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For Immediate Release

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“Talk. They Hear You.” Campaign Encourages Parents to Have Conversations with Children about Alcohol and Drugs

EAGLEVILLE, PA, June 9, 2020 —The Montgomery County Department of Human Services’ Office of Drug and Alcohol, Family Services of Montgomery County, prevention-focused coalitions, and school districts throughout Montgomery County are collaborating to educate parents and caregivers about youth alcohol and drug use through the “Talk. They Hear You.”® campaign.

[“Talk. They Hear You.”](#) is a national media campaign and comprehensive resource toolkit created by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) through the Sober Truth on Underage Drinking Act. The campaign’s goal is to provide parents and caregivers with the resources they need to address the issue of alcohol and other drugs with children.

The campaign emphasizes the importance of parents talking to their kids about alcohol and drug use before they reach an age when they are confronted to make a decision about it. In addition, the campaign offers advice for parents about preparing their children to deal with peer pressure that may lead to alcohol and drug use.

“Parents have a significant influence on their children’s decisions to experiment with alcohol or other drugs,” said Kelly Canally-Brown, Director of Programs and Services, Family Services of Montgomery County. “Research suggests that one of the most influential factors when a child is growing up is a strong, open relationship with a parent. When parents create supportive and nurturing environments, children make better decisions.”

High rates of youth alcohol use and shifting state laws regarding marijuana are prevalent health concerns facing families today. According to the 2019 Pennsylvania Youth Survey, alcohol continues to be the most widely used substance among Montgomery County’s youth, with 20.7% of 10th graders and 35.2% of 12th graders reporting alcohol use in the past 30-days. Marijuana is also prevalent among adolescents with one quarter (25.1%) of 12th graders reporting use in the past 30-days. Vaping of Nicotine and marijuana products has greatly increased from 2017 to 2019 from 31.6% to 55.5% in 2019 for Nicotine and from 20.0% to 37.2% for Marijuana/Hash Oil.

According to Kay McGowan, Administrator, Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol, alcohol and drug use can have severe, even devastating, consequences, such as poor judgement and decision-making; difficulty with attention, concentration, problem solving, learning, and memory; mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety disorders; or injury or death from accidents.

In order to help parents prepare for these important conversations, SAMHSA created the [“Talk. They Hear You.” mobile app](#). The app features simulations that helps parents learn the do’s and don’ts of talking to kids about alcohol and drug use. The app helps parents learn the questions to ask and share ideas on how to keep the conversation going.

“The ‘Talk. They Hear You.’ toolkit and mobile app provides parents with knowledge, resources and confidence,” said McGowan. “We’re all spending more time at home. Now is the time to have these important conversations. Although it may not seem like it, when parents talk about alcohol and drug use, their children do hear them.”

The Montgomery County Department of Human Services’ Office of Drug and Alcohol provided the funding to implement the “Talk. They Hear You.” campaign in Montgomery County. Beginning this month, billboards will appear throughout Montgomery County, as well as television public service announcements, car magnets, lawn signs, banners, print materials, and social media messaging.

Several prevention-focused coalitions are partnering with the Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol and Family Services of Montgomery County to share the “Talk. They Hear You.” message with their local communities. These coalitions include Cheltenham Communities That Care; Indian Valley Character Counts! Coalition; Norristown Area Communities That Care; Project Live Upper Perk; and Upper Merion Area Community Alliance for a Safer Tomorrow (CAST).

For more information, resources or to download the “Talk. They Hear You.” mobile app, visit www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking

About Family Services

Family Services is a nonprofit social service organization that provides support and guidance to Montgomery County individuals and families in need. Throughout the organization’s history, its programs have evolved to meet the ever-changing needs of the community. Current programming focuses on Family Support; Health and Wellness; Older Adults; Parent Education; Reentry Services; and Substance Abuse Prevention. Family Services’ innovative programs make a positive difference in the lives of 11,000 Montgomery County residents each year. For more information on Family Services, call 610-630-2111 or visit www.fsmontco.org.

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