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**BARRY GLASSMAN**  
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Heroin Warnings from Harford County Youth Coming to a Theater Near You ...**

**BEL AIR, Md.**, (June 23, 2016) - Children who have lost a loved one to heroin are speaking out in a series of gripping public service announcements in Harford County movie theaters this summer. Produced by the administration of County Executive Barry Glassman, the first of three 30-second PSAs debuted on June 17 in a campaign that will run through September. The PSAs are the administration's newest effort to raise awareness about the national heroin epidemic affecting Harford County. All together these emotionally powerful messages will be seen by an estimated 131,000 movie-goers.

Bravely stepping forward in the first PSA are 12-year-old Jade Buddenbohn from Fallston and Alyana Beck, age 15 from Street, who lost their cousin to an overdose in December 2015. Subsequent PSAs will feature 8-year-old Ava Buddenbohn of Fallston; Mara Finnegan, age 10 of Forest Hill; Patrick Beck, age 18 of Street; Alaina Rives, age 15 of Street, and Lexi Kuzma, age 16 of Bel Air.

The PSA's are intended to help bridge the "summer gap" in countywide anti-drug messaging.

"Harford County Public Schools and Harford County government's prevention specialists do an excellent job reaching parents and students throughout the school year, but it is more difficult to reach families during busy summer months," said Amber Shrodes, director of the Harford County Department of Community Services. "We want to reach kids in different ways throughout the year to ensure the message continues to be top-of-mind."

The PSAs were produced in a peer-to-peer format, which is recommended by experts in the field of juvenile drug prevention and by Maryland Governor Hogan's Heroin Task Force.

"These are the types of stories that are resonating with our youth," said Wendy Messner, founder and president of Rage Against Addiction Inc., a local nonprofit dedicated to connecting addicts and their families with recovery resources.

Messner also helped the Dept. of Community Services' Office of Drug Control Policy identify youth for the PSAs. "I am so proud of all of the PSA participants," she said. "I applaud their courage to share these deeply painful accounts. It is not in vain. This is what works. These messages keep kids from experimenting with drugs."

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

"Summer vacation should not be a vacation from talking to your kids about heroin," said County Executive Barry Glassman. "We need to keep these conversations going because nothing is more powerful than parents talking to their kids about drugs."

The first PSA can be viewed online at [www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/drugcontrol](http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/drugcontrol) and on the Harford County Office on Drug Control Policy Facebook page.

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