



THE CONNECTION

2022-2023

IMPACT REPORT

Empowering Wellness Through Recovery

Mission

To empower recovery and wellness in Forsyth County through relapse prevention.

Our community is a collaborative effort among people in recovery, their loved ones, allies, and local partners, all of whom we are proud to collaborate and work alongside.

The Connection and all of its services are free and open to anyone 18 or older.



www.theconnectionforsyth.org



[instagram.com/theconnectionforsyth](https://www.instagram.com/theconnectionforsyth)



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Opioid Explosion

According to the **Department of Public Health**, an increase in drug overdoses has been driven largely by the presence of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. In Georgia, data drug overdose deaths have increased by 61% and fentanyl-involved overdose deaths have increased by 230%*. Among adolescents ages 10-19, fentanyl-involved deaths rose 800% over the last few years.

In Forsyth County, the **Department of Health's Online Statistical Information System (OASIS)** reports there have been a total of 66 opioid-related deaths*. Thirty of these involved a synthetic opioid such as fentanyl.

The Connection believes that substance use and abuse is a complex issue that affects people from all backgrounds. We work to create an inclusive, all-encompassing network of support that elevates multiple pathways to recovery and fosters an environment of support that targets long-term success and relapse prevention.

Recovery

We do not believe there is one path to recovery. This allows us to provide an unbiased approach to linking individuals with the best care for their unique needs. In house, we offer Peer to Peer coaching provided by **Georgia Council for Recovery CARES** certified peers. We also host several recovery meetings throughout the week representing various pathways to recovery.

Wellness

In support of our "*Wellness for Families Through Recovery*" model we offer evidence-based programs aimed at educating the public and supporting both peers and their loved ones. In 2022, we held 44 sober social activities for peers, their loved ones, and our allies in the community at large, as well as a slate of mental wellness-based programs

Community

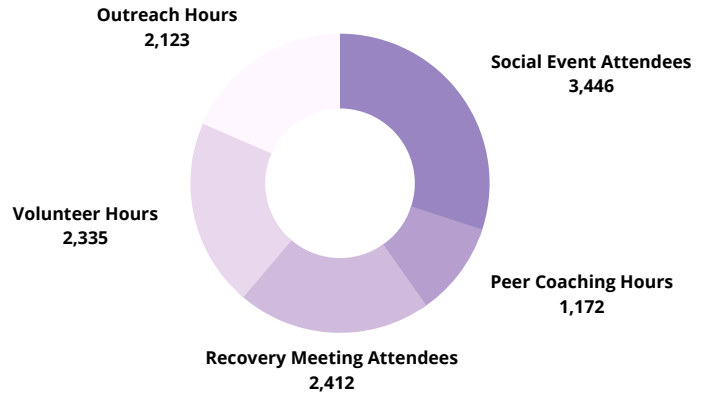
We believe that connection must occur from a place of giving back and always working towards the best outcomes for all. For this reason, we strive to support our neighbors and community partners to create better conditions to alleviate the symptoms and outcomes of substance abuse disorder and mental health.

*Statistical data provided is from period of 2019-2021

Relapse Prevention

Since its doors opened in 2018, **The Connection** continues to expand relapse prevention services, adding peer specialists, offering more diverse recovery meetings and sober social activities, and introducing evidenced-based education and wellness programs.

Last year, 298 recovery meetings were held at our Cumming location including, Narcotics Anonymous, Dual Diagnosis, SMART, Recovery Dharma, and Serenity Sisters (Women's AA). Additionally, we were able to provide several familial support programs including Parent Recovery Network, #NotinVain Warrior Moms, and SMART Family & Friends.



In 2023 we are working towards expanding our meeting offerings. We are doing this by opening dialogue with veterans and first responders and finding avenues of support, including, but not limited to, a new PTSD group. We would also like to increase the availability of one-on-one peer coaching by helping eligible and interested parties through CARES certification, offered by Georgia Council For Recovery.

One of the programs we have been most excited about is a result of our continued partnership with Forsyth County Accountability Court. In April 2022 we launched **ALLIES**, a monthly get-together that links Accountability Court graduates with peers in the final phases of the court program, to provide support and face-to-face engagement in a fun, casual environment. To date, we have had 333 attendees and look forward to seeing these numbers grow!



Intentional Wellness

When we have our emotional, physical, social, spiritual and financial needs met, our chances of preventing relapse and maintaining recovery long-term greatly increases.

As people in long-term recovery, we know that one of the biggest factors in relapse prevention is continued care, support, and access to tools that can support well-being.

In recognition of our ideals, and in conjunction with the successful lobbying of **Mental Parity House Bill 1013***, we have begun to expand to include a more robust slate of health and wellness programming.

In 2022 we soft-launched several series of evidence-based programming. Thanks to a grant from **United Way of Forsyth** we were able to share these resources with nearly 100 peers in need.



2022 Programming Partners

Shift Happens - Art as a Mindfulness Tool

Special Equestrians of Georgia - Equine Therapy

Forsyth Co. Accountability Court - Nurturing Parents

In 2023 we are working to expand our offerings based on the needs of our community. Some of these anticipated offerings and partnerships include:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (**ACES**)

Science of the Brain

Trauma Informed Care

Obstacle Course and Team Building with **FullCircle**

Community Hikes

Health and Wellness Fair with **Forsyth County**

Dept. of Health



*Requires mental health and substance abuse disorders to be recognized equally to physical illness,

Unity in Community

In 2022 we held a food drive to benefit **The Place**, an essentials hygiene campaign to assist returning citizens and local homeless people, held two Blood Drives with **LifeSouth**, and collected over 4,000 toys for the **Marine Toys for Tots** program. We were also able to engage volunteers for 2,335 hours of community service.



Thanks to community engagement **The Connection** was able to supply **LifeSouth** with 26 pints of blood - equivalent to saving 78 lives!

Local volunteers delivering food to the **The Place** food pantry.



Georgia Overdose Prevention, Realty for Recovery, and The Connection hosted a free public NARCAN Training and provided kits to all participants.

Community Listening Sessions

To gain input from local leaders and organizations, The Connection held listening sessions that included 20 organizations including, **NAMI, Georgia Highlands Medical Center, FullCircle, Avita, Forsyth County Accountability Court, No Longer Bound, SAFFT, and Corner Farms**, as well as community partners in the fields of law enforcement, counselors and interventionists.

This year we are partnering with:

Forsyth County Drug

Awareness Council

GA Overdose Prevention

Shatterproof

FullCircle

NAMI

No Longer Bound

Forsyth County Accountability Court Forsyth County Schools

and others in support of Recovery Awareness initiatives.