

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

"Be a bush if you can't be a tree.
If you can't be a highway, just be a trail.
If you can't be the sun, be a star.
For it isn't by size that you win or fail.
Be the best of whatever you are."

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Help Your Kids Be Their Best - Starts Tomorrow, January 16!



**Being a kid is all fun and games until
you realize how slippery it can be.**

**Help your child learn how to navigate life's
inevitable challenges with our Free Life Skills Class.**

Help your HoCo kids and grandkids be their best too. It's not too late to register your student for our popular FREE 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 - 6:30 p.m.**

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

Parents and Grandparents Be Your Best Too



Learn skills to help your HoCo kids and grandkids!

Guiding Good Choices® is an evidence-based curriculum that helps adults to build stronger relationships with their kids, all while teaching them how to deal with peer pressure and avoid risky behaviors. If you are the **parent, guardian or grandparent**, then this may be a powerful resource for you.

Learn how to:

- Prevent drug use in your family
- Develop healthy attitudes and clear standards
- Avoid trouble and response to peer pressure
- Manage conflict and express feelings constructively
- Strengthen family bonds
- and much more!

We urge you to attend all five of HC DrugFree's Zoom classes scheduled to be held on **Tuesdays, March 12, 19, April 2, 9, and 16** from **Noon – 1:30 p.m.**

[Learn more & register](#)

Wanted: Creative PSAs

Submit your Public Service Announcement (PSA) by April 14!

Join HC DrugFree and the HoCo Student Film Fest for another year of creative filmmaking fun!

HC DrugFree is proud to have our own PSA category in the Film Fest, and our 2024 theme is "KNOW Your No." This category was chosen to showcase the ways teens stay true to their personal values, stand up to peer pressure, and avoid risky behaviors by using Refusal Skills, all while keeping their friends.

Enter now to flex your creativity, connect with other HoCo filmmakers, and have a chance at winning a prize for the best PSA. Contact HC DrugFree's staff if you have any questions. The 20th Annual HoCo Student Film Festival will be held on May 3rd at the Miller Library, 7 - 8:30 p.m. [Learn more and get involved](#)



Report Card of Community Health Indicators in HoCo

The **Howard County Health Department** has released the 2023 Report Card of Health Indicators. This report card evaluates the health of Howard County residents across several key public health measures, including chronic disease risk factors, cancer incidence, leading causes of death, and maternal & infant health. One highlight from the report shows a 39% reduction in adult smoking from 2019 to 2021. [Read more](#)

Safe School Maryland Anonymous Reporting

[Safe Schools Maryland](#) (SSMD) is a FREE resource worth sharing and having easily accessible. Awareness of SSMD continues to grow thanks to your efforts. Let's work to make sure every student, educator, parent, and community member knows how to report behaviors of concern.

Anonymous reports can be submitted by calling the tip line (1-833-MD-B-SAFE/1-833-632-7233), completing an online form ([click here](#)), or downloading the free app from the App Store or Google Play.

[Download any of the resources on our webpage](#) to print and post, distribute at parent and community events, and include on your webpage and in your school newsletters. To learn more about the program use this [sign-up form](#).

Feds Seize More Illegal E-Cigarettes

Federal officials are seizing more shipments of unauthorized electronic cigarettes at U.S. ports, but thousands of new flavored products continue pouring into the country from China, according to government and industry data reviewed by The Associated Press. The figures underscore the chaotic state of the nation's \$7 billion vaping market and raise questions about how the U.S. government can stop the flow of fruit-flavored disposable e-cigarettes used by 1 in 10 American teens and adolescents. [Read more](#)

Voices of Gambling 2.0

Recovery is a personal journey of hope, purpose and growth. It is a process of setting your own direction. It is accepting the responsibilities of meeting challenges, and using your own abilities, strengths and determination. It is never too late to begin the journey.

Enjoy this serene video with messages of hope.



[Watch video](#)

HoCo Students: Get Involved

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, February 5** from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Zoom. Register early to get the meeting link. [Learn more](#)

[Learn More](#)

Register Today! Teen Planning Committee Meeting: January 22

HoCo students grades 8-12 interested in contributing to our special February Teen Program should attend this meeting on Monday, January 22 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. It's not too late to get involved and **receive Community Service Hours**. Register to receive the January 22 Zoom link.

[Volunteer and Earn Community Service Hours](#)

Save the Date:

February 5 Teen Advisory Council Meeting and Teen Program

Join us for a very special Teen Advisory Council Meeting/Program as we allow our students to take the reins and host a unique community program designed to give parents, teacher, and younger students a window into the life of a Howard County high school student. The meeting/program will be held on Zoom on February 5 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. **More info coming soon!**

[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!**

Medication Safety



A single opportunity is all it takes. **Remove the risk** of unused opioids.

www.fda.gov/DrugDisposal

  **Remove the RISK**

Learn how to safely store and dispose of medication to remove the risk of intentional or unintentional misuse in your home. [Learn more](#)

Become a Friend of HC DrugFree

Please consider becoming a [Friend of HC DrugFree](#). Your support shows funders that you value the work that we do. Thank you for your continued support of the important work we do at HC DrugFree!

[Donate Now](#)

Or mail your **2024 donation** to HC DrugFree's office:

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

Teen Suicide Prevention



[Watch video](#)

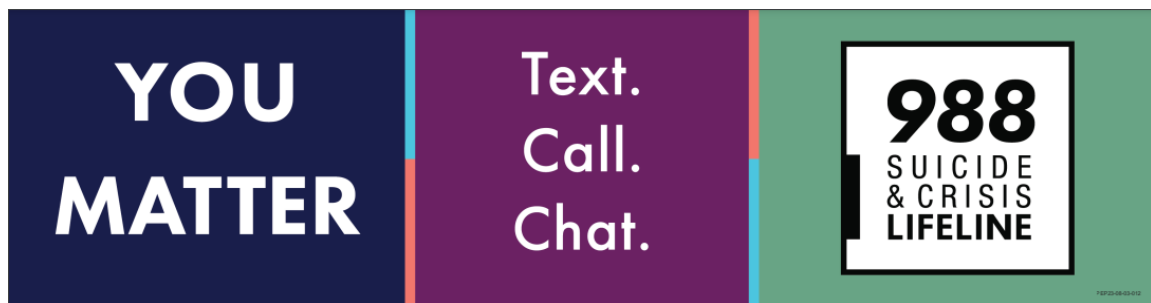
Please take a moment to watch this powerful PSA about youth suicide prevention. Knowledge is power and the information in this video may help save a life!

Please...Tell Us What You Think!

Please take our 2 second survey to let us know what you think of the content provided in this newsletter!

[Survey](#)

Resources



You matter! If you need it, support is at your fingertips. People in distress, in crisis, or struggling with alcohol or substance use can text, call, or chat 988 anytime, day or night. Learn more at 988lifeline.org

[Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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