

Georgia Prevention Project

NEWSLETTER

WINTER/2022

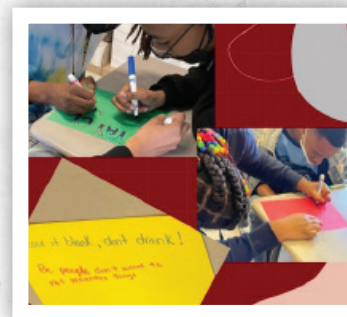
Prevention Takes Hold in Taliaferro!

GPP had a terrific first year implementing the Partners in Prevention Project in Taliaferro County. Taliaferro is a small community, with less than 2,000 residents, so it was important to us that we take year one to focus on outreach and building relationships. In doing so, we have slowly but surely gotten involved in, and invited to, more and more community events.



start a Teen Action Council (TAC) for students to be part of. As members of TAC, youth in Taliaferro are able to learn more about youth alcohol prevention and also gain leadership skills to carry them from adolescence to adulthood successfully. As part of TAC, we partnered with the CTAE department at Taliaferro County Schools to promote healthy alternatives to drug use during the #DressforSuccess event.

As we continue with the PIPP grant, GPP is looking towards big things for prevention. Keep an eye out on details for a Youth Drug Prevention Summit open to all Georgia Youth, and planned in partnership with TAC.



One of the major events of the county was the Back to School Bash. GPP was able to be a vendor supplying over 200 students with school supplies in order to celebrate the upcoming school year and bring awareness to youth alcohol prevention. Additionally, GPP was able to bring twenty-five students to Voices for Prevention's Youth Advocacy Summit held in Summer 2022.

In addition to community support, we've also been fortunate to partner with Taliaferro County Schools! Due to a lack of extracurricular activities within the county, school leadership was excited for the opportunity to

Let's Get Positive!

GPP is excited to offer evidence-based materials for youth K - 12 through Positive Action programming. Positive Action provides a "whole-child" approach and supports youth through social & emotional learning.

Positive Action is based on the intuitive philosophy that we feel good about ourselves when we do positive actions. By emphasizing positive thoughts and actions, the program creates healthy environments where youth have opportunities to practice and grow their skill sets.

GPP is proud to provide evidence-based content to our programming so we can best serve the youth of Georgia. If you are interested in learning more about how Positive Action can be used in your community, reach out!

think + act + feel +

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Growth in 2022: GPP Expands Programming

What happens when you take a group of diverse and dedicated students, give them great training in opioid and prescription drugs, prevention methods and the platform to lead the discussions on their campuses? You get the College Prevention Partnership!

The College Prevention Partnership (CPP) is thriving on 15 campuses across the state of Georgia and thanks to funding provided by The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, it is expanding to many more colleges.

Each CPP is as diverse as the campuses they are serving. We have amazing partnerships with the Offices of Health and Promotion at many colleges, but we also have unique partnerships, like Mercer Neuroscience Organization at Mercer University or University of North Georgia's graduate counseling program. In addition, The University of Georgia College of Pharmacy and Gordon State University's Association of Nursing Students, partners with the CPP so students are able to take the passion they have for their future career and add an educational and fun perspective to make it a well-rounded experience.

College years are a time of learning but also a time to gain a sense of community that often carries you through your adult years. Sofina Tran, our CPP student liaison at Georgia State University shared, "I like the feeling of bringing people together to learn what they can do in preventing drug misuse on campus and spreading awareness on how to be Rx safe." Her counterpart down the road at Georgia Tech shares the same sentiment. Sofie Stroeva says, "Through various collaborative events, we are able to lend a helping hand to fellow classmates while providing resources and information through a fun lens. I feel like an active contributor to student well-being on campus and I hope to help the organization fulfill its mission." This sentiment has been echoed across the state in words but also in the way the CPP groups are engaging their peers in prevention!



Our goal with the CPP is to not only provide substance misuse education, but a chance for the students to take ownership of the program and provide health education on their campus.

Ready to Launch!

We are expanding! The College Prevention Partnership is going statewide, and we want to make sure all Georgia colleges and universities can participate. The CPP program is free of charge and a great offering to provide to students looking to create change on campus. GPP provides trainings, year-round, and teaches students how to use frameworks that work, to make a difference!

CPP groups partner with faculty, campus police, health departments, Greek life, and other student organizations! There is a place for all to get involved in our work.

GPP will be hosting a launch event for new schools in January 2023. We hope to bring as many schools into the fold as we can – together we can change lives.

For more information on the launch, contact rmorris@georgiapreventionproject.org



Partnerships, Pledges and More!

Our Substance Education Training (SET) program kickstarted 2022 by partnering with a local, youth led organization in Forsyth County. Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council (FCDAC) worked in partnership not only with us, but also with the Department of Public Health, District 2, to host an in-person Youth Tobacco Summit.

During this Summit teens in Forsyth County had the opportunity to learn about the dangers of vaping from our very own Communications Specialist, Rachel Morris, as well as create their own anti-vaping media campaign to share within their community.



Our students cleverly came up with the message, "Put It Down, Before It Puts You Down" and inspired others to make a pledge to stay away from vaping.

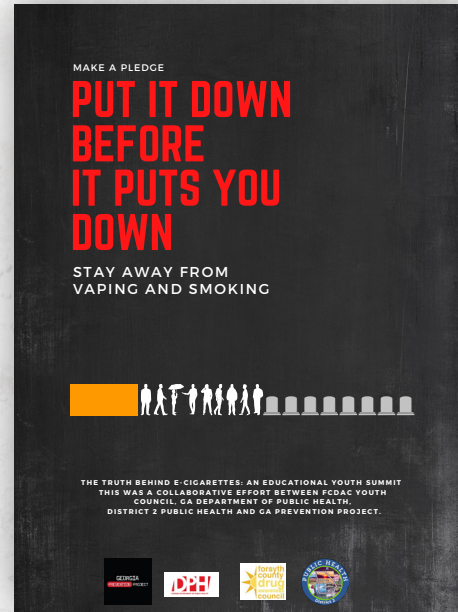
As the year went on, we had a great deal of success in building strong relationships

with schools all across Georgia. We had the opportunity to train over 100 teachers in 17 new counties on various prevention topics such as vaping, marijuana, alcohol misuse, prescription drug misuse, and more. This ultimately put our program in a resounding 95 counties in the state.

Looking forward, we hope to continue building valuable community partnerships and finding unique ways to spread the word about the

impact of substance use to both teens and young adults. We have high hopes for 2023 as we are very excited to partner with TMU (Taylor Made University) in January, as well as host our Annual SET Training open to all educators across Georgia.

Furthermore, we couldn't do any of this without the support of our community. If you or someone you know would like to learn more about our free resources offered through our Substance Education Training Program, please have them contact Rachel Morris, or one of our other team members. We would love to partner or serve your community!



TAC is inspiring ACTION!

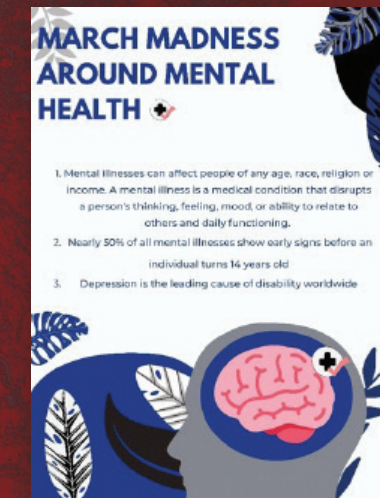
Changing our name from the Teen ADVISORY Council to Teen ACTION Council was an easy decision. As our schools and communities shifted back to in-person events during 2022 we realized that TAC youth weren't mere advisors, they were action-makers!

This year our TAC leaders are learning about substance misuse prevention, as well as risk and protective factors, in addition to an increased focus on mental health. TAC youth are leading the way in destigmatizing all these conversations. Ultimately our goal is for TAC leaders to take the skills and knowledge they gain at meetings and spread them to their peers to procure a more supportive and safer environment within their schools.

At North Cobb High School, the TAC team created a "Teen Resource Guide" to share all things mental health and substance misuse prevention with their peers in a visually appealing way. This school year they are gearing up for many events during the upcoming Red Ribbon Week, including a QR code scavenger hunt full of facts and an in-school trick or treating event to spread awareness.

Newton High School's TAC team has become a leader in substance misuse prevention in the community by participating in events such as the Covington Cheerios Challenge. This TAC team has the privilege of planning all of the Red Ribbon Week dress up days for the school, as well as hosting peer talks, and posting informational signage around the school. Similarly, the TAC students at Champion Middle School are also the leaders of their school's Red Ribbon Week. This year they had the honor of hosting a special guest speaker from the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse to spread awareness about recovery and substance misuse.

We are excited to see what these ACTION-takers will accomplish this year and we hope you will stay tuned to find out!



SARA News: Lawsuit Settlement Funds on the Way

Events of the last half of 2022 should give all Georgians great encouragement about new funding to prevent and combat substance use disorder (SUD).

This past March, the Office of the Georgia Attorney General announced the completion of negotiations for the award of damages to several states who sued large opioid manufacturers and distributors. The Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) lays out the procedures for how Georgia will receive \$636 million over a number of years to use in combatting the opioid problem in the state.



In late October, the Georgia Substance Abuse Research Alliance (SARA) heard a presentation by Grant Thomas, Director, Georgia Office of Health Strategy and Coordination who outlined the implementation details for awarding the MSA funds to communities, organizations, and projects.

"It's a highly structured process for evaluating requests and making awards," Thomas explained. "The MSA requires both regional advisory councils (RACs) and a statewide advisory council to make recommendations on the allocation of settlement funds to address prevention and treatment of SUD at both the local and statewide levels." Thomas anticipates both the RACs and the statewide Advisory Committee establishing processes to solicit recommendations and proposals from stakeholder groups, advocacy organizations, citizens, and members of the public.

Thomas anticipates that the governance structure will not be completely in place until sometime in the first few months of 2023.

SARA Chair James Langford expressed thanks to Thomas for providing guidance on the process, and he encouraged SARA members to get prepared for making funding requests.

Langford cited how tobacco lawsuits in past years brought many millions of dollars to the State, but very little of the money went to public education programs aimed at reducing tobacco use. Instead, the money was allocated by the Georgia Legislature to a wide range of other projects including school construction, teacher's salaries and road construction.

"This MSA is a unique opportunity for making an impact on the SUD problem in Georgia," Langford stated. "The formal request process helps ensure that this opioid settlement money goes to work in programs and projects that can work directly on avoiding or alleviating suffering from SUD. The overdose numbers in Georgia keep going up despite lots of hard work by State agencies, local communities and non-profit programs across the state. The new funding can help make a big difference."

For more details about the MSA and the funds allocation process, see the PowerPoint provided by Director Thomas to SARA, available at www.sara-ga.org/impact.

Drug Free Communities Grant, Moving Into Year Two!

GPP was awarded the Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant in 2021. We are now in Year 2, working alongside community leaders in Polk County and couldn't be more thrilled for what's to come!

Efforts are led by new Polk Against Drugs (PAD) Coordinator, Jonathan Thomas. Jonathan is local to Cedartown, in Polk County after teaching in both major cities of Polk during his longstanding career.

PAD is a coalition that works together to reduce the use of drugs, tobacco, and underage drinking among youth in Polk County. PAD also supports persons in recovery to become self-sufficient to ensure a safer community.

In year two, we are looking forward to expanding the Teen Action Council, using



Positive Action with all students in K – 12 and also continuing our partnership with law enforcement and other business leaders on the Reward & Remind program, to make it harder for youth to have access to alcohol and tobacco.

PAD is so thankful for the support of Polk School District, who collaborated to survey over 3,300 students on health topics related to substance use. These results, analyzed by our evaluation team, will help us as we move through year two, and beyond, to track our success and measure PAD's progress.

Live in Polk County, or like something they're doing there? Get connected with our team at www.georgiapreventionproject.org

