

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

**“Blessed is the season which engages the  
whole world in a conspiracy of love.”**

*Hamilton Wright Mabie*

## We Showed Up! Community Overdose Action Town Hall



On Thursday, November 30, HC DrugFree's team of teens, parents, and community members attended the Community Overdose Action Town Hall Series. The event was held at the Slayton House in the Wilde Lake Village Center and hosted by the Maryland Opioid Operational Command Center.

Public testimony was offered by HC DrugFree Executive Director Joan Webb Scornaienchi and Board Members Harsh Patel and Mary Pizzo, as well as members of HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council. Ms. Scornaienchi has served as the Executive Director of HC DrugFree for the past fourteen years. Mr. Patel, now 24 years old, joined our Teen Advisory Council as a 9th grader at Atholton High School, remained involved through his college years out-of-

state, and later joined HC DrugFree's Board of Directors. Ms. Pizzo is retired from Maryland's Office of the Public Defender.

We reminded elected officials, funders, and the community that Primary Prevention deserves their attention and funding because "Prevention" efforts have been shown to reduce substance abuse/misuse, save lives, save money for both communities and families, reduce drug-related crime, and much more. However, too often, Primary Prevention is not part of the discussion.

Several adults in the audience had tears in their eyes as members of our Teen Advisory Council unexpectedly volunteered to testify. The teens reminded us that we do what we do for our amazing Howard County kids! As a community, we do not want Prevention conversations to focus solely on overdose prevention. That's too late.

We stood together and spoke out to keep the focus on resources for Howard County youth who are not using illegal drugs or misusing legal medication. Yes, we have always supported intervention and treatment and will continue to do so each and every day as we serve the community, but our mission is Prevention.

Many thanks to the Maryland Opioid Operational Command Center and Special Secretary of Opioid Response Emily Keller for hosting these important community conversations in Howard County and throughout the state of Maryland.



Above: HC DrugFree Executive Director Joan Webb Scornaienchi testifying during the Community Overdose Action Town Hall Series.  
Right: HC DrugFree's team signing the Community Overdose Action Town Hall Banner.



## YOU Can Help!

As most of you are aware, HC DrugFree is grant, contract, and donation funded. With just two changes to grants this fiscal year, our budget was reduced significantly.

We need your help to find businesses and individuals willing to donate to

support our work or help sponsor our events/activities. Also, YOUR tax-deductible donation at this time would be most appreciated. Adding your name to our Friends or Sponsors lists would help show our funders that the community values our services.

[Donate here](#) or mail your donation to HC DrugFree's office.

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## Navigating the Holidays in the Midst of Grief

Therapist [Laura Berman's son died of an overdose](#) in 2021 after buying pills from someone he connected with on Snapchat. Recently, she shared 5 tips to surviving (and even enjoying) the holiday season when you're grieving. [Read more](#)

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## Holiday Gifts to Add to Your Shopping List

Looking for a creative way to nurture stronger family bonds with your children? Stuck in a conversation rut with your teenager or your elderly parents? Grandparents don't know how to get grandkids to talk with them?

Give the gift of deeper family connection this holiday season! Get to know your loved ones on a deeper level with innovative products that are designed to help you share your story.

The following is a short video from Storyworth, but the other links below are worth a look too!



[Watch Video](#)

As we discuss in our free Parenting Classes, children and teens who "bond" with their families are less likely to engage in risky behaviors including drug/alcohol use.

HC DrugFree has no affiliation with the following companies, but we like the concepts. If you purchase any of these items, please let us know what you think.

[Talking Point Cards](#) to get conversations started with your kids.

[Storyworth](#) to capture your family's history in a book.

[Tales](#) to enjoy time together and learn your family's history.

## Free Life Skills Classes for HoCo Students



**Confident kids  
grow up to be  
confident adults.**

**Set them up for success with  
our FREE Life Skills Class.**

**HCDrugFree**  
Empowering the Community

Registration is open for our popular online Life Skills Classes. 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.**

High school and college students will serve as role models, assist at each class, and teach the evidence-based curriculum as HC DrugFree staff oversees all classes. [Learn more](#)

## Make a Plan this Holiday Season



There's nothing festive about a DUI or impaired driving-related accident. Be The Driver who drives sober this holiday season and beyond. [Learn more](#)

## Looking for HoCo College Students

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 considering a career in public health, medicine, 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 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](#)

***NEW! This coming Monday!!***

**Seeking Howard County Teens for a Special Event!**

**Community Service Hours available for planning, making videos, speaking at the event, attending, and more!**

**Something for all teens/talents!**

We have a new and exciting opportunity for teens to be a part of a special event. Join members of our Teen Advisory Council (TAC) on Zoom this coming **Monday, December 11 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. for our first planning meeting** and to learn more about our upcoming February 5 online event that will feature Howard County teens.

The February event will serve not only as our monthly TAC meeting, but also as a special community event open to other teens, parents, educators, and the community. It will be held virtually via Zoom and our teens will be the featured voices. Based on teen feedback received in previous TAC meetings, the topics may address teen mental health and stress, navigating academic pressures, how adults/parents/educators can better understand, and much more.

If you know an interested teen, please have them join us this coming **Monday, December 11 from 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.** Register below so we can forward a Zoom link on Monday.

[\*\*Register\*\*](#)

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**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\*\*](#)

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**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](#)

You Are Not Alone

**It's okay  
not to feel  
merry and  
bright.**

**988** SUICIDE & CRISIS  
LIFELINE

If you or someone you know is struggling or needs support now, call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) – *You are not alone.*

## Newsletter Survey

Please take our 2 second survey to let us know how satisfied you are with this newsletter!

[Take Survey](#)

For more information, contact

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