

GPF Foundation Fellows Providing Critical Perspectives on Peer-to-Peer Outreach While Gaining Real-Time Experience in Harm Reduction Practices

LAKE FOREST, Ill., March 2, 2022 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – From educational program development to writing a peer-review article on the diagnosis and treatment of patients in medical emergencies due to the use of adulterated street drugs, GPF Foundation Fellows apply their academic knowledge and compassion to develop and deliver educational presentations for the GPF Foundation (GPF).



GPF FOUNDATION

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Graduate level fellows are drawn from Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in North Chicago, IL. Significantly, a number of Fellows are contributing original scholarly work for a 2022 issue of the medical journal "Disease-a-Month." Edited by Dr. Jerrold B. Leiken, GPF Foundation's 2021 Harm Reduction Award winner, "Disease-a-Month" provides current, practical information to clinicians, with an emphasis on patient evaluation, diagnosis and treatment. Nancy and Ross Friedman, two of the Foundation's

founders, will write the forward to the article to contextualize GPFF's work by sharing the story of their son, Greg, who passed away during a psychotic break brought on by a one-time use of MDMA (street name Molly or Ecstasy).

The current cohort of GPFF Fellows include:

- **Lexie Kessler** (fourth year medical student) helped to create a research-based educational presentation on MDMA, adulteration and harm reduction. Recently, she was appointed to the Foundation Board of Directors.
- **Alex Woods** (fourth year medical student) says "it gives me great pleasure to see how far the Foundation has come from reviewing the literature to forming and revising our educational program, and now validating our program's utility through an [Institutional Review Board] IRB-approved study."
- **Hamad Hussein** (third year medical student) is part of the cohort working on a comprehensive educational program for high school and college students regarding the associated risks and dangers involved with MDMA and other recreational drug use.
- **Dagmara Zajac** (a third-year pharmacy student) who "wants to ensure that people are aware of the mechanism of action of street drugs and their adverse side effects."
- **Marianne Chirica** (seeking a Master of Science in Psychology) was impressed by the Foundation's harm reduction approach because the "more knowledge students have, the better they can make safe and smart choices."
- **Taylor Macaulay** (doctoral student of Clinical Psychology) was attracted to the Foundation because of her love for working with adolescents and young adults.
- **Sam Vincent** (doctoral student of Clinical Psychology) joined the Foundation to help educate others about recreational use of MDMA and conduct research on the Foundation's educational effectiveness.
- **Alaa Hajeissa** (medical student studying psychiatry) is dedicated to helping young people who may feel like they have no one to turn to as they struggle with substance use and other psychological issues.
- **Jeremy Foreman** (third year medical student) conducted research on chronic pain and opioid use as an undergrad at UCLA. He was drawn to the Foundation's non-judgmental, comprehensive approach to drug education.
- **Hamed Shafiuddin** (fourth year medical student) has helped his community by providing health education concerning sex and common drugs that allows students to make thoughtful decisions.
- **Aayush Boddu** (third year medical student) is fascinated with understanding the mechanisms of how recreational drugs affect an individual's biological, social, and psychological functioning.

Above and beyond all their accomplishments and ongoing contributions, especially noteworthy is the fellow's genuine enthusiasm about working collaboratively with the Foundation to save lives. This is evident in their already-expressed interest to continue working with the Foundation beyond the

original timeframe of their Fellowship.

Applications for the 2022/2023 cohort are now being accepted. Applicants should go to <https://www.gpffoundation.org/contact> to request an application.

About The GPF Foundation

The GPF Foundation was founded in 2018 to save lives by supporting education, appropriate treatment and overall awareness of the dangers related to recreational drug use. In pursuit of this mission, GPFF focuses its work in two interrelated areas: 1) Educational Initiatives to mitigate the dangers of playing a modern day version of “Russian Roulette” with street drugs, including peer-to-peer outreach on the risks of MDMA (Ecstasy or Molly), particularly adulteration with other substances, and effective harm reduction strategies; and 2) Medical Initiatives that include development and dissemination of innovative clinical training tools for front line medical providers that address a critical “blind spot” in the accurate diagnosis and effective treatment of those experiencing adverse effects of psychostimulant use. Learn more at <https://www.gpffoundation.org/>.

Media Contact:

Michael Beightol

Coyote Marsh

mbeightol@coyotemarsh.com

312.339.0055