

HC DrugFree

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

Dates to Remember

April 7 - [HoCo Student Film Festival/HC DrugFree Deadline](#)
April 8, 22, 29 - [FREE Life Skills Classes for Students](#)
April 14, 15, 21, 22 (and April 28 optional) - [FREE Classes for Adults](#)
April 25 - [Medication Drive-Thru Collection](#)

FREE! We Can Help!!

FREE PARENTING CLASS



Taking HoCo Families to the Next Level

Join us to learn new techniques that really work!!!

Raising, or helping to raise, a K-12 child?

Then this is for you.

HC DrugFree's Guiding Good Choices® program is open to:

- ✦ Out-of-state parents (including military families)
- ✦ Grandparents supporting from near or far (Grandparents enjoy this class!!)
- ✦ Stepparents, guardian, and caregivers (Adults who influence K-12 youth)
- ✦ Wondering if this is for you? Register and we'll contact you!

FREE - Easy - On Zoom

Parents like YOU asked us to offer classes **online** during their **lunch breaks** so kids weren't listening in the background.

Participate from anywhere:

...your office desk...parked car...back deck enjoying the sun!

**It's free, so attend a class to decide if this is for you.
We're confident that you'll want to attend all classes.**

Must-See Videos!!

This interactive, evidence-based program helps you:

- ✓ Strengthen Family Bonds
 - ✓ Manage Conflict and Express Feelings Constructively
 - ✓ Develop Healthy Beliefs and Clear Standards
 - ✓ Avoid Trouble and Respond to Peer Pressure
 - ✓ Prevent Drug Use in Your Family
- ...And More!

Designed for ages 9–14, but **appropriate for families with children in K–12.**

Class dates: April 14, 15, 21, 22 (and optional class on April 28)

[Learn More](#) and [Register](#)

Adults are encouraged to attend as many classes as possible. We understand your schedules are busy but give it a try. Please include any questions or comments on the registration form and we'll get back to you.



Grandparents: Good for Your Health Too!!



HoCo Grandparent **testimonial** about FREE classes:

*We recently moved to Maryland to be closer to our grandchildren and are so happy that we have! Being physically close enough to build daily or weekly memories is a gift for us and for our grandchildren. [Harvard research](#) highlights how vital the "emotional safety net" provided by grandparents is. By sharing our stories and simply being present, we're providing them with a sense of cultural and familial identity that helps them navigate the world with more confidence. **Guiding Good Choices has given us strategies to provide support both to our children and grandchildren, as well as excellent suggestions of ways to strengthen our bonds.***

*If you have grandchildren who live in Howard County, even if you do not, I **highly recommend taking these classes.***

*And parents, **consider inviting your parents and grandparents to participate in these sessions** along with you as a way to enrich both their and your children's lives. The more we include influential adults in our children's lives, the happier, healthier and stronger they will be.*



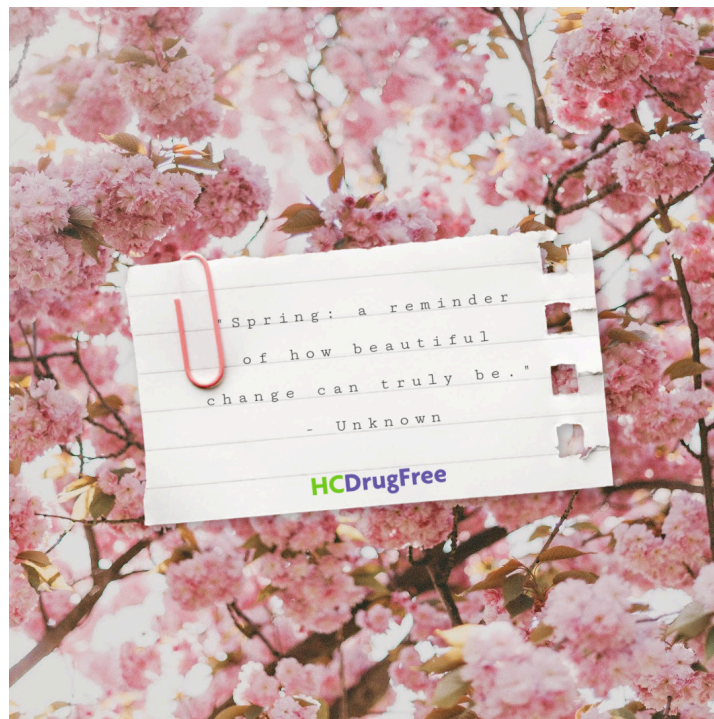
Grandparents make a lasting impact on kids' emotional health. [Harvard research](#) shows that stable, nurturing adult relationships help children handle stress and build resilience.

A University of Michigan poll found **72 percent of grandparents with grandchildren hardly ever feel isolated, highlighting how these bonds benefit both generations.**

Want to support your grandchild's healthy choices at home? Check out Guiding Good Choices, a FREE program that helps families strengthen communication, set boundaries, and guide kids toward positive decisions.

[Learn more](#) and [register](#)

Be Safe This Spring Break!



Spring Break = more freedom, more responsibility: especially for middle and high school students.

Beach Safety

Know your limits, watch for rip currents, don't dive in what could be shallow water, use sunscreen, and swim with others. Pay attention to flags and make friends with the lifeguards. Never go in the ocean if there is no lifeguard and never swim in the ocean at night.

Car Safety & Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

Plan rides ahead. No distracted driving, no speeding, and never ride with someone who is impaired. One bad decision can change everything.

Social Media

Think before you post. Avoid sharing your location with strangers or risky behavior—what goes online can last far beyond the week. Remember,

colleges and employers will look at candidates' social media. When in doubt, don't post it.

Substances

Alcohol, vaping, and other drugs increase the risk of accidents and poor decisions. Stay in control and look out for your friends. Never share your medication and don't trust that you will know a real pill from one that's fake.

Family Check-In for Youth

Set clear expectations, stay connected, and keep communication open. Facetime rather than text or call so adults can see and hear how and where youth are.

Have fun, stay safe, and make it a Spring Break you can feel good about.

Student Supports Offered by HCPSS & Autism Society of MD

In collaboration with the Autism Society of Maryland, the Howard County School System (HCPSS) has resources available online to support conversations with children and families. The HCPSS Family Support and Resource Center is available to help families of children with special needs. Services include workshops, [IEPs \(Individualized Education Programs\)](#) assistance, [IFSP \(Individualized Family Service Plans\)](#) assistance, newsletters, a lending library, facilitation of parent support groups, and community resources and service referrals. The center is open during the school year, Monday through Friday, and during the summer by appointment. Email fsrc@hcpss or call 410-313-7161. [Learn more](#)

Saturday, April 25: Meds Collection & FREE Storage Boxes



The next drive-thru Medication Collection in the Wilde Lake Village Center will be held on Saturday, April 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Pills may remain in bottles. No need to remove labels. Safely dispose of:

- Prescription Medication
- Over-the-counter meds

- Vitamins
- Vape Devices with batteries removed
- Inhalers
- Pet Medication

✗ **Sharps (needles, syringes, EpiPens) will NOT be accepted.**

What to do with sharps?

♻️ Howard County Bureau of Environmental Services recommends placing used/unused needles in a sealed plastic bottle (like a detergent bottle) before putting them in your curbside trash to protect collection crews.

Once again, **100 FREE medication storage boxes** will be distributed. Protect your family by storing medications safely. Keeping prescriptions and over-the-counter medications locked, out of sight, and out of reach helps prevent accidental misuse and protects children, teens, and loved ones in your home.



Volunteer now and dispose of your meds! [Learn more and volunteer](#)

Earn Service Hours and Volunteer:

Community Service Hours are available for teens looking to boost their resumes and assist in college applications! We encourage you to bring a friend or sign-up as a group! **Teens** will not handle medications and will assist in guiding visitors and holding signs.

We also welcome **adult and medically-trained volunteers** to assist in our collection (nurses, pharmacists, doctors).

All volunteers need to properly complete a waiver found on our website.

Teen Advisory Council Meeting

Free! HC DrugFree invites **all Howard County students in grades 8-12** to join our Teen Advisory Council (TAC).

There will be no April TAC meeting because we have other teen events scheduled, so [register to receive the May 4 TAC meeting Zoom link](#) and be sure to [volunteer for our Saturday, April 25 medication collection](#). Community Service Hours awarded for both events.

Students: If you have not submitted a 2025-26 registration, please complete [this form](#). Members of TAC 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

[Learn more.](#)

Looking for a Spring Break Project?

Create a film while on spring break!! HC DrugFree is proud to sponsor a category in the 2025-26 HoCo Student Film Festival. Students are invited to create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) for this year's theme: **“In The Know: Fake Pills, Real Danger”**



Key Details

- Submission Deadline: April 7, 2026
- Festival Date: May 1, 2026, 7–8:30 PM at Miller Library
- Length: 30 seconds–2 minutes (plus a 10–30 second closing screen)
- Must Include: HC DrugFree logo, website (hcdrugfree.org), Admin@hcdrugfree.org

For requirements and past winners, visit our [website](#) and the [Film Fest website](#).

Free Narcan Training and Kits

The Howard County Health Department offers a free training so you can be prepared in case of an opioid overdose. Sign up for your free training and to receive a Narcan kit: [Learn more](#)

Have expired or used Naloxone you want to dispose? [Bring it to our FREE medication disposal event on April 25, 2026](#)

Support Spring 2026 Events!



HC DrugFree
needs your support!
Help us help Howard County

www.hcdrugfree.org/donate/






Your support allows us to provide our FREE resources and programs to the community. Please donate today by visiting hcdrugfree.org/donate or mailing

Donate here!

Resources

NAMI Howard County - Mental Health Services:

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Howard County is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals affected by mental health conditions and their loved ones. [Download brochure](#)

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:

Marylanders who are experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis should call or text 988. Learn more at 988.maryland.gov. Maryland veterans and their loved ones can call 988 and press 1 to transfer to the Veterans Crisis Line. Press 2 for Spanish.



[Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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