2021-22
Communities that Care of Greater Downingtown Annual Report
Greetings from the Executive Director

Welcome to our 2021-2022 annual report and celebration of CTC of Greater Downingtown’s collective and prevention work in the Downingtown community. Although this year we experienced a somewhat return to “normal”, we continued to rely heavily on our virtual programming and communication strategies. Even with this hybrid approach to prevention, our staff, board of directors, and community prevention partners remained dedicated to “empowering youth by promoting mental health and preventing substance use.”

Our prevention strategies remained guided by (4) key prevention priorities:
- Engaging youth in prevention activities
- Promoting alternative healthy social activities and events for youth
- Equipping parents and strengthening families
- Providing prevention education and public awareness

In this annual report, we are excited to share with you prevention highlights in collaboration with the Downingtown Area School District and (15) partners in prevention who are the CTC collective. Our HYPE (Healthy Youth Positive Energy) Clubs were active in promoting positive messages and advocating for healthy choices. Youth created and shared nicotine/vaping prevention messages and participated in the first annual “Healthy Youth Summit”. We launched our newest parent resource: Parent to Parent podcast series including helpful tips, resources, and parenting strategies to help navigate the challenging topics of mental health and substance use. Youth created and shared nicotine/vaping prevention messages and participated in the first annual “Healthy Youth Summit”. We launched our newest parent resource: Parent to Parent podcast series including helpful tips, resources, and parenting strategies to help navigate the challenging topics of mental health and substance use. Our parent blog series continues to gain popularity and provides an additional source to connect parents with prevention. In partnership with the Downingtown Area School District, we hosted (7) programs with community prevention partners in the areas of mental health, parenting, and substance use and piloted a Parent Café which provided opportunities for parents to meet (virtually) to share parenting tips and resources.

We also ventured into the world of hosting a 5K Run and 1 mile walk – the “Snowball Shuffle.” We are so grateful for the over 200 runners/walkers, family and friends who joined us on the cold (but fortunately) not snowy March morning to support youth and family mental health programs. We hope to see all of you at this event in 2023!

CTC is built on a prevention model of collaboration of community partners, schools, families, and donors. Our collective impact approach recognizes that addressing complex social issues of mental health and substance use requires a strong network of partners committed to a common mission of prevention. We remain grateful to our generous donors, sponsors, and grant support from Chester County Drug and Alcohol Services, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and CCRES.

Please continue to follow our prevention work and share resources from the CTC website, and social media channels including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. I am excited to continue our prevention work in 2022-2023 and join you in supporting Downingtown youth and families.

Bethann Cinelli, D.Ed.
Executive Director, CTC
The Team

2021-22 Board of Directors

Carl Gregory  
CTC Board President

Dan Brady  
CTC Board Vice President, Owner, The UPS Store Franchise

Rosemary Foley  
CTC Board Secretary, Marketing/Customer Relations, Baby Merlin Company

Lena Elguindi  
CTC Board Treasurer, Director of Operations, Wharton Interactive

Mary Savage  
CTC Board Treasurer, Senior Director, Companion Diagnostics, GlaxoSmithKline

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CTC Board Member, CEO/Co-Owner, Sanare Today, LLC

Caroline Gregory  
CTC Board Secretary, School Counselor, Downingtown East High School

Kevin Kelly  
CTC Board Member, Managing Partner, Jason Roberts LLC

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Executive Director

Carmen Glenn  
HYPE Coordinator & Administrative Support

Christine Dziembowski  
Prevention Program Coordinator

Aria Walterski  
Communications Director

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Development Director

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Bookkeeper

Joshua Fetzer  
Website & Marketing

Staff

Partners

A Path to Hope
Be a Part of the Conversation
Caron Treatment Centers
Chester County Drug and Alcohol
Chester County Intermediate Unit
Collegium Charter School
Compass Mark
Crime Victims Center

Downingtown Area School District
Downingtown Area Ministerium
Downingtown Education Foundation
Government
Holcomb Behavioral Health
Lionville YMCA
Upper Uwchlan Police

About Us

CTC Programs

CTC is a community-based collective working to create resilient youth and families through increased awareness, education, and shifting social norms surrounding mental health, drug, and alcohol use/abuse. CTC aims to cultivate an environment of positive impactful change. We strive to facilitate the interpretation of research and knowledge regarding drug, alcohol, and mental health into accessible tools for local communities.

We equip volunteers and community leaders with evidence-based tools and we seek to create strong inter-community bonds through communication and collaboration with organizations county, state, and nationwide.
Meet our CTC Healthy Youth Positive Energy (HYPE) clubs:

Making a difference in creating a healthy school community!

HYPE, is a student club that is currently active at four Downingtown Area School District schools: Lionville Middle School, Downingtown STEM Academy, Downingtown West High School, and the Downingtown East High School, which included 82 active members who led 15 activities during the 2021-2022 school year.

Students advocating for positive choices

HYPE is a group of students passionate about creating a healthy school community through advocacy and leadership to prevent substance use and promote positive mental and emotional well-being. HYPE students make a difference through social media, peer-to-peer messaging, sharing the youth perspective, and adding their voice to the prevention conversation.

HYPE clubs engage youth in prevention initiatives by promoting healthy behaviors and providing student education on substance use and abuse, as well as mental and emotional wellness. HYPE clubs, with the guidance of dedicated faculty mentors, design positive prevention message campaigns to raise awareness and send consistent messages to youth about the power of healthy choices.

In March 2022, Communities that Care of Greater Downingtown (CTC) hosted the Healthy Youth Summit. The event was held at Downingtown West High School for youth in grades 6-12 local to the Downingtown area. The day was one of learning, inspiration, and community building. The event’s keynote speaker was Stephen Hill, the founder of Speak Sobriety and a renowned national speaker on substance use prevention. Stephen shared his journey, which is a comeback story from stigma and struggle to resilience and recovery.

Youth learned advocacy skills with Joe Myers, Director of Prevention and Education, from Crime Victims Center of Chester County.

Thank you to our HYPE club faculty mentors. Your leadership and commitment to mentoring youth is the power behind prevention!

Jynelle Sass
Downingtown East High School
Susan Tancredi
Downingtown West High School
Lorena Sevi
Downingtown STEM Academy
Courtney Evans
Lionville Middle School
National Kick Butts Day
Students decorated a wall outside the HYPE advisor’s classroom to encourage kids to kick their bad habits, including smoking.

Red Ribbon Week
Students made a large poster for the main lobby area, gave out red heart stickers to students, distributed red paper ribbons to teachers, faculty, and staff, asked everyone in the school to wear red on 10/27 to raise awareness, and awarded gift cards to students wearing red at lunch periods. Additionally, students at Downingtown East High School handed out red bracelets to commemorate the week.

Kindness Week
The highlight of this week-long campaign included a meditation room for students to relax and recharge with twinkle lights, relaxing music, and some chocolate treats.

National Drug And Alcohol Facts Week
To mark National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week in March, students posted in Schoology and on social media facts about drugs and alcohol. Facts were also put on posters and placed around the school.

Social Media Involvement
Students frequently posted prevention and positive mental health posts on Instagram, as well as what the Club was participating in. Students were challenged throughout the year to share the HYPE posts on their own social media and were given incentives for recruiting followers.

Day Without Hate
An informative video was made to raise awareness and was shown on morning announcements, along with staff and students wearing white to show their support. This was a school-wide event which had multiple clubs supporting the campaign.

National Suicide Prevention Day
Students hung posters, made an educational video that was shared on morning announcements that discussed relationships, gratitude, and healthy habits for coping with stress and anxiety. This information was also shared on the Schoology platform.

Bullying Project
Students committed to anti-bullying pledges and hung them outside of the Health classroom. In addition, posters were hung around the school and anti-bullying messages were on the morning announcements.

Role Models for Change
40 students at Downingtown West High School, Downingtown East High School, and Downingtown STEM Academy were trained by trainers from the Caron Foundation on a vaping presentation that was then shared with middle school students at Downingtown Middle School in early April.

Vaping Projects
Students created anti-drug and vaping Kahoots (school wide quiz program). Public service announcements were also made and hung up around the school, as well as anti-drug messages on the morning announcements.

National Stress and Anxiety Week
Students hung posters and made an educational video that was shared on morning announcements that discussed relationships, gratitude, and healthy habits for coping with stress and anxiety. This information was also shared on the Schoology platform.

Be the Change Prevention Video Contest
Spring 2022
Communities that Care of Greater Downingtown hosted its 2nd annual alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) prevention youth video contest. All 7th - 12th graders who reside in the Downingtown Area school district were invited to create a motivational message to encourage others in their community to make healthy lifestyle choices and avoid using drugs and alcohol.

“Why do I step up each year to be the H.Y.P.E. Advisor? I do it because the messages we send to students, staff, and our community are extremely important to me. I do it because I believe I was placed on this Earth to create change. Change is what we need at East when it comes to initiatives such as: spreading awareness to bullying, mental health, drugs, alcohol, vaping, etc. The students at East want change, and I’m here to support that change.”

- Jynelle Sass, Downingtown East High School

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“...“When I first offered to take on the role of HYPE advisor, I didn’t really know what it was but I was willing to learn. Over time, the more invested I have become in HYPE, the more I realized how important the club is to the school community and the importance of my role as a facilitator in discussing topics such as vaping, smoking, drug use, and other vices that students in the high school are challenged with every day. Growing up as the daughter of an alcoholic, I know firsthand what it is like to have an addiction influence one’s life. Also, for over 20 years as an educator, I have had the privilege to support students struggling with peer pressure, coping with stressors at home, and dealing with the challenge of trying to fit in. I appreciate that as HYPE advisor, I can support students as they work through these life experiences and that they feel comfortable enough to open up to me and get involved in platforms that aren’t always popular.”

- Susan Tancredi, Downingtown West High School
Podcast Launch

CTC launched a parent-focused podcast as part of the Parent to Parent umbrella, “Parent to Parent: Real Life Tips to Raise Resilient Kids”. CTC staff Chrissie Dziembowski and Bethann Cinelli cohost the bi-weekly podcast and meet with experts and other parents to discuss topics related to raising healthy kids everything from drug and alcohol use to mental health to supporting independence. Each episode gives listeners concrete, hands-on tips that parents can use right away with their families, plus real life stories and support.

The podcast launched in November 2021, and most episodes have featured CTC Collective partner organizations. To date, the podcast has been downloaded over 1,300 times.

Blog

Each month, CTC Prevention Program Coordinator, Chrissie Dziembowski writes a blog post where Downingtown area parents can find support, information, and guidance to empower their youth to make positive choices and strengthen their families. In 2021-22, 12 blog posts were published. The blog has received positive feedback from the community.

The blog and podcast web pages on CTC’s website have garnered over 2,100 unique pageviews.

Not My Kid Is Not a Thing: Lessons learned from one family’s journey of substance use to recovery
Featuring Kim Porter, Be A Part of the Conversation

All Things Vaping: Essentials Parents Need to Know
Featuring Salena Morris, Caron Treatment Centers

It’s Not About Being Right: How to have early and often conversations to prevent drug and alcohol use
Featuring Laura Wiecek, Compass Mark

Happy Holidays from Bethann and Chrissie

Bullying & Cyberbullying: It’s in the Air of Society - How Bullying Has Changed & What Parents Can Do
Featuring Joe Myers, Crime Victims Center of Chester County

Doing Nothing Is Not An Option: How to Navigate Mental Health Support for Your Kid & Find Your Path to Hope
Featuring Holly O’Connell, A Path to Hope

All Things Marijuana: Everything Parents Need to Know
Featuring Gretchen Hagenbuch, Caron Treatment Centers

Supporting Transgender Youth: A Journey to Our Truest Selves
Featuring Dr. Bethann Cinelli and Aubrey Fatzer

Gaming and Gambling: The Link Between Youth Problem Gambling & Video Games
Featuring Josh Ercole, Council on Compulsive Gambling of PA

All Things Screens: How to find balance for your child (& yourself) in a tech-filled world
Featuring Dr. Stephanie Diaz-Morel, Reboot and Recover

Supporting Your Kids to Have Healthy Relationships & Friendships
Featuring Joe Myers, Crime Victims Center of Chester County

Alcohol in Our Lives: Questioning Our Own Use & the Impact on Our Kids
Featuring Dr. Jennifer Benjamin and Jerome Williams, Philadelphia Family Therapy Training Center

Tech, Substances, the Law, and Our Kids: Q&A with Corporal Brian Cathercole, Upper Uwchlan Police Department

Summer Plans for the Pod & WWBD (What Would Bethann Do?)

We Were Lucky: A Parent’s Story of Supporting Their Child to Recovery
Featuring Cynthia Black, DASD Parent, Former CTC Board President

Welcome to the Water Bar Audioblog

CTC’s collective partners are committed to collaboration to support and promote CTC prevention strategies. We are grateful to our partners for their role in our Parent to Parent Podcasts, Parent Speaker Series, and Healthy Youth Positive Energy (HYPE) clubs.

Partners in Prevention

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I just wanted to share with you how much I appreciate your efforts in publishing this Blog! I am a long-time educator in the district, but also a parent to 3 (almost grown) children who went through the schools here. These words, lessons, suggestions, and overall your content is POWERFUL to those with impressionable youngsters. Just wanted to thank you for your time, and commitment to reaching our most valuable possessions- it truly takes a village!

Kris Mills, M.Ed.,
Downingtown Parent & Educator

As a parent with three school aged students within Downingtown, I am so grateful for the knowledge and support that Communities that Care has provided my family. CTC provides me with a level of comfort and confidence while I am navigating this parenting journey. They’ve helped me understand the current challenges and concerns that exist within my community - things like substance abuse and mental health concerns - but their work doesn’t stop there. They are actively engaged in providing support to families. They are connecting Downingtown families to experts & professionals and providing us with resources that may otherwise be unknown or out of reach. I proudly support Communities that Care as an investment in my family and our community.

Cheryl Wendt,
Downingtown Parent

I am the father to five children, all whom attended Downingtown area schools. I know the challenges we face as parents, trying to raise our kids in today’s world. Communities that Care is a coalition of groups across different disciplines and they bring together resources for us as parents and for our kids, both to sustain and improve the health of our children as they grow up in this time. CTC is an integral part of what goes on within the Downingtown Area School District. I fully support the work they do and I find it extremely valuable, both as a parent and as a pastor.

John Neider
Downingtown Parent and Pastor,
Romansville United Methodist

CTC would like to extend a huge thank you to all of the event sponsors who allowed this event to become a reality: Citadel Credit Union; Brumbaugh Wealth Management; Hankin Group; AGC; Sanare Today; The UPS Store (#754); Bentley; Krapf School Bus; Miller’s Insurance Agency; Embark Behavioral Health; West Bradford Youth Athletics; United Tire; First Resource Bank; Ethos Treatment LLC; State Farm Agent Ed Hart; Meraki Run Club; Lionville Natural Pharmacy; The Wright Agency; Wegmans (Downingtown location); and United Way of Chester County.

CTC would also like to thank all of the local community businesses that so generously donated items for the event’s raffle: Nothing Bundt Cakes (Exton location); Urban Air (Downingtown location); Honeybrook Golf Club; Applecross Country Club; Longwood Gardens; Epicurean Garage; Elite Escape Exton; Hair Today Salon; Prim’s Hoagies (Eagle location); Starbucks (Eagle location); Good Life Organic Kitchen; Brickside Grill; Limoncello (Chester Springs location); Beautycounter Representative Lauren Hofmann; Buckman’s Ski Shop; All Star Sports Academy; Color Street Independent Stylist Megan Berkstresser; Downingtown Running Store; and Giant Food Stores (Lionville location). Another thank you goes to local race photographer, Derek Carr, who donated his photography services to the event.

Communities that Care of Greater Downingtown hosted its First Annual Snowball Shuffle Event on Saturday, March 5th, at Eagleview Town Center. 250 participants came out to run/walk for a healthier Downingtown community.

Thanks to the generous support of the community and corporate sponsors, this first-time event raised over $25,000.
Parent Speaker Series:

CTC, in partnership with Downingtown Area School District, offered a virtual parent speaker series to increase education and awareness on mental health and ATOD topics and provide parents with resources and support during the school year. CTC hosted several collective partners as featured speakers. There were 7 events held in a webinar format and over 500 participants (attended the program live or watched the recording).

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Not Just Thriving but Surviving
Featured Speaker: Justin Brown, DASD
Participants had an interactive experience and learned how to engage children in conversations about Covid-19, increased empathy for parents, teachers, students, and staff and enhanced understanding on how to navigate uncertainty and cope with change.

Being Comfortable in the Uncomfortable
Featured Speaker: Dr. Jennifer Benjamin
Being a caregiver requires engaging a child/teen in growth promoting conversations. Often, the more important a conversation, the more uncomfortable a caregiver will feel. Being uncomfortable directly influences if a caregiver will develop a “you can tell me anything” relationship versus a critical and dismissive relationship. In this session, participants explored the importance of co-regulation, preparation, and using a checklist to stay comfortable in the uncomfortable with Dr. Jennifer Benjamin from the Philadelphia Child and Family Therapy Training Center.

Mock Teen Bedroom
Featured Speaker: Be A Part of the Conversation
During this event participants “toured” a teen bedroom, learned about trends in adolescent substance use and related devices, the warning signs of substance use, and how to best address these challenging topics.

Chasing Childhood
Documentary Screening and Discussion
What do kids need most to thrive? Chasing Childhood examines how free play and independence have all but disappeared from kids’ lives, replaced with relentless perfectionism and record high levels of anxiety and depression. The film spotlights experts and families who are empowering young people to explore their independence, enjoy unstructured time, and be free to thrive. Following the film, CTC and DASD staff facilitated a guided discussion with participants.

Search for Identity
Featured Speaker: Be A Part of the Conversation
Many young people are searching for their identity, feeling pressured by a label, or just trying to belong. How does this journey put some young people at risk for substance use or other behavioral disorders? How can family members best support youth by nurturing their identity? To answer questions like these, a panel of behavioral health professionals and Downingtown Area staff explored risks and warning signs, and provided families and educators with the tools needed to empower young people with a healthy sense of self.

Navigating Social Media
Featured Speaker: Justin Brown, DASD
This presentation was a meeting style format including a discussion about social media - the good and the bad - and how to manage its use in your family. We discussed popular social media platforms; the role parents play in its use, and how to stay connected to your child and their social media presence. Participants learned how to find a balance in smartphone and other screen use.

Mental Health 101: College & Beyond
Featured Speaker: Holly O’Connell, A Path to Hope
This presentation was designed for parents and students (11th and 12th graders) preparing to leave for college. Participants learned practical advice on: accessing mental health services on/off campus, managing medications, insurance tips, emergency medical leave, legal documents, accessing crisis services off campus, and developing an emergency plan.

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Prevention Education

Thanks to additional funding from the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services, CTC was able to expand and support the implementation of evidence-based ATOD prevention and mental health curricula in the Downingtown Area School District.

Footprints for Life™ is an evidence-based prevention program designed to build positive assets and teach life skills using animal puppets and stories that feature “real-life” situations experienced by a child’s soccer team. Footprints for Life is focused on five key competencies: planning and decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, cultural competence, peer pressure, and peaceful conflict resolution. By building these assets and social competencies, students are less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors, including alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. In 2021-22 school year, Footprints for Life was implemented with 200 students in grades 2 and 3 in DASD.

Signs of Suicide (SOS) is a mental health prevention and early intervention program teaching students how to identify the signs of depression and suicide in themselves and their peers, and how to access resources in the school and community. DASD implemented SOS with a total of 5,456 students in grades 6-10 this past school year. See below for specific numbers by building and grade level:

- Marsh Creek – 1,023 students
- DMS – 597/563 (7th and 8th grade)
- LMS – 827/905 (7th and 8th grade)
- East – 435/463 (9th and 10th grade)
- West – 410/465 (9th and 10th grade)
- Stem – 249/239 (9th and 10th grade)

CTC of Greater Downingtown's social media platforms have all seen substantial growth over the last year and have been one of our main vehicles of relaying information to community members. CTC currently has social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. The content on each of these platforms varies but we consistently post ATOD prevention & mental health facts, the most current PAYS data (Pennsylvania Area Youth Survey) for Downingtown Area School District and information that relates to those topics, community resources, upcoming events, and more. The community has been very receptive to the content posted on our social media channels and engagement is up across all platforms.

In addition to CTC’s social media accounts, another new initiative that was started this past year was the Parent to Parent podcast, which is a bi-weekly podcast that meets with experts and other parents to discuss topics related to raising healthy kids—everything from drug and alcohol use to mental health to supporting independence.

Email Marketing

CTC’s email marketing initiative has been key in educating community members about all that the organization has to offer. We have stayed consistent with sending out our quarterly CTC newsletter as well as information about our other initiatives, including but not limited to, our Parent to Parent podcast and blog updates, our Parent Speaker series done in collaboration with Downingtown Area School District, any upcoming CTC events/campaigns, and more. We are proud to showcase an increase with both our contacts and average open rate since last year. Our contacts have gone up 50% with our listserv now at 1,280 contacts and average open rate has increased by 15%, making our average open rate 45%. This is important to note as the non-profit industry average open rate is 18-20%. The fact that CTC continues to have an above average email open rate for the industry showcases how invested our community is in learning about what we do and can offer them.

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By The Numbers 2020-21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Instagram</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in followers</td>
<td>7.95%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>10.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in page likes</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>7.95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posts reach per month</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>1508.3</td>
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| LinkedIn | | |
|----------|----------|
| Increase in followers | 316.7% |
| LinkedIn Followers | 50 |

www.dtownctc.org

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CCRES
Chester County Department of Drug & Alcohol Services
PA Department of Human Services

INCOME $201,555

EXPENSES $208,808

Easy Ways to Support CTC From Home

Follow Us On Social Media

@DowningtownAreCCTC
@DowningtownCTC
@DtownCTC

Visit Our Website: dtownctc.org

Follow Us On Social Media

- Check out our resource page for information about drugs and alcohol as well as mental health, webinars, links to professional help, and more!
- Learn more about CTC programs and how we support parents, youth, and the community.
- Get to know our collective partners and how they support our families.

Attend a Parent Event

CTC regularly supports and collaborates with schools and community organizations to offer special parent events. Please visit our upcoming events page: www.dtownctc.org/new-events-page and social media accounts to find out what is coming up next.

Be a Parent Partner & Post!

Interested in a simple way to support CTC and volunteer in the community? Help us share parent resources through your own social networks!

To learn more, please contact Prevention Coordinator:
Chrissie Dziembowski at cdziembowski@dtownctc.org

INCOME $201,555

EXPENSES $208,808

- Grants $97,318
- Events $31,170
- Individual & Corporate Donations $72,947

- Administration $30,584
- Fundraising $43,756
- Programming $86,297

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Learn more at www.dtownctc.org!

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Our Prevention Strategies

- Prevention Education and Public Awareness
- Supporting Parents and Strengthening Families
- Engaging Youth in Prevention
- Promoting Community Opportunities and Rewards for Prosocial Involvement

Contact us at:
dtownctc@gmail.com
www.dtownctc.org
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