

United Way of Howard County

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### **Our Forgotten Future: UNITED Against Opioid Abuse**

KOKOMO, IN – PRESS RELEASE – United Way of Howard County is releasing the UNITED Against Opioid Abuse Landscape Scan, *Our Forgotten Future*, which draws attention to families with children birth to five years of age and the effects opioids play into their lives.

The 2017-2018 term of the UNITED Against Opioid Abuse program in Howard County focuses on the community's Kindergarten Readiness goal, 75in5, by bringing awareness to the issues presented by substance use and the effects it has on brain development and lifelong trauma in children birth to five years old.

"We are hopeful this landscape scan of our community brings awareness to the effects of substance use on young children and helps establish opportunities for action in Howard County," said Jeff Young, United Way of Howard County Board Chair. "We look forward to continuing our work through the UNITED Against Opioid Abuse project and supporting and advocating for families with children birth to five who have been impacted by opioid and other substance use."

The landscape scan is a layout of data, stories and knowledge from community members and stakeholders about their experiences with our youngest and most vulnerable population and how they are impacted by this crisis. UNITED Against Opioid Abuse is a collaborate initiative with AmeriCorps, Indiana United Ways and local United Ways in Howard, Clinton, Grant, Jackson, Jennings, Madison, Montgomery, Porter, Sullivan and Vigo counties.

"UNITED Against Opioid Abuse was developed on the notion that community is the antidote to substance use disorder," said Rachel Scott, VP of Community Impact & Resource Development, Indiana United Ways. "When Indiana United Ways secured a special AmeriCorps grant focused on reducing the impacts of opioid abuse, we knew it was important to get a good baseline for each community. The landscape scans are intended to be very "three-dimensional"—a look not only at the statistics, but an inclusion of the community voice to highlight the most significant pain points for real people living with this epidemic."

The United Way of Howard County has appointed Kailee Sparks as the second-term UNITED Against Opioid Abuse Coordinator. Sparks will serve the Howard County region to further understand the scope of the opioid problem and how it effects children birth to five years.

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