

## The Role of Mental Health in School Safety



In the wake of the February 14 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, experts who specialize in the study of school violence have called not only for action to address the role guns play in these tragedies but also for a comprehensive approach to prevention, emphasizing the necessity of strong mental health supports, social-emotional learning curricula, and a school climate that does not isolate or ostracize any students. When Dr. Jeck and the Fauquier County Public Schools hosted a School Safety Meeting in early March, the gathering of local educators, law enforcement leaders, and community leaders also placed a high premium on adequate mental health supports. The group focused on giving students the tools to prevent mental health problems from arising, having programs in place to identify students who are struggling, and making sure those students get appropriate treatment immediately.

The Mental Health Association of Fauquier and the Fauquier County Public Schools have collaborated over the past ten years to build those supports, and continue to work with community partners to strengthen prevention and early intervention programs in both the schools and the community. One extraordinary effort has been offering Youth Mental Health First Aid to almost 1,000 school staff and community members, arming them with information about warning signs/symptoms as well as how to respond to an emergency and how to help young people connect with professional treatment when needed.

Another recent effort was a joint venture between the schools and the community to identify and adopt five new substance use and mental health prevention programs teachers can use with students.

In 2016, the Mental Health Association and the Fauquier schools published results of the PRIDE survey of 4,450 middle and high school students, which indicate that:

- 30% of local students have had symptoms of depression in the past 6 months
- 29% have suffered from anxiety
- 400 are at risk of addiction given their current use of drugs or alcohol
- the average of first use of drugs is now 13, which puts those young people at a 70% risk of addiction over the next five years!

Since the PRIDE data came out, the Mental Health Association and the schools have provided leadership for the Youth and Family Initiative for a Healthy Community, through which 25 local organizations have been working to increase and improve mental health and substance supports for local youth. For more information, visit the Mental Health Association's website at [www.fauquier-mha.org](http://www.fauquier-mha.org).



## Give Local Piedmont: May 1, 2018

Mark your calendar for Give Local Piedmont! We are participating in this exciting community event once again, and this year MHAFC has some very generous donors who have agreed to match your contributions! We hope you will join the fun and support our efforts to increase access to behavioral health resources. **Pre-scheduled donations begin on April 17.**

### Three things we achieved with your Give Local contribution in 2017:

1. Offered Mental Health First Aid Classes
  2. Hosted Conference on Treating Opioid Addiction
  3. Hosted Community Forum with Chris Herren
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# Chris Herren Returns to Fauquier County

Former NBA player Chris Herren will travel to Fauquier County once again to speak with students about his struggles with substance use and journey of recovery over the past decade. On April 10th and 11th, students from all of Fauquier's middle schools and seventh graders from Highland will hear Chris' story and engage in conversations regarding healthy decision-making.



## Mental Health First Aid

The Mental Health Association of Fauquier County continues to offer Mental Health First Aid training **free of charge** to the Fauquier, Rappahannock and Culpeper communities. Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that teaches individuals how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. This training gives you the skills you need to provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis. There are two courses, one geared to individuals serving adults and one focused on individuals who work with youth populations.

As an additional incentive for local residents to participate in the Youth-specific Mental Health First Aid course, **the PATH Foundation will offer an incentive grant of \$500 to a church or community group** that has 5 or more staff/volunteers complete the course!

If you haven't taken advantage of this great opportunity, don't delay! Check out our upcoming class offerings:

Youth Mental Health First Aid class schedule:

[www.fcps1.org/ymhfa](http://www.fcps1.org/ymhfa)

Adult Mental Health First Aid class schedule:

<http://fauquier-mha.com/eventMHFA.htm>

## Thank you, Excell!

A special thanks to Excell Dance of Warrenton who used their recent performance to spread awareness about mental health. We were thrilled to partner with them in increasing access to behavioral health resources in our very own community. Through their generosity, we raised hundreds of dollars! Thank you to all who supported this initiative!

