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Lynchburg City Students Honored at 2025 YADAPP Conference with Prestigious Wheeler Award

Lynchburg, VA - Lynchburg City students have returned home triumphant from the 2025 Youth Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Project (YADAPP) Conference, held earlier this month, earning top recognition with the Wheeler Award. This prestigious honor is awarded to student teams who demonstrate exceptional leadership, innovation, and commitment to substance abuse prevention among youth.

The Lynchburg team was recognized for their outstanding completion of the 2024–2025 STAN Plan—a strategic tool developed to set and achieve long-term prevention goals aimed at creating a healthier, safer community. Their project exemplified YADAPP's mission of empowering youth, promoting healthy lifestyles, and inspiring lasting change throughout Central Virginia.

The students return to the community equipped with an actionable plan to continue their impactful work within their schools and across the region. As a direct result of their success at the conference, Horizon Behavioral Health and the HYPE Club were awarded a Virginia ABC Mini-Grant to help implement their youth-led prevention initiative. The grant will support activities that promote healthy choices and reduce substance use among youth in Lynchburg and beyond.

To kick off this next phase of community engagement, the HYPE Club is inviting local youth to join an exciting upcoming project, *Canvas of Hope*, a public mural designed to spread messages of hope, resilience, and mental health awareness. The mural will be created at **1415 Park Avenue** in downtown Lynchburg on **Thursday, July 24th, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.** Youth ages 18 and under are encouraged to participate in the painting process. This community initiative is proudly supported by Horizon Behavioral Health, Hughes Supply, and the Virginia Cooperative Extension.

“We are incredibly proud of the Lynchburg students for their hard work, leadership, and vision,” said Januwaa Davis, Prevention Manager at Horizon Behavioral Health. “Their efforts continue to inspire change and bring hope to the community, and this mural will be a lasting reminder of their dedication.”

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Horizon Behavioral Health has been the primary public behavioral healthcare provider in the Central Virginia region for more than 56 years. Horizon provides services to adults and children, addressing challenges with mental



health, substance use and intellectual disabilities. Horizon is accredited by CARF International. This represents the highest level of accreditation that can be given to a behavioral health organization.