



## *No Family Is Immune*

August is Overdose Awareness Month, with August 31st being the official day families and communities come together to honor and remember those who died from a drug overdose. It's no secret that many lives have been lost due to this drug epidemic, and that COVID19 and the stress and restrictions associated with it have been responsible for increasing fatalities over the last year and a half. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), more than 93,000 people died from an overdose in 2020. Official numbers for 2021 so far have not been released yet.



How can we prevent future overdoses? How can we help those struggling with addiction? The first step is to become aware that it can happen to anyone. Rage Against Addiction's famous saying is that "no family is immune." Addiction does not discriminate.

By learning and understanding details about addiction and overdoses, you may help save a life. The CDC indicates that an overdose shows some of these signs:

- Small / constricted pupils
- Loss of consciousness
- Slow and shallow breathing
- Choking / gurgling sounds which likely indicate an obstructed airway
- Changes in skin color and temperature
- Irregular pulse

If you suspect an overdose, you should act immediately. Seconds count. Call 911 and administer Naloxone if you have it. Please remember that this important live-saving medication – both in a nasal spray, commonly referred to as Narcan and an injection form, which is often given by a medical professional – is not intended to treat addiction; it is to help someone recover from their current overdose. "Naloxone is an opioid antagonist or blocker that temporarily reverses the effects of opioids for 20 to 30 minutes [but] the person who overdosed must still go to the emergency department for medical treatment," stated Dr. Michael Weaver in an Addiction Center [article](#). This medication will only reverse an overdose to opioids – illegal drugs like heroin; synthetics like fentanyl; and pain relievers like oxycodone (OxyContin / Percocet), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, or morphine – but does not have harmful effects if given to someone who has overdosed on non-opioid drugs such as cocaine. In many states, the Good Samaritan Law exists, which protects the victim and the person seeking medical help from drug-related charges. However, it is best to research the specific criteria within your state to find out how and where this law applies.

Rage Against Addiction is an organization that strives to offer resources, knowledge, and treatment to those struggling with addiction. Daughter's House and Sister House are our two women's sober living houses that provide a safe and supportive environment for the residents to ensure that they can achieve, enhance, and maintain recovery while they rebuild life skills and learn a variety of coping methods. Through our Rage Club program, we provide age-appropriate information and therapeutic activities to children who have been directly impacted by addiction. We rely on many likeminded organizations and individuals to assist

us because we know we cannot end addiction and overdoses alone, nor can we help those in our community who need it the most without the support and generosity of others. We genuinely believe in education, awareness, love, hope, support, and recovery. While August is a month where millions of people all over the world come together to acknowledge those lost to this awful epidemic and to provide awareness about addiction and overdoses, our Rage Against Addiction team works tirelessly to do this each and every day; we also love to celebrate those in recovery because we know that journey is neither easy nor perfect.

Please consider getting involved in the global Overdose Awareness campaign, not just in August, but every day. You can truly make a difference by:

- Properly disposing of all expired and unused medication. Check with your local police station or hospital to find out how to correctly do this in your area.
- Talking with and listening to someone you know who has lost a loved one to an overdose. Oftentimes family members feel alone since losing someone to a drug-related death carries a heavy stigma.
- [Learning](#) more about Narcan and how you can save a life during an active overdose.
- Wearing purple and decorating your business with purple lights to help spread awareness about drug addiction and drug overdoses.
- Sharing a story and photograph of your loved one to be posted on our Rage Against Addiction Facebook page on August 31st. Please email [Wendy@RageAgainstAddiction.com](mailto:Wendy@RageAgainstAddiction.com) before August 20th to be included in our organization's observance. (By submitting a story and photo, you are giving RAA permission to post on our Facebook and Instagram pages.)
- Researching details about an overdose. You can take a CPR class and read about the Good Samaritan Law in your area.
- Having ongoing and honest conversations with your children about the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and addiction. It is never too early to start the conversation. The most unsafe attitude a parent can have is thinking "it won't happen to my kid."
- Volunteering your time to a local organization that helps those who struggle with addiction find and maintain a path to recovery.
- Ending the stigma. Those with substance abuse disorder do not need shame and ignorance; they need care, hope, and help. Their family members need strength, support, and understanding.

One life lost is too many. You know someone. We all do. It's time we ALL do something together. Our future depends on it.

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a note from  
Wendy

FOUNDER AND  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Unless you know the pain of an overdose death, you don't know the pain and depth of the grief that is endured. Personally speaking, losing my daughter to this disease has been one of the most defining moments in my life. Heartbroken and purpose filled Rage Against Addiction, and it became my continued relationship with my girl. The best way I have found to move forward has been through educating myself to help provide awareness and support to others who struggle. So, in my continued and perpetual drive to make a difference in the lives of people who have been affected by the disease of addiction, I ask you to look into the eyes of your child or loved one, and remind yourself that "no family is immune."

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### *Facebook Fundraiser Creator*

I myself do not have an addiction but my son did. He passed away on March 29, 2021 at the age of 32 from an accidental drug overdose (opiates, benzodiazepines, cocaine) I also believe that there was fentanyl in one of those drugs that he was not aware of. I am still waiting on the final toxicology report for confirmation. He also smoked marijuana and cigarettes, and drank whiskey. My son was imperfect in

those ways, but to me he was perfect in every way. My story is long because addiction is not an overnight thing, but I will try to be brief.

I am not certain of the age he started drinking but I know he was in his early high school years. He had many traumatic things happen in his life at an early age and life just kept throwing curveballs at him, but he always had a positive attitude and a huge heart for others and for life. He had people around him that loved him, and he was provided for but I feel it was not a healthy love. His father had a drug and drinking problem which resulted in my divorcing him shortly after my son was born. I was 21 when he was born, and my mother was dying of cancer and passed shortly after his birth. I truly tried my best to keep him safe and I trusted people that I thought had mine and especially his best interest at heart. But they felt I was not doing good enough for him and that they could do better. Around the age of 5, I allowed him to visit with his grandparents (his father's parents) in Birmingham, Alabama one summer as I had done before, but this time they refused to let him come back home to me. I had legal custody of him in the state where I lived but they filed with the court in their state for temporary custody, stating that if I wanted my son back, I had to complete a home study by social services, which I agreed to because I really didn't have any other choice. During that time, I had gotten married to someone else and had another child, and I would bring his brother to visit regularly. They didn't approve of who I married and fought even harder to keep us apart. Meanwhile, I am sure they spoke ill of me to him, saying I didn't love him and I didn't want him, which was so not true.

Unfortunately, I was never able to complete the home study because my then-husband was doing an illegal activity which I anonymously reported to the authorities that resulted in his death and me being incarcerated for 15 years because the authorities said I didn't report it soon enough so I was charged with his crimes. I still called and wrote my son, but his grandparents would not always give him my letters and calls, and unbeknownst to me, my son's grandparents filed for adoption of my son and it was granted. I didn't know this until years later.

During the time he was in his grandparents' care, his father came to live with them. He still had a drinking and drug problem, and my son witnessed this activity and was subjected to verbal arguments between his father and his parents that led to physical fights between my son's father and his dad. Around 7 years old, my son witnessed his dad and grandfather physically fighting, where his dad tried to shoot his own father but ended up getting shot. He was in a coma with an inoperable lodging of a bullet in his head and he died a few days later. Several years after this,

his grandfather ended his life, and years later, his grandma had to be placed in a home because she developed dementia. My son was around 21 at that time. He lost a dear friend and a godmother whom he was very close to a few years later.

He and I talked as much as I could while I was locked up. When I got out, we were able to be in touch every day and that was so great to be able to connect with my son regularly without any disturbance from others. We became very close, and we had many deep and meaningful conversations. He was doing great until he started dating a very abusive, controlling, and manipulative girl who was heavy into heroin; he wanted to help her but ended up getting dragged down too. Life with her and her drug abuse brought him so far down that he became dependent on her. I know I and others tried to get him to seek help, but he wasn't having any of that. He eventually got free of her and was doing good, but the drugs were still there and were his escape. He had several car accidents, and he was robbed a couple of times and lost so much money in the process that it was just overwhelming. I and others would give him money to help with his car and daily living, but he seemed to always turn to the drugs when things got rough. He had problems with depression on top of everything else. He seriously tried so hard to get ahead and stay ahead in life, but life kept throwing him curve balls. He always kept a good attitude, and had such zeal and love for life, but life often became too much, and he turned to drugs one too many times. He didn't want to die; he was just having a bad day and did what he always did to escape it and to numb the pain, but he refused to give up.

My son was 32 when he passed. He loved life but life didn't love him back. He had the quintessential underdog story. He was a success in a sea of failures; he had the world against him with a crazy ex-girlfriend that destroyed his life and he had almost no possessions. In less than 6 months, he came back and started making good money on a steady job, started a career and had a 5 year plan in front of him. When he passed, he had already won the game of life. He was the resounding success of willpower and perseverance that is akin to a Rocky story. In his last few months, he was an ocean of achievement in a time when the world was shutting down with COVID. He was coming up like a phoenix. His name is Larry Myers, my first born.

Written by: Debbie Wymann (Switzerland)

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***Shrimp and Bull Roast Fundraiser***

If you're looking for an exciting way to support a worthwhile cause, please join us for our first Shrimp and Bull Roast. Alcohol will not be served.

We will have a buffet-style menu including shrimp, turkey, salad, pasta, soup, dessert and a COFFEE BAR provided by [Coffee Coffee](#). Music will be provided by The Perfect Beat.

We will have auction items and other games.

Tickets must be purchased in advance here: [Shrimp and Bull Roast tickets](#). Ticket sales end on **August 21st**.

Your generosity will support our programs:

- Daughter's House
- Rage Club
- RAA ABC (After Baby Care)
- Sober Living Funding
- HALO (How to Live Without Our Addicted Loved One)

\*See below for program details.



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***Get Involved***

RAGE AGAINST ADDICTION'S

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FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CONTACT

Mia@rageagainstaddiction.com



- Donate to us through [Paypal](#)
- Create a [Facebook fundraiser](#) for us on or around your birthday
- Host a fundraiser for us if you have your own business or ask your employer to do so
- Use Amazon Smile when shopping online
- Share your story in one of our newsletters
- Share our information on your social media accounts
- Participate in our virtual and in-person events
- Purchase items from our [Wish List](#)

We all have a  
STORY.  
What is  
YOURS?



Are you in recovery? Have you lost a loved one?

Please share your story in our newsletter.

Email your story and photo to Mia Ellis at

[Mia@RageAgainstAddiction.com](mailto:Mia@RageAgainstAddiction.com)

(Subject line: Newsletter story)

(We reserve the right to edit for content, punctuation, etc.)

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## Community Resources

**Addiction Connections Resource:** A non-profit organization that assists with providing resources and support for addiction treatment and that educates the

community about substance abuse disorder. Located in Fallston, MD. Please visit [here](#) or call 443-417-7810 for more information.

**Ashley Addiction Treatment:** An inpatient treatment center that personalizes clinical programs based on individual need. Located in Havre De Grace, MD. Please visit [here](#) or call 800-799-4673 for information about online and in-person meeting services.

**Celebrate Recovery:** A local support group for those with addictive behaviors. Located in Bel Air, MD and Joppa, MD.

- 5:45pm every Thursday at Mt. Zion Church - 1643 Churchville Road, Bel Air, MD 21015. Contact [lheitmuller@zoominternet.net](mailto:lheitmuller@zoominternet.net) or visit [here](#) for more information about meetings.
- Mountain Christian Church in Joppa, MD: Please register [here](#) to join.  
\*Please check out the updated information regarding meeting details.\*

**GRASP (Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing):** A local support group for those who have lost someone to addiction.

- 7:00pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.
- Located in the Education Building at Mt. Zion Church - 1643 Churchville Road, Bel Air, MD 21015
- Contact [lisa.craig4@verizon.net](mailto:lisa.craig4@verizon.net) for more information.
- The private national Facebook group is available. Please visit [here](#) to ask to join.

**The Klein Family Harford Crisis Center:** A clinic that provides immediate care for mental health and addiction. Located in Bel Air, MD. Please visit [here](#) or call 410-874-0711 for information about online and in-person meeting services.

**Loving An Addict:** A local support group for family and friends of those in active addiction.

- 7:00pm every Saturday.
- Located in the Education Building at Mt. Zion Church - 1643 Churchville Road, Bel Air, MD 21015
- Contact [lisa.craig4@verizon.net](mailto:lisa.craig4@verizon.net) for more information.

We serve locally but think globally. For counseling, or for addiction, substance abuse disorder, or mental illness treatment, please contact your area's health department, county government, hospital, or law enforcement agency.

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**Rage Against Addiction**  
**Programs**

**Daughter's House:** Designed to assist women who are transitioning from substance abuse treatment to recovery; includes two sober living houses (Daughter's House and Sister House) located in the suburbs of Harford County, MD. Click [here](#) to visit the Facebook page.

**HALO (How to Live Without Our Addicted Loved One):** An online grief support group specifically for those that lost loved ones to substance abuse. Click [here](#) to ask to join the private Facebook page. \*Please read and answer the membership questions prior to joining.

**RAAABC (After Baby Care):** Provides post-partum care packages to new mothers in early recovery.

**Rage Club:** Designed specifically for children affected by addiction to help them process their feelings and learn about the disease by offering counselor-led activities, such as equine and art therapy, nature walks, and

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**Rage Against Addiction**  
**Team Members**

**Wendy Beck Messner**  
Founder and Executive Director

**Amanda Buddenbohn**  
RAA'S ABC (After Baby Care)  
Coordinator

**Tara Kuzma**  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

**Rachel Bongiorno**  
Recovery Coach and Daughter's House  
Program Director

**Mia Ellis**  
Newsletter Writer and Administrator

**Sarah Hoover**  
Rage Club Event Coordinator and  
Volunteer

**Michael Nesline**  
Rage Club Mascot

more. The group meets several times a year. Click [here](#) for more information.

Rage Against Addiction  
501c(3) Non-Profit Organization

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