



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Havre de Grace High School Students Take a Stand Against Heroin

287 students wore a special t-shirt and stood the entire school day

On March 1, 2017, Havre de Grace High School decided to “Take a Stand Against Heroin.”

The “Take a Stand Against Heroin” initiative started its planning phase when delegates from Havre de Grace High School’s SADD chapter attended the Harford County Public Schools Grassroots Heroin Summit in October.

Following the summit, Havre de Grace High students wanted to find a way to pay tribute to the growing number of fatal/nonfatal overdoses in Harford County, as well as to find a significant way to visually represent the actual number of lives lost to heroin in our county.

During National Red Ribbon Week in October, the Havre de Grace SADD students planted more than 200 red tulip bulbs as a tribute to overdose victims and to provide a visual reminder for community members. But that wasn’t enough. They wanted the message to directly impact the student body and be a constant reminder during a school day. The SADD students decided that t-shirts would be the most impactful.

Support from Joe Ryan and Tara Lathrop, from the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy, helped fund a portion of the cost for the purchase of the t-shirts. Keith Martinez, from Classic Team Sports in Abingdon, picked up the rest of the cost and provided the t-shirts in support of the cause.

The Havre de Grace SADD members approached students to volunteer for the event in and between their classes, and during school lunch shifts. On the first day of soliciting, 185 students committed to wearing the t-shirt and standing for the day to spread the message. The members of Havre de Grace SADD wanted this day to occur while the Conversation Tree was making its stop at its school. During the week of February 20, students have added messages to the Chain of Hope on the Conversation Tee and the chain currently contains more than 200 links with messages from Havre de Grace High school alone.

On the morning of March 1, 287 students and staff – the number of heroin overdoses in Harford County last year – each wore the shirt and agreed to stand throughout the day as a symbol of taking a stand against heroin.

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The shirts will travel around the county with the Conversation Tree for those schools who would like to participate. As of right now, Edgewood High School has committed to continuing this initiative when the tree arrives there.

The Conversation Tree's final destination is the Bel Air Public Library, where all schools' SADD students will bring their individual chains of hope and create one large, community chain.

"It is important that all members of our community, both inside our schools and out, recognize how much the heroin epidemic touches the students within Harford County Public Schools," said Paige Milanoski, SADD advisor. "We must honor the struggle of the victims and their families and raise awareness and prevention. I am humbled by the outpouring of support and hope that comes when communities join together and unite for a common cause as important as this. We may be a small school, but we have once again shown that we have big hearts."

"I joined SADD because I have been personally affected by drug and alcohol use," said Gracie Diveley, tenth grader at Havre de Grace High. "I think it is important to raise awareness for how heroin touches our school community. I hope that my fellow students realize how many more people are affected by this drug than they realize, and this is a way for us to show them how much this problem exists in our community."

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