Dear friend and neighbor,

Did you know that 175 people die each day from a heroin or prescription painkiller overdose? Our communities are in the midst of a crisis of epidemic proportions, with overdose rates now the leading cause of death for people younger than 50.

Here in our county, we are taking a collective stand against substance abuse with a new initiative called QAC Goes Purple. This project is a substance abuse awareness and prevention program that empowers our youth and our community to ‘Go Purple’ as a sign of taking a stand against substance abuse.

Launched on the heels of a spate of overdoses across the county last month, QAC Goes Purple promotes awareness of the opioid epidemic. The project focuses on preventing the use of opioids through education and community support.

The project is based upon THP Project Purple, an initiative of the Herren Project that helps people struggling with drug dependencies. Former NBA player Chris Herren founded both projects after speaking to a high school about his struggles with drug dependency. Herren designated the color purple for his initiative.

Herren is scheduled to speak at 7 p.m. on Nov. 13 at Kent Island High School in Stevensville. This event is free and open to the public - no registration required. In addition to the evening event, Herren is set to speak at two in-school assemblies that week. Those assemblies are closed to the public.

Leading up to Herren's visit, we hope you'll join us in ‘going purple’ this September.

Here's how you can get involved:

- Like us on Facebook (@QACGoesPurple) and take our survey, then share our educational messages starting in late August.
- Visit our website (www.QACGoesPurple.org) and subscribe for updates.
- Get purple lights either on our website, or at Price and Gannon Ace Hardware Store in Centreville or Kent Island True Value Hardware Store in Chester.
- Display a window cling or car sticker, which are available at the Queen Anne's County Chamber of Commerce at 1561 Postal Road in Chester and at Bay Area Association of Realtors at 126 Coursevall Drive in Centreville.
- Show your support with a shirt, hat or other gear, which are available on our website.
- Come to our ceremonial kick off on Sept. 6 – more details to follow.
- Join us on Nov. 13 for the Chris Herren event.

QAC Goes Purple is an initiative from the Queen Anne’s County Office of the Sheriff and Queen Anne’s County Drug-Free Coalition, in partnership with the Opioid Intervention Team/QAC Department of Health, Queen Anne’s County Public Schools, Queen Anne’s County Commissioners and the Mid-Shore Community Foundation.

More information is available at www.QACGoesPurple.org. Find us on Facebook @QACGoesPurple or contact us at QACGoesPurple@gmail.com.

QAC is a component fund of the Mid-Shore Community Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization – donations to which are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.