



SAVING LIVES TASK FORCE

The Initiative is a quarterly newsletter presented by the Saving Lives Task Force, the goal of this publication is to educate, inform and engage residents of Dare County.

- Our Task Force is a team of professionals and community members working toward the prevention of substance use disorders and the availability of effective treatment for all Dare county citizens in need of help.
- **Join us for our In-Person Meetings** on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 2:00 pm.
- **For More Information** please contact Roxana Ballinger, Saving Lives Task Force Co-Chair, at 252.475.5619 or roxana.ballinger@darenc.com.

savinglivesobx.com
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Addiction: A Universal Struggle Part Two of a Three Part Series

By Kira Walters, Staff writer, First Flight High School

Habits are everywhere. Everyone has them. Brushing your teeth, going to the gym, showering every other day. All of these habits are norms in our society. However, not all habits are practices meant to improve one's personal well-being. Many of them do the exact opposite. They become an all-encompassing thought and feeling that is seemingly impossible to break free of.

For instance, the worldwide nicotine epidemic: The harmful effects of smoking cigarettes and vaping are inescapable facts, to the point of kids learning about it in school. But nicotine is only a tiny fraction of the substances that have taken over people's lives.

An eighth-grade student from FFMS, an FFHS senior and a local adult shared their experiences with substance abuse anonymously in order to raise awareness about this sensitive topic. They will be referred to as Sophia, Grace and James in order to keep their identities confidential.

The Grace Chapter

Grace first understood the definition of addiction in sixth grade. She had seen people using drugs many times before, but wasn't completely aware of what was going on. "I knew what addiction was, but I never personally experienced it because I was oblivious to the things being done around me," Grace said.

"I was at home and I heard screaming from a friend and I ran to the bathroom and saw someone very close to me laying on the floor. She had overdosed and was black and blue. I held her, crying, and I was told to hold her head under the shower so I did and someone else was holding her as well. I thought she was gone for good. Luckily, I started hearing strange grunting noises from her and she slowly became conscious again.

"Grace still vividly remembers this traumatic incident six years later."

She sat me down and explained to me that she can't help what she is doing because she feels like she physically needs it and she will get very sick without it," Grace said. This was only the first of many times Grace had to witness someone in this condition. And even after seeing the horrifying aftermath of addiction, the environment she was living in subdued her will to avoid using substances herself.

"The first time I used a substance I was 12, I believe," she said. "I felt like it was so stupid and I hated it ... at first." An early middle-schooler – this was the beginning of a downward spiral for Grace. "I started smoking because my friend got taken by social services and it became a coping mechanism

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THE INITIATIVE Resources:

savinglivesobx.com

PORT/New Horizons
2808 S Croatan Hwy,
Nags Head, NC 27959
252.441.2324

Trillium Health Resources
www.trilliumncaccesspoint.org
877.685.2415 – 24 Hours a Day

Mobile Crisis Team
24 Hours a Day / 7 Days a Week
866.437.1821

2-1-1 Directory
www.nc211.org

Community Care Clinic of Dare
Syringe Services Program
M-Th | 9 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
252.261.3041

Contact your insurance company to find out more information on local providers and your plan's benefits.

13th Annual Walk Against Addiction

When: Saturday, September 24, 2022 at 9:00am

Where: First Flight High School, Kill Devil Hills

We will have vendors from the field of recovery and vendors of alternatives to substance use (i.e. yoga, gym) Registration is \$10 and will include a tote bag. We will have free coffee from Starbucks and free cookies from Crumbl Cookies! Our speakers this year will address Adverse Childhood Experiences. We will also address how friends/family members should deal with those suffering from the disease of addiction.

After our Walk, Gene Perry will be serving free hot dogs and hamburgers to participants. Before our Walk, Matt Costa of OBX Running Company will be sponsoring a 5k! This is a separate event from the Walk Against Addiction.

Please contact Brenda Thacker at 252.202.1110 if you have any questions or if you wish to participate in any way!

Crossroads OBX

Crossroads OBX is Christ-centered outreach offering discernment, guidance and objective planning for those who desire to change the course of their lives and help those who have been thrown off course by homelessness, addiction, incarceration or other events.

For more information contact 252.455.2510, crossroadsobx.org or crossroadsobx@gmail.com

Recovery & Overdose Support Services (ROSS)

Recovery and Overdose Support Services (ROSS) provides support groups, harm reduction education and resources, overdose response, and assistance with recovery planning.

Katy Haslar, PSS, 252.473.7861 or RecoveryServices@DareNC.com

SMART Recovery OBX Addiction Support Group

When: Mondays, 6-7pm for 60 minutes

Where: Nags Head Treatment Center, 2224 S. Croatan Hwy., Nags Head

Facilitators: Scott and Katy Haslar, smartrecoveryobx@gmail.com

Alcoholics Anonymous: Meetings 7 days a week.

Visit the website AAOBX.com for current virtual meeting schedule. Outer Banks AA Hotline 252-256-0850 and <https://aaobx.com/>

Outer Banks Alateen, Outer Banks Alateen Meeting, Saturdays, 10-11am, Kitty Hawk Baptist Church, email alateen@alanonobx.com for information.

Alateen is a fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or friend.

OBX Nar-anon is a means of coping with the insanity brought about from having a family member or friend struggling with addiction.

For more details, please contact Holly Henry West at 252-489-7778.

Women of Worth

Groups are being held virtually on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00am-12:00pm. The groups will focus on recovery from the evidence-based curriculum, "Helping Women Recover."

Please contact Catisha Bryant at catisha.bryant@darenc.com for more information or if you would like to join the group.

Breaking Through Task Force, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 8:30 am

The Breaking Through Task Force is composed of community members who wish to address communication and stigma concerns about mental health conditions and substance use disorders.

Contact Kelly.Nettin@darenc.com www.breakthestigmaobx.com

Dare Community Collaborative, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 1:30-2:30 pm

A partnership among providers and families of youth and adults with mental health issues and/or substance use issues. Together, they identify services, support needs and try to find ways to meet those needs.

Contact Stephanie Webb, stephanie.webb@trilliumnc.org

Addiction: A Universal Struggle

Part Two of a Three Part Series

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for me. Then I started trying new things because weed wasn't satisfying me enough and everyone around me was doing stuff as well," she said. "I had seen multiple people in my life overdose so, luckily, I never did anything with pills since I had already seen other people's bad experiences."

No one's experience is identical and there are many different reasons for beginning to use substances, but Grace was heavily influenced by her surroundings. "I wouldn't say other people influenced me, but I definitely was told it was super fun and everyone around me was doing it, so I started trying it to be cool," she said. "Then it turned into a habit."

Grace is now a senior, and despite her wisdom from having lived through the experience, she still struggles to discern the reason why she made those decisions.

"I think a lot of things lead to the misuse of drugs," Grace said. "Trying to fill something in your life, past trauma, trying to fit in, being depressed – anything could make you want to try something, and if you enjoy it, you're going to continue to use it unless you have strong control of yourself, which most people don't."

While substances can provide a temporary relief, the pain people are trying to erase is only amplified. It can feel like the only solution at the time, but in retrospect, Grace realized that was hardly the case.

"I would tell my younger self to just never get started," she said. "I hate how our mind can be altered and how we feel the need to be dependent on something that does nothing but damage to ourselves."

Kira Walters is a sophomore writer for Nighthawk News Magazine, the student-run newspaper of First Flight High School. Walters and her classmates wrote six stories surrounding drug issues on the OBX following the accidental overdose of an FFHS senior in January. Walters can be reached at 24walterski77@daretolearn.org. Journalism teacher Steve Hanf oversees the newspaper classes and can be reached at hanfst@daretolearn.org. Look for copies of the spring edition at the school and a variety of establishments on the OBX.

"Today, I close the door to the past and open the door to the future."
– Alcoholics Anonymous

Dare Challenge: Residential Addiction Treatment Facility Expansion

Outer Banks Dare Challenge is about three months away from breaking ground on an expansion project that will allow its existing residential addiction treatment facility in Wanchese to go from serving 15 clients to having the capacity to serve 50.

The nearly year-long Christ-centered, residential discipleship program serves men ages 18 and older who are struggling with drug or alcohol addiction or other self-abusive behaviors. The \$2 million expansion was approved by the Dare County Commissioners last year and is being funded through grants as well as private investors.

The expansion will include two additional dormitories and a 9,000-square-foot multi-purpose building equipped with a full industrial kitchen, a dining room and four additional classrooms, office spaces and a conference room. Also, part of the expansion will be a building to house staff, including the program director and his family. The existing building will be converted to serve as a women's facility/dormitory so that women may now be served by Dare Challenge.

The multipurpose room will have an unfinished lower level for further expansion in the future, and all gas appliances in the industrial kitchen come with a back-up generator. Those features would enable the facility to be used as a hub for the community during hurricanes or other disasters.

Students accepted into the program live on campus and divide their time between Bible study, courses and counseling and working at the program's thrift store in Kill Devil Hills. They also participate in community service work for those in need. The Dare Challenge thrift store provides approximately 70 percent of the program's income, with the other 30 percent coming from donations. Daniels said that as they expand, the goal is that the program becomes entirely self-sufficient.

For more information about Dare Challenge, visit their website at: outerbanksdarechallenge.org or on Facebook@obxdarechallenge and Facebook@obdcthrifty.

