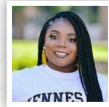


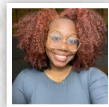
Meet the GPP Team! What Drives Us!



Kaitlin Burkly, Executive Director: "GPP believes in prevention and invests in future generations. We put our dollars towards educating, raising awareness for, and empowering Georgia's youth. Peer to peer education and using young people's lived experience truly makes prevention work more effective; we've been fortunate to train and educate hundreds of young people and young adults to make change leading into 2024 and beyond."



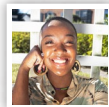
Janel Echols, Partners in Prevention Project Program Coordinator: "I have one of the best jobs in the world. I not only deliver drug prevention content to youth in unique ways, but also help them to realize their dreams, while bringing new experiences and opportunities to the table. I'm grateful for the partnerships that we've built with the schools, community organizations, fire department, sheriff's office, and so many more as we work together for the common goal of supporting the needs of our community."



Stacey-Ann Gordon, College Expansion Program Coordinator: "The most impactful aspect of my program is that college students are taking the lead on prevention. It's exciting to see them engaged as peer educators and striving to spark change on their campuses."



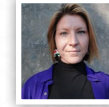
Gregory Greer, College Expansion Program Coordinator: "Working with GPP has already allowed me to learn so much. I have learned a tremendous amount about Georgia, its college and University system, and the different communities across the state. I've also learned more about the Health Prevention field in general. GPP has also impacted me because it consistently allows me to meet more people and talk about my passion for health and prevention!"



Kyah Harris, Teen Action Council Program Coordinator: "The most impactful part of my program is being able to connect with students on a personal level. I understand my main role is to educate, however, it is important to pour into my students' lives and learn what makes them who they are. I love discovering their creative passions and aspirations and fostering that in them. I want them to know it's okay to dream big and that no idea is too small."



Rachel Morris, Communications Specialist: "I've never worked for an organization like GPP before. The genuine passion, and care that our team holds for the communities that we work with is unmatched. While substance use prevention is at the forefront of our mission, we value meeting people where they are, and providing the resources necessary to help them and their community grow. This is one of the many reasons why I continue to work and support GPP."



Hanna Naukkarinen, College Prevention Partnership Program Coordinator: "Working with GPP has given me the opportunity to spread awareness and provide resources to folks before they find themselves in a crisis. Additionally, having the opportunity to collaborate with youth to provide the most pertinent information and resources has made this position rewarding. Seeing the knowledge that our students gained during our 2023 TAC Summit, and hearing the questions our college students ask CPP members, highlights the impact of the work done at GPP."



Jonathan Thomas, Drug Free Communities Program Coordinator: "Working in collaboration with GPP, I was presented with an opportunity to give back to my community and be of service through Polk Prevention & Recovery Alliance. Since starting my position, I've had the chance to lead by example, make a difference with our youth, and be a resource for them and our recovery community in Polk County."



Melissa Vaughan, Program Manager: "I continue to work with GPP because I know our work makes a difference. Meeting the students at events like TAC Teen Camp and Red Ribbon Week Kickoff, I see the light and passion in their eyes when we discuss prevention. I work to support the GPP Team so they can continue to connect and empower our community."



Georgia Prevention Project Team:

Kaitlin Burkly, MSW, CP – Executive Director

Melissa Vaughan – Program Manager

Rachel Morris, CP – Communications Specialist

Janel Echols, MPH – PIPP Program Coordinator

Hanna Naukkarinen, MPP – CPP Program Coordinator

Jonathan Thomas – DFC Program Coordinator

Gregory Greer, MPH – College Expansion Coordinator

Stacey-Ann Gordon, MSW – College Expansion Coordinator

Kyah Harris, MPH – TAC Program Coordinator

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Georgia Prevention Project

NEWSLETTER

WINTER/2023

College Students Taking the Lead on Prevention!

The College Expansion Project (CEP) has launched!

Thanks to new funding provided by our partners at the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, we've had the exciting opportunity to expand our College Prevention Partnership Program (CPP) to all colleges in the state of Georgia. The College Expansion Project (CEP) has helped us bring prevention efforts for substance misuse and mental health beyond our original 15 CPP campuses.

Launching officially in February 2023, the College Expansion Project (CEP) is off to a great start. GPP welcomed two Program Coordinators to undertake the CEP. Our Coordinators spent the next several months recruiting and onboarding prospective CPP campuses. As a result, we have collectively built formal partnerships with the following 9 colleges and universities: Albany Technical College, Atlanta Metropolitan State College, Augusta University, College of Coastal Georgia, Fort Valley State University, Reinhardt University, Savannah State University, University of West Georgia, and Young Harris College.

Expansion is still within the first year yet our new CPP groups have already done a tremendous job of implementing creative programming on their campuses. With the help of the Office of Prevention and Awareness at Reinhardt University, students kicked off the school year with a personal Student Leader Training provided by our expert Program Coordinators.



Young Harris College started their school year by tabling at the student organization fair where over 20 students expressed interest in CPP. They have been holding multiple student meetings a month and their student liaison, Ashley P., has done an excellent job at getting members involved. Atlanta Metro State College launched CPP with Fresh Check Day, to offer mental health check-ins with peers.



At Augusta University, GPP partnered with the Office of Student Wellness to establish CPP as an official student organization on campus with three executive board members. In a short time, Augusta University, headed by student liaison D'Mya S., has taken off as a very active school. They held health promotion events such as Rethink Your Drink (making mocktails), Mindful Monday (discussed healthy coping mechanisms) and Mid-Term Distress. As a new school, they are on track to start their pre-surveys for our PSN campaign which researches the perceptions among college students aged 18-25 related to the nonmedical use of prescription drugs.

We are excited that we have expanded CPP across DBHDD Regions 1-6 in the state of Georgia! We look forward to our CPP students taking the lead on prevention.

How TAC helped one student find their voice

Saraya D., North Cobb High School TAC Member:

Why did you join TAC? I've been depressed for the majority of my life, and I have never had a safe place for me to talk about my feelings at school to a trusted adult without feeling like I would be reported or villainized. My older sister, Somiyah, initially wanted me to join, and I was hesitant until I learned about the warm atmosphere that TAC provides.

Please tell us about any successes that your involvement in TAC has helped you achieve, and how. They have helped me with increasing my community involvement and leadership successes, especially when it comes to applying to colleges. My involvement in TAC allows me to stand out from others and have references that I can base my skills off of.

What is the best part of the TAC Program and why? The best part of TAC is the lessons and conversations that we share at every meeting. We can be silly and have fun, but also get down to the nitty-gritty, hard hitting things that truly affect us negatively, and work our way around solutions.



Creative Campus Programming and the CPP!

College Prevention Project (CPP) groups working to stop the nonmedical use of prescription drugs continue their efforts on 15 college campuses. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) funds and supports the CPP program with emphasis on the importance of peer-to-peer education among college students. CPP is also implementing a Positive Social Norms Campaign for 2023 - raising awareness of misperceptions and showcasing data supporting that the majority of college students are not misusing prescription drugs.

Gordon State College is the newest CPP group beginning their programming in Fall 2022. This group partners with the Georgia College Association of Nursing Students (GCANS) and collaborates on many wellness initiatives on campus. Gordon State hosted the annual "Spill the Tea" event to spread the word about CPP and invite other students to join in on prevention efforts. Additionally, Gordon State participated in a campus-wide Wellness Fair in Spring 2023. We are excited to see what this group will accomplish!

In continuing collaboration with Campus Police and DEA Takeback Day, Valdosta State University, Georgia College and State University, and the University of Georgia CPP Programs all participated in Takeback Day events over the past year. Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, and Georgia Institute of Technology highlight the importance of mental health and wellness through various events such as: stress yoga classes, a mental health and wellness summit, and creative journaling seminars. With the heightened overdose crisis in mind, Georgia Tech and Mercer University were our first CPP groups to host Naloxone trainings with a combined forty students attending.



Our CPP groups have made it a point to provide health education and resources to their community and campus through creative programming such as: "Spread S'more Awareness", "Wake and Bake", "DoNut Do Drugs", "Pop TicTacs, Not Pills", "Pharmtoberfest", "Lunch and Learn", "Pour Paints, Not Pints", "Prevention Pumpkin Patch" and many more. These events have provided students and the community with information about safe drug disposal, the dangers of mixing substances, the facts and figures of substance use, and additionally resources for safe disposal and how to get help.

Finally, GPP has provided opportunities for collaboration and continuing education to the CPP groups. At our CPP Summit Student Liaisons gathered to discuss highlights and challenges, make plans for the upcoming school year, and collaborate on a CPP Mocktail Book, which is now available to all groups. GPP continues to provide trainings to each group on the core prevention frameworks and helps facilitate trainings with outside providers such as Georgia Overdose Prevention. Through continual collaboration with and feedback from our CPP students, Georgia Overdose Prevention provides pertinent resources via our student-led programming.



Taliaferro County Students: Invested in the Future



GPP had a terrific second year implementing the Partners in Prevention Program (PIPP) in Taliaferro County. Although still fairly new to the community, our efforts have created a significant impact. Through partnerships with local businesses, fire stations, and the sheriff's office, PIPP expanded outreach with various organizations and influential community members.

This year, we were able to participate in many major events and facilitate one of our own. One of the major events was the County's Back to School Bash. Through GPP, PIPP supplied over 200 students with necessary school supplies while bringing awareness to youth alcohol prevention. PIPP also participated in the community's Trunk or Treat Halloween event. Members handed out candy to trick or treaters along with youth alcohol prevention and mental health resources. Additionally, GPP was also able to have its 1st Annual Collaborative TAC Summit and Health Fair with over 30 attendees, several speakers on trending topics, and lots of fun activities. We also partnered with Taliaferro Family Connection for Red Ribbon Week activities.

PIPP's major accomplishment this year was sustaining a TAC program in Taliaferro County Schools. Students are still energized to be a part of TAC and learn more about youth alcohol prevention while being able to reflect on themselves using our Positive Action curriculum. Another accomplishment is PIPP's partnering with the CTAE department at Taliaferro County Schools. This program promotes healthy alternatives to drug use by donating cap and gowns for the students promoting post high school readiness! Our TAC students gained hands-on experience at various prevention days at the State Capitol including Substance Abuse Prevention Day and Suicide Prevention Day. Additionally, our students also earned community service hours at a nearby food bank.

As we continue into our third year, the goals for PIPP include increasing the number of students in the Taliaferro County TAC program, expanding TAC through an afterschool program, solidifying the CPAW group, visiting college campuses, and planning for a 2nd Annual Youth Drug Prevention Summit open to all students within Georgia.

Stay tuned to learn more about what is in store for PIPP Year 3!

Polk County Surveys Over 3,000 Youth in 2023!

We have been very busy at the Drug Free Coalition over the past year, primarily through a rebranding process in an attempt to heighten interest and involvement across all sectors of the community. Polk Against Drugs was renamed Polk Prevention and Recovery Alliance with the goal of establishing a more inclusive representation of what the coalition aims to achieve.

Part of the rebranding process also included improved meeting times and places to increase coalition visibility in Polk county. By alternating locations between both sides of the county per month, we recommitted our investment and involvement across the area. As a result, we are extremely proud that attendance and participation has greatly increased.

In addition, PPRA organized several community projects throughout the year including distribution of free medication safes, Deterra (a safe disposal product), and Narcan. Throughout the year, coalition members also participated and volunteered at events such as The County Fair, Law Enforcement Family Night, Kiwanis Tennis Tournament, CASA Golf Tournament, and DEA Drug Take Back Day.

A major milestone for PPRA was the addition of our first intern, Ms. Stephanie G., from Kennesaw State University for the 2023 fall semester. Stephanie has been instrumental in advancing social media content and rebranding efforts in order to raise awareness of our community programs and assistance. She demonstrates a willingness to engage partners and laid the groundwork for future interns after her time with PPRA ends.

Lastly, we are actively working with the Polk County School District on implementing a Vape Education and Disposal program. This will include a Positive Social Norms campaign as well as curriculum across the middle and high schools to help educate students, faculty, and families on issues related to vaping.



Youth Leaders Tackle Substance Misuse Issues

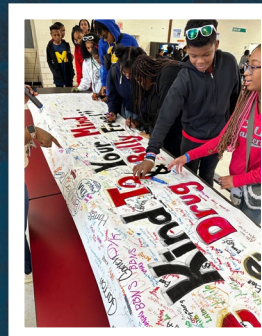
Teen Action Council (TAC) youth are leading the charge and the 2023 - 2024 school year has been jam packed! We started the year attending all TAC school open houses, passing out goodies and prevention flyers. Our main goal, as always, was to start conversations about student drug prevention and mental health awareness. Over 120 students signed up for the TAC program across our partnering schools!



Another major event that all TAC students participated in was October's annual Red Ribbon Week. During this time, schools across the nation bring awareness to drug misuse. Our TAC members hosted tabling events and spirit days at their schools to commemorate the occasion. Students at Wheeler High School hosted a table at their homecoming parade where they passed out candy bags with this year's slogan, "Be Kind To Your Mind, Live Drug Free." TAC members at North Cobb High School also hosted a spirit week with various dress up days. We are so proud of our members and their creativity!

The leadership that TAC members displayed this year is inspiring. Students took the initiative to create individualized methods of peer outreach, which we are extremely proud to witness. Future goals for TAC include expanding our resources to visit colleges, invite guest speakers, and host leadership summits to educate on substance misuse prevention. We are so thankful for the direction that TAC is headed and look forward to watching our students flourish.

TAC hosted many new and exciting events this year. The biggest celebration was the summer TAC Teen Camp hosted at the GPP office. Over 60 students from middle and high schools all over Georgia came together to complete the Sources of Strength mental health and suicide prevention program. Students also discussed possible futures with over ten college and military representatives and learned about financial responsibility from community leaders.



Prevention in the Classroom and Beyond

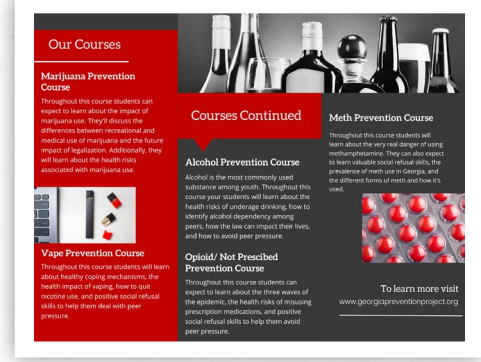
A large part of our Mission at Georgia Prevention Project is to provide education that addresses the impact of substance misuse among teens and young adults. Over the years, our Substance Education Training (SET) Program has served as a reliable resource for educators, counselors, and youth serving organizations to help them do the same.

Our SET Program consists of 5 prevention courses, which were designed with the intention of making substance use education available for all who work closely with middle and high school students. Each course consists of ready-to-use presentations, facilitation guides, lesson overviews, and engaging activities that make an impact. We annually update each course to reflect current Health Education Curriculum Standards, as well as current trends and statistics. More so, our SET program implements efforts beyond the classroom.



Throughout 2023, our SET Program has had the opportunity to provide educational resources directly to students ranging in age from middle school to college. Early in the year we partnered with Great Promise Partnership, and attended their Real Skills Day to educate students in Union

County on the impact of substance misuse. During this event, information around crisis help lines, signs and symptoms of substance use disorder, stigma, and supportive peer behaviors were shared. Additionally, we offer an annual Substance Education Training for all middle and high school



educators in Georgia, and provide training opportunities on an as needed basis throughout the year. In July, we had nearly 50 teachers RSVP for our different training opportunities, and we are currently in the process of partnering with Polk County to provide vape prevention resources for their educators. We look forward to the future as we continue to partner with new communities and organizations to provide current, reliable information on substance use prevention and education.