

Substance abuse affects everyone

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CONTRIBUTING WRITER

First in a series on "Advancing the Common Good through Transformed Lives: United Way of Greater Greensboro." This week: Alcohol and Drug Services

Take a walk in downtown Greensboro or in any of its parks and you will see a clean, green community that bears resemblance to the utopia-like atmosphere of Mayberry where people smile at each other and peacefulness is usually the order of the day.

The calm facade masks a problem that is plaguing the nation — drugs and alcohol abuse.

"No one ever thinks it will happen to them," said Angela Maxwell, prevention services manager of Alcohol and Drug Services of Greensboro, "but 50 percent of the population is impacted by chemical abuse of some kind.

"One life touches dozens and ultimately affects all of society. For example, when a person shoplifts due to drugs, retail prices increase and we are all impacted. Substance abuse is everyone's problem."

The organization performs the vital role of educating the



PROVIDED BY UNITED WAY

An Alcohol & Drug Services Prevention event.

community through prevention services and treatment for individuals who have been diagnosed with a chemical addiction. The CARES (community awareness recreation education for students) program is a 100 percent United Way funded initiative which is designed to prevent substance abuse among youth and reduce the impact of abuse on families and communities. CARES also includes LifeSkills training, a drug education pro-

gram aimed at elementary-aged students and parent education programs.

The newest and most innovative component of the multifaceted initiative is the teen leadership program, which is the first of its kind in Guilford County. Teens are immersed in leadership training and conduct communitywide events to educate their peers about substance abuse.

Research shows that teens

develop addictions faster than adults, so early education is critical.

Easy access to drugs such as alcohol and prescription drugs has made this course a necessity, as well as the far-reaching arm of social media that heavily influences the plugged-in generation. Teens also have the misconception that "everyone is doing it."

The other spectrum of the organization is treating addictions. A staff psychiatrist, family nurse practitioner, clinicians and trained counselors work with educators and the medical community to map out the best plan of treatment for each client and to direct them to a path of health and wellness.

"Substance abuse and mental health go hand-in-hand. Unfortunately, they are viewed as dirty secrets by the community at large," said Les Quagliano, senior substance abuse counselor. "Our challenge is to educate

the public, and to allow patients to address their illness without shame."

A year-end report for Alcohol and Drug Services shows that 85 percent of individuals in treatment will decrease their alcohol and/or drug use. This is good news but clearly much remains to be done and educating the community remains a priority for the organization.

"United Way sees the value in addressing substance abuse across the continuum of services, not only when a person needs treatment for an addiction but how we can educate the community to prevent it," Maxwell said. "They have allowed us to expand our services further into the community and we are grateful."

For information about United Way supported programs or how you contribute to the United Way of Greater Greensboro, go to www.unitedwaygso.org.

DUFFY

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happening — until January. I was sitting home alone, working on the computer when — BOOM — I went completely blind in my left eye. I got in my car, still in my pajamas, and drove down the street to SFEC. I walked in crying, told them what was going on and begged for someone to look at it right away.

Dr. Jennifer Flaherty took me immediately and got me right in to see a specialist. Turns out I was having a retinal stroke. I lost some vision but am so grateful for their immediate attention and compassion. I now take medication to prevent further problems.

Summerfield Food Lion: I realize it may not be as "chic" as some of the newer supermarkets, but you won't find friendlier, more accommodating employees anywhere. Everyone in the deli

is awesome. They know me by name, as well as what I order and how I like things sliced.

When I was sick and my husband had to do the shopping, I told him to just let them know he was my hubby, and they'd hook him up. They did. They are always turning me on to amazing new foods I would have never thought to try.

If I'm looking for something they don't carry, James Little and Joe Galvon will order it. The other day, I went to get milk, and the register spat out a coupon for paper towels. Rachel Harrison said, "Go get the paper towels." She pointed out they were on sale for \$4.99 and I'd just gotten a \$1.50 coupon. Major bargain. Customer service at its finest.

Summerfield Veterinary Hospital: Anyone can administer a rabies shot and vaccines, but at a time of grief, true customer care and compassion shine.

A few weeks ago we had to make the heart-breaking decision of having our ailing 14-

year-old cat put down. The staff at SVH comforted me as I sat crying. Afterwards, they sent our family a beautiful, handwritten note offering their condolences.

Last but not least, I'd like to give a nod to the staff at Sir Speedy Printers in Greensboro. I am the editor of our school newsletter, and Sir Speedy has been great with pricing, quality and turnaround.

An employee has guided me through the digital process with such patience.

I can't help noticing that if "Summerfield" precedes the name of your business, you might just have the best customer service around.

It just goes to show that sometimes you don't have to go any farther than your own backyard to find the customer service and satisfaction you long for. I love this town.

Nancy Duffy is a mother of two Stokesdale Elementary students and a Northwest High student.

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