



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 13, 2018

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**A Message from the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy Coming to a Theater or Billboard Near You**

**BEL AIR, Md.**, (June 13, 2018) - Summer messaging is underway by the Harford County Office of Drug Control policy to prevent drug abuse and deliver a powerful message: treatment works and recovery is possible.

The Glassman Administration began on June 15 airing 30-second public service announcements (PSAs) in Harford County movie theaters featuring Louis Marcell, a local resident in recovery. This emotional PSA is the latest marketing tool in the administration's campaign to raise awareness about the opioid epidemic.

The PSA was produced in a peer-to-peer format, which is recommended by experts in the field of addiction and prevention, and by Gov. Hogan's Heroin Task Force. In the video, Marcell, 30, describes himself as a "normal kid with a loving family" who began his opioid addiction after having a tooth pulled. He was given a prescription for pain, which ultimately flung him into a spiraling addiction to prescription medication and, ultimately, heroin. When Marcell lost his younger brother to addiction, he sought treatment with the help of his family and now lives a life free of drugs.

"I hope this PSA educates the community about treatment and recovery and helps fight stigmas that prevent individuals from seeking help. I want to encourage everyone, especially parents, to have conversations about drugs, addiction and recovery. Recovery is possible and it is wonderful," Marcell said.

The PSA will run at the Regal Theater in Bel Air and the Horizon Theater in Fallston through September. It is estimated to be seen by more than 130,000 movie goers this summer.

Earlier this spring, Harford County unveiled a billboard campaign with another compelling awareness message: overdose is not the only way heroin kills. The billboard features Denise Hanna, mother of Joshua Hanna who was killed in a motor vehicle accident on November 5, 2011 by a driver under the influence of heroin. On the billboard Hanna holds a picture of Joshua next to a roadside memorial the family maintains on Maryland Route 22, near the site of the accident. Joshua was a 2008 graduate of Harford Technical High School and a resident of Street, Maryland.

“Joshua was a loyal son and grandson who had a smile that would light up the darkest room. He was a hard worker with a good sense of humor. He could always make you laugh,” Denise Hanna said. “Joshua did not do drugs, but his dreams will never be realized because of heroin.”

Denise Hanna was recognized by Harford County government in 2017 with a Shining Light Award for her efforts to raise awareness about addiction and advocate for positive change.

A \$15,000 grant from State Farm Insurance helped cover the cost of the billboard, which is located on Pulaski Highway in Joppa.

Harford County has been recognized twice by the National Association of Counties for its innovative anti-drug awareness campaigns. Recently the Glassman administration was awarded the “Best in Category” in the Category Arts, Culture, and Historic Preservation for using the arts to expand the reach of prevention messaging.


To watch the PSA, learn about addiction and substance abuse, or seek treatment, please visit [www.harfordcountymd.gov/ODCP](http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/ODCP). Resources are also available at [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

Harford County hopes to capture the attention of pre-teens to young adults with the campaign, but there is a message here for parents too.

“Summer vacation should not be a vacation from talking about the scourge of opioid abuse lurking in every zip code in Harford County and the nation,” County Executive Barry Glassman said. “Government programs can help, but nothing is more powerful than parents talking to their kids about drugs.”



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