

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

**"Celebrate endings—for they precede new beginnings."**

*Jonathan Huie*

## New Year's Resolutions: Building Good Mental Health

Happy New Year! As we think of New Year's resolutions, we naturally reflect on how we can better ourselves and contemplate changes to make that happen.

For most, New Year's resolutions typically focus on self-improvement – whether it's losing weight, exercising more, or learning a new skill or hobby. These resolutions can fill us with excitement in anticipation of the possibilities of achieving goals or weigh us down with dread and apprehension of not living up to our expectations. [Read More](#)

## If New Year's Resolutions Aren't for You, Try a "Done List"

Neuroscientist, Nicole Byers, Ph.D., has a compelling thesis about New Year's Resolutions: our brains don't like them. The yearly pressure to choose a resolution that is frequently followed by setbacks, or even abandonment, may activate the brain's chronic stress system! So, should we completely skip goal setting or attempting to adopt new habits? Absolutely not. The trick is understanding how the brain works to set yourself up for the most success. [Read More](#)

## Dry January Helps You Drink Less in 2024



If you're asking why you should face the world without a sip of wine or beer for a month, there are some compelling health reasons to do it. Dry January has become a post-holiday tradition as people start the new year focusing on their health after weeks of drinking and overeating. [Read More](#)

## Reflections on 2023. You Can Make a Difference!



New Year's Eve is just on the horizon and as we look into the possibilities of 2024, we can't help but reflect on 2023. We're grateful for our community, our friends, and our neighbors. We accomplished a great deal by working together, and for that, we all should be proud.

At HC DrugFree, we understand how challenging it can be to stay informed, which is why we are dedicated to keeping Howard County *IN THE KNOW*. Our mission is to give you, and your loved ones the resources you need to stay healthy and safe.

Over the course of the last year, HC DrugFree continued to offer educational opportunities like our Life Skills classes for middle schoolers and our free parenting classes, Guiding Good Choices®. We also saw a great deal of growth in our Teen Advisory Council, with many new faces, and lots of

inspiring new ideas!

Of course, we also hosted our twice-a-year Medication & Sharps Collection in April and again in October resulting in a total of **2,457.5 lbs. of medication** and **47 bins of sharps** collected between the two events!

We accomplished so much thanks to the support of YOU:our friends, neighbors, and partners who stood by us and bolstered our commitment to keep Howard County informed, safe, and DRUG FREE.

While we remain committed to providing FREE programs and resources to help County residents stay healthy and achieve success, we are facing unprecedented challenges, **finding ourselves \$100,000 under last year's budget** due to unexpected shifts in our grant funding.

As a nonprofit organization, HC DrugFree relies solely on one-year grants, fee-for-service contracts, and donations to fund our work. This year, your donations mean more than ever. Your support for HC DrugFree goes beyond a simple donation — it becomes an investment in the well-being and future of Howard County students, older individuals, and families. Every dollar you contribute is a commitment to the safety and future of our community.

**Please consider becoming a [Friend of HC DrugFree](#).** Your support shows funders that you value the work that we do. You can become a Friend of HC DrugFree by making a donation in any of the following amounts:

\$10 student

\$25 individual

\$50 family

\$50 nonprofit organizations

\$100 business

Sponsors starting as low as \$500.

Thank you for your continued support of the important work we do at HC DrugFree. May 2024 be another bountiful year of community partnership as we work together to keep Howard County safe!

[Donate Now](#)

Or it's not too late to **mail your 2023 or 2024 donation** to HC DrugFree's office:

HC DrugFree  
5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206  
Wilde Lake Village Center  
Columbia, Maryland 21044

[Make a Plan for New Years Eve](#)



### Celebrate Safely This New Year's Eve

Ringing in the New Year with a glass or two of champagne sounds harmless enough until it's time to drive home.

If you're planning on drinking this New Year's, make sure you have a plan to get home safely.

Even better, offer to be the designated driver for those in your party.

For the third year in a row, the Motor Vehicle Administration's Highway Safety Office is offering a \$20 Lyft credit to Maryland residents. Don't allow money to stand in the way of you getting a safe ride home! [Learn More](#)

## Start the Year with Young but Wise Role Models for Your Kids



Registration is open for our popular online Life Skills Classes for HoCo students. Classes will be held on **January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 20, 27, and March 5** on Zoom from **5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.**

**College students will teach** the evidence-based curriculum while **high school students will serve as role models and assist.** HC DrugFree staff will attend and oversee all classes. [Learn More](#)



## College Students Can Participate from Anywhere

We are looking for responsible college students raised in Howard County and available to serve as role models to our middle and high school students as well as teach our online evidence-based Life Skills classes. Previously, Howard County high school graduates joined us online from their universities in Ohio, West Virginia, Delaware, College Park, Howard County, and more!



Do you know a college student who is interested in learning more about the inner workings of nonprofit organizations? How about a college student who is a positive role model and enjoys working with younger students?

We offer a variety of opportunities to gain experience with the flexibility of joining us virtually from anywhere. **Our experiences will also be great additions to resumes, 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 on **January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 20, 27, and March 5 from 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.** Apply now even if you can't attend every class, so we can answer your questions!

[Apply Here](#)

## Teens: Get Involved and Earn Community Service Hours

### High School Students: Be a Role Model and Earn Community Service Hours

Seeking **high school students** to assist our team of college student instructors and adult facilitators teaching our Life Skills Classes to middle school and high school students. Along with the younger students, high school volunteers assisting our team and serving as positive role models will learn a variety of practical skills by attending the classes. In addition, they may earn Community Service Hours and acquire valuable experience for future college and employment applications. Life Skills classes will be held on **January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 20, 27, and March 5 from 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. on Zoom.** Apply now even if you can't attend every class, so we can answer more of your questions.

[High School Volunteers Apply Here](#)

**Next Teen Advisory Council Meeting: January 8**

HC DrugFree invites **all Howard County students in grades 8-12** to attend our monthly meetings and serve as student ambassadors in their schools and in the community.

### Why join TAC?

- Earn Community Service Hours
- Gain experience for job & college applications
- Volunteer opportunities year round
- Be a leader and role model in Howard County!

Join our teens at the next TAC meeting on **Monday, January 8** from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Zoom. Register early to get the meeting link. [Learn More & Register](#)

[Learn More](#)

[Register Now](#)

### SAMHSA Fentanyl Awareness Youth Challenge



SAMHSA issued a challenge to America's youth: Help us raise awareness about fentanyl and reduce teen overdose deaths. FentAlert: Empowering Youth for Safer Choices – SAMHSA Fentanyl Awareness Youth Challenge is an opportunity for youth,

ages 14-18, to develop a community strategy to educate their peers about fentanyl and fake pills — and prevent drug overdose deaths. There's a total prize purse of \$80,000, with individual prizes up to \$5,000. Youth can participate individually, or as part of a team. Submissions are due by February 26, 2024.

[Learn More](#)

Save the Date: Community Teen Listening Session

**Save the Date: Teen Listening Session**

**Monday, February 5 • 5:30 - 7pm via Zoom**

Join Howard County teens as they present "insider information" for parents, educators, middle school students, and their high school peers during this special student-lead community program. This is a unique opportunity for community members to listen to the real experiences of HoCo youth to better understand and support them. **More info coming soon!**



Family is never far out of reach –  
but your medicines should be.

This holiday season, keep your kids and grandkids safe from your medicines.  
Learn more at [www.UpandAway.org](http://www.UpandAway.org).

Put your medicines  
**up** **AND** **away**  
and out of sight

[Learn More](#)

You Are Not Alone

YOU'RE NOT ALONE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.  
THE LIFELINE IS HERE FOR YOU, 24/7/365.



Connect with a trained crisis counselor at any time – day or night – by calling  
or texting 988 or chatting at [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org)

For more information, contact

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Wilde Lake Village Center  
Columbia, MD 21044  
[Admin@hcdrugfree.org](mailto:Admin@hcdrugfree.org)  
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