being held online. The links will be provided prior to each class. Please ensure that you have downloaded Zoom prior to our sessions beginning.

HOW?

Students need a personal device equipped with a webcam and high-speed internet access. Students will connect with their teacher and other students using **FREE** Zoom conferencing software which will be downloaded to their device prior to class.

Please [**REGISTER TODAY**](#) as space is limited. Once

**REGISTER
TODAY!**

registered you will receive an email confirmation that provides more details about the program sessions.

If you have any questions please email us at LifeSkills@hcdrugfree.org

HoCo Student Film Festival

The 19th Annual HoCo Student Film Festival will be held on Friday, May 5, 2023 at the Miller Library in Ellicott City. HC DrugFree is sponsoring a PSA category with the theme of KNOW: Kids Nurturing Others Wisely. This category was chosen to showcase ways that teens can encourage one another through mental health challenges, dealing with peer pressure, and most of all, how to avoid substance (drugs, alcohol, nicotine) misuse. [Learn more](#)



College Students Wanted for Paid Virtual Position

Accepting Applications.

We are looking for college students raised in Howard County and available to assist online from college.

Do you know a college student considering a career in public health, education, drug & alcohol prevention, or who is interested in learning more about the inner workings of nonprofit organizations? How about a college student who is a good role model and likes working with younger students?



HC DrugFree is looking for responsible students to help with some of our programs. We offer a variety of opportunities to gain experience with the flexibility of working virtually from anywhere. Our experiences will also be a great addition to a resume, applications, and future job interviews.

We are looking for college students to teach and/or assist with our Life Skills classes for middle school students **Tuesdays, February 7, 14, 21, 28 & March 7, 14, 21, 28.**

HC DrugFree plans to hire 2-3 college students for this paid opportunity. Interested college students should complete this [survey](#).

High School Volunteers Wanted

Accepting Applications.

Do you know a high school student who is a good role model and likes working with younger students?

HC DrugFree is looking for responsible students to help with some of our programs. We offer a variety of opportunities to gain experience with the flexibility of working virtually from anywhere. Our experiences will also be a great addition to a resume, a college application, and future job interviews.

Community service hours available.

We are looking for high school students to assist with and be positive role models for the middle school students in our Life Skills classes **Tuesdays, February 7, 14, 21, 28 & March 7, 14, 21, 28.**

Interested high school students should complete this [survey](#).

Are you IN THE KNOW about Vaping?



Article submitted by a Howard County high school student:

It may be common knowledge that smoking damages the lungs and is the cause for many other health complications, but is this the case with vaping?

Some may think that vaping is an entirely safe alternative to smoking because it does not have any tobacco, but it still contains the drug nicotine, which is very addictive. They may be common knowledge, but the harmful side effects of nicotine cannot be stressed enough. Nicotine can obstruct brain development in teens, such as through altering the formation of synapses (a factor in learning or making memories) or impairing elements of the brain that influence attention, learning, and more. In addition, a study done by Stanford researchers found that those who vaped had a chance of contracting COVID-19 five to seven times higher than non-users. This is just one side-effect

among many, so this should make vaping another item on the list of dangers that parents should be on guard against for their teens.

Fortunately, there are subtle signs to look for around a teen that may indicate the use of a vape:

- Having suspicious or unknown USB flash drives or pens
 - Juul, MarkTen Elite, and CloudV make vapes that can deceitfully look like writing pens or USB flash drives.
- Batteries around their room as well as unknown charging cables.
 - Look for extra charging cables that you are not familiar with as well as the use of batteries as most devices have built-in rechargeable batteries.
- Some signs to look for in terms of their health include:
 - shortness of breath
 - chest pain
 - more frequently thirst
 - weight loss

[Learn more](#)



Michael Phelps Wants More Men to Try Therapy

Legendary Olympic swimmer, Michael Phelps, has been outspoken about his struggles with mental health. He is now urging other men to seek support through therapy. [Read more](#)

Research Findings on Pre-Teens and Substance Use

A study has been published regarding pre-teens' interest in and access to substances such as alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco. By examining data collected from a nationwide sample of adolescents and their parents, researchers found a variety of factors that can help pique a child's curiosity.

For example, the pre-teens of parents who reported that alcohol or nicotine were easily accessible in their homes were more likely to express a greater interest in trying said substances. Furthermore, more than 25% of the parents surveyed revealed that they had not established clear rules and boundaries regarding their children's substance use — a finding that came as a surprise to researchers. As stated by the study's lead author Meghan Martz, Ph.D. (University of Michigan), "[children's] household environments and messaging from parents can play a major role at this age." That is, it is important for parents to recognize their role in shaping their children's attitudes and behaviors and, as a result, to strive to set a good example for them to follow.

[Read more](#)



Friendships Improve Overall Health

Studies have found that people who have strong platonic relationships are more likely to enjoy better overall health, both mental and physical. As social animals, humans need community to live their most fulfilling lives, but how do we put that into practice? [Read more](#)

Narcan Maker Applies to Sell Product Over-The-Counter

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has accepted Emergent BioSolutions application to grant priority review of Narcan, its overdose nasal spray as an over-the-counter (OTC) product.

Narcan is a drug administered nasally through an autoinjector to reverse the effects of a suspected opioid overdose. Currently, Narcan can be purchased at most pharmacies in all 50 states and territories as a “behind the counter” (BTC) drug, but not OTC. [Read more](#)

Medication Storage and Disposal

Why is proper medication storage and disposal important?

Medication is the leading cause of poisoning among children, with **more than 500,000 children under the age of five experiencing a potential medication related poisoning every year.** Proper storage and disposal is vital, especially when children may mistake medication for candy. Check out this

infographic to see how similar medication and candy may appear, especially to a child.

For more information about proper medication storage and disposal please visit our website [here](#).

CANDY Confused
Pills and candy can look, smell, and even taste alike.

Every year, approximately **60,000** young children end up in the emergency room after getting into medicines left within their reach.

That's nearly 4 school busloads of children per day!

Store medicines **UP AND AWAY** and out of sight of young children.

Keep medicines in their **ORIGINAL PACKAGING**.

NEVER refer to medicine as candy when giving to your child.

In case of an **ACCIDENT**, call Poison Help 24/7 at 1-800-235-1222.

Save the number in your phone so you have it ready in an emergency.

For more information about safe medicine use, visit KnowYourOTCs.org

Make sure your kids don't accidentally get into medicine thinking that it's candy.

GUMMY BEAR vs. **MULTIVITAMIN?**

ALTRID MINT vs. **ASPIRIN?**

SWEETART vs. **ANTACID?**

IBU vs. **IBUPROFEN?**

IBU vs. **IBUPROFEN?**

Save the Date: Drive-Thru Medication & Sharps Disposal



SAVE THE DATE!

Medication & Sharps Disposal

Saturday, April 22 • 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

HCDrugFree
Empowering the Community

Wilde Lake Village Center Parking Lot
5305 Village Center Drive, Columbia 21044
www.hcdrugfree.org

Safely dispose of:

- Prescription Medication
- Over-the-counter meds
- Sharps (Syringes, Needles, Epi-Pens, etc.)
- Vitamins
- Vape Devices
- Inhalers
- Pet Medication
- ...and more!

Save the date for our next drive-thru medication and sharps collection: Saturday, April 22 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. in the Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot. We will accept prescription and over-the-counter medications, pet medications, sharps (needles, syringes, EpiPens, etc.), vapes, inhalers and more. **Teen, adult and medically-trained adult volunteers wanted!!!** More information about volunteering will be shared closer to the event. [Learn more](#)

Donations

Your generosity helps us continue to offer the programs, resources, and events that help make Howard County a safer, wiser, and more connected community. Make a difference with your dollars: [Make your tax-deductible donation today!](#)



Follow and Like Us on Social Media

Join our social media community for more content and easy ways to share important and potentially life-saving information with your friends and network.

Remember: **Knowledge is Power** and together we can help keep our community informed, safe, and **IN THE KNOW!**



Additional Resources



Thoughts of Suicide?

Mental Health Crisis?

Substance Use Crisis?

**Call or Text
988**

HCDrugFree
Engineering the Community

The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States. <https://988lifeline.org/>

**You never know when
a crisis could happen.**



Veterans: Confidential crisis support is available 24/7 for Veterans and their loved ones. <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

Grassroots Crisis Center: Need help? Don't wait. Call the local crisis hotline at 410-531-6677 or simply dial 9-8-8. Mental health and substance use services available.

Free Resources for Parents Following a Suicide Attempt: What to expect during recovery, safety planning, warning signs and risk factors. [Click here](#) to download resources document.

Reverse Opioid Overdose: [Click here](#) to contact the Howard County Health Department to receive free training and Narcan kit.

Quit Smoking: Call 1-800-QuitNow (1-800-784-8669) for 24/7 for free and confidential assistance or visit www.smokingstopshere.com.

Emotional Support Human: When someone you care about is hurting, it's natural to want to help them. But, that person might not always tell you something is wrong—and you might be unsure about how to reach out. Sponsored by the Horizon Foundation. [Learn how to be an Emotional Support Human here.](#)

Gambling with Your Future: Call, text or chat 1-800-GAMBLER for free confidential, compassionate help with gambling problems.

Additional Resources: [HC DrugFree Hotlines & Resources Page](#)

For more information, contact

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Donate

