

HUDSON COMMUNITY FIRST NEWSLETTER

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 12-13

Hudson Home & Garden Tour

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!!

TOAST TO HUDSON 2026: A SELL-OUT NIGHT OF COMMUNITY, CONNECTION, AND YOUTH WELL-BEING

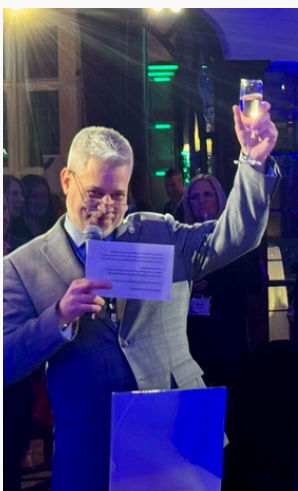


On Friday, February 27, Hudson Community First gathered for our annual Toast to Hudson. With a sell-out crowd, the room was filled with the kind of energy that reminds us why this community is so special.



Guests enjoyed a wonderful evening of delicious food, complimentary beer and wine from Flying Monkeys Craft Brewery and Henry of Pelham Family Estate Winery, as well as live music from the Canterbury Jazz Trio. Throughout the night, conversations flowed easily, laughter was everywhere, and the shared purpose behind the event was felt in every corner of the room.

One of the highlights of the evening was our silent auction, featuring over 100 items. From unique experiences to local favorites, the auction was not only a lot of fun, it was an incredible show of generosity from both donors and bidders.



Another meaningful moment of the night came through the sale of symbolic bricks, each one representing one of the 40 Developmental Assets—the building blocks that help young people grow into healthy, thriving, resilient adults. These assets are the foundation of everything Hudson Community First does. Our speakers, programs, and activities are each rooted in at least one of the 40 assets, reinforcing the supports and relationships kids need to succeed.



To everyone who attended: thank you. Your presence, your enthusiasm, and your support make this event possible and keep our mission moving forward.

We also want to extend a sincere thank you to our generous sponsors who helped make Toast to Hudson a success: Kaulig Giving, Cleveland Electric Labs, Fleet Response, Katie Madio Homes, Augere Construction, Akron Children's, Clearstead, Great Clips of Hudson, Callahan's, GPD Group, PNC, Civista Bank, and Miavana.

Because of you—and because of everyone who showed up—Hudson Community First can continue building a stronger, more connected community for our youth.



Thank you for raising a glass with us. We can't wait to see you next year!



SUPPORT HUDSON COMMUNITY FIRST BY SPONSORING AN ASSET

40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

Hudson Community First's programming educates young people about the 40 Developmental Assets needed to grow and succeed. These research-based, external and internal values, experiences and qualities influence the development of our youth, helping them become caring, responsible and productive people.

Support our mission by sponsoring an asset for the 2026-2027 school year. As we feature an asset each week, we will recognize your family or company name along with your chosen asset. Sponsorships run \$250 and are available for purchase [HERE](#).

The following assets are still available for sponsorship:

Developmental Asset #4: Caring Neighborhood

Caring Neighbors
Welcoming Environment

Developmental Asset #6: Parent Involvement in Schooling

Parent(s) are Actively Involved in Helping Young Person Succeed in School.

Developmental Asset #8: Youth as Resources

Young People are given useful roles in the community.

Developmental Asset #10: Safety

Feel safe at:
Home, School, and in the Neighborhood

Developmental Asset #12: School Boundaries

School Provides Clear Rules and Consequences

Developmental Asset #13: Neighborhood Boundaries

Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior!

Developmental Asset #15: Positive Peer Influence

Young Person's Best Friends Model Responsible Behavior

Developmental Asset #18: Youth Programs

Young Person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations

Developmental Asset #22: School Engagement

Young person is actively engaged in learning.

Developmental Asset #23: Homework

Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day

Developmental Asset #24: Bonding to School

Young person cares about his or her school

Developmental Asset #31: Restraint

Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs

Developmental Asset #35: Resistance Skills

Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations

Developmental Asset #37: Personal Power

Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me"

Developmental Asset #40: Positive View of Personal Future

Young person is optimistic about his or her future



UNDERSTANDING ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS: WATCH THE WEBINAR NOW

This webinar presents a clear, evidence-based conversation to help parents navigate addictive behaviors in children and teens. Featuring experts in their field Talia Brown, Michelle Bestic, and Laura A Markley from Akron Children's Hospital.

When it comes to youth substance use and addictive behaviors, many parents are left wondering what is normal, what is cause for concern, and how to respond in a way that truly helps. In this thoughtful webinar, experts from Akron Children's Hospital break down a complex topic into clear, practical guidance for families.



The conversation explores the wide range of addictive behaviors affecting children and teens today, from vaping, cannabis, and alcohol to gaming, social media, and other unhealthy coping patterns. The panel explains that these behaviors are often less about the substance or activity itself and more about the role it is playing in a young person's life, especially when stress, anxiety, boredom, loneliness, or emotional struggles are involved.

Parents will hear an important reminder that these issues can begin earlier than expected. The webinar discusses why adolescence is such a vulnerable developmental stage, how early exposure increases risk, and why patterns that begin in late elementary or middle school deserve attention before they become more serious.

The panel shares what parents should watch for, including changes in mood, secrecy, isolation, sleep disruption, loss of interest in favorite activities, aggression, and ongoing conflict at home. They offer practical advice on how to start conversations without shame or accusation, and explain why leading with curiosity can open the door to honesty and support.

A major takeaway is that the products teens are exposed to now are often stronger, easier to hide, and more dangerous than many parents realize. From high-potency THC products to counterfeit pills and discreet vaping devices, the risks are not the same as they were for previous generations.

Most importantly, this conversation offers hope. The message throughout is that early intervention matters, support is available, and parents do not need to wait for a crisis to ask questions or seek help.

[Watch the webinar for the full conversation](#) and hear directly from Talia Brown, Michelle Bestic, and Laura A. Markley as they share expert insight, practical strategies, and reassurance for parents who want to better understand and support their children.

CHECK OUT ADDITIONAL WEBINARS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE:

MENTAL HEALTH, COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL MEDIA & EATING DISORDER.

WWW.HUDSONCOMMUNITYFIRST.COM

HUDSON COMMUNITY FIRST WRAPS UP THE SCHOOL YEAR WITH JESSICA LAHEY

Hudson Community First closed out its Community of Care speaker series with an engaging and thought-provoking presentation from Jessica Lahey, educator and bestselling author of *The Gift of Failure*.

Lahey's message to Hudson parents was clear: when adults rush in to prevent struggle, they may also prevent growth. Confidence does not come from things being easy. It comes from building competence through effort, problem-solving, and learning from mistakes.

Throughout the evening, Lahey focused on three essentials for helping kids thrive: autonomy, competence, and connection. Kids need chances to make decisions, work through challenges, and know they are loved regardless of performance. She encouraged parents to focus less on outcomes and more on process by asking questions like: What worked? What did not? What will you do differently next time?

She also shared insights on the adolescent brain, reminding parents that skills like organization, time management, and self-control are still developing during puberty and into young adulthood. One of the evening's strongest takeaways was the importance of building self-efficacy: helping kids believe that their actions can make a difference.

Lahey also addressed substance use, pushing back on common myths and reinforcing one simple message: delay, delay, delay. Because the adolescent brain is still developing, delaying alcohol and substance use matters immensely for healthy brain development.

For Hudson Community First, this conversation was a meaningful way to close the school year. Supporting parents and strengthening the adults who surround our young people is one important way we help build the Developmental Assets that allow kids to grow, connect, and thrive. We are grateful to everyone who joined us for this year's speaker series and helped make these conversations part of our community.

The Gift of Failure is available for purchase at The Learned Owl Bookshop.

We look forward to welcoming families back for another thoughtful and inspiring Community of Care speaker series next school year.



STUDENTS EXPLORE FUTURE CAREER PATHS AT HUDSON COMMUNITY FIRST CAREER PANEL

Thank you to all of the students from Hudson High School and Western Reserve Academy who attended our recent Career Panel. We were so glad to welcome students for an evening focused on learning, asking questions, and exploring a variety of professional paths.

The panel featured an outstanding group of professionals who shared insight into their careers, educational backgrounds, and the experiences that shaped their journeys. Speakers included John C. Workley, Architect of Record and Principal at Vocon; Ronda Ambroziak, PharmD, Clinical Pharmacist Opioid Stewardship Specialist at Cleveland Clinic; Elliot Kolkovich, Summit County Prosecutor; Valerie Ott, Director of Communications at First Congregational Church of Hudson; and James Madio, Actor and Producer.

This was a great opportunity for students to learn about different careers and career paths directly from professionals working in the field. The panel highlighted the many ways a career can take shape and reminded students that there is not just one path to success. Hearing firsthand about choices, career pivots, professional challenges, and personal growth gave students a more real and relatable view of what the future can look like.



Panelists: John C. Workley, Ronda Ambroziak, Elliot Kolkovich, Valerie Ott & James Madio.

If you would like to be part of a future Career Panel, please contact director@hudsoncommunityfirst.com

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Jennifer Fisher
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joneslau@windstream.net

VOLUNTEER BOARD

Looking to get more involved in the community? We are always happy to have more members as part of our volunteer board. Volunteer Board members assist with various events and programs throughout the year. Contact a director for more information.

UNCHARTED WATERS HELPS HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Hudson Community First is proud to sponsor Uncharted Waters, a program designed to help Hudson High School seniors prepare for life after high school and the responsibilities that come with becoming an official adult. The program offers practical guidance, real-world advice, and empowering insight to help students feel more confident as they step into this next stage of life.

This year's speakers included Genevieve Adelman, Financial Advisor with Edward Jones; Judge Lisa Coates; Officer Lauri Natko of the Akron Police Department Community Relations team; Lt. Kevin Nelson of the Hudson Fire Department; and Lisa Kress, HHS Counselor. Together, they shared important information on topics such as the legal realities of turning 18, personal and campus safety, budgeting basics, stress management, and fire safety. Hudson Community First was also pleased to provide lunch and raffle prizes, helping make the event both informative and enjoyable for students.

This year, HCF was happy to bring a version of Uncharted Waters to WRA students by having Judge Lisa Coates address the entire senior class about what they need to know now that they're 18. HCF also provided raffle prizes and donuts to make for an enjoyable morning.



HCF YOUTH BOARD PRESIDENTS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Sadie Mrakuzic served as the HCF YAB President during the 2019–2020 school year before graduating in HHS's first virtual ceremony. Sadie attended Michigan State University's Honors College and earned a Double Bachelor's in Public Policy and Psychology with minors in Leadership of Organizations and Spanish.

After graduating from MSU in May 2023, Sadie pursued her Masters of Social Work at the University of Michigan as a part of the 2023–2024 Cohort of Community Based-Initiative Scholars, focusing on community change in the city of Detroit. After graduation, Sadie continued working at the James and Grace Lee Boggs School, a place-based community school in the city focused on educating creative, critical thinkers who contribute to the well-being of their community.

As their school social worker, Sadie is grateful to nurture the next generation of students who share her values and commitment to community, a passion she discovered in her work with HCF.



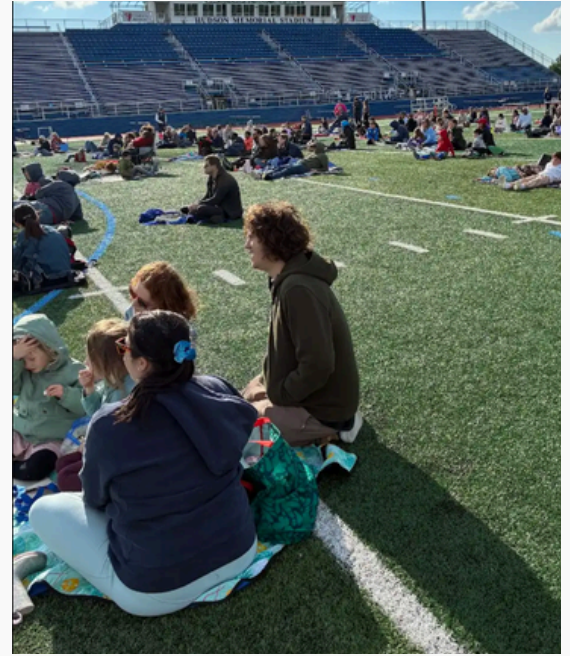
HUDSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNUAL CARNATION SALE

The Hudson High School Hudson Community First Board's annual carnation sale is a favorite Valentine's tradition that lets students share a little joy with friends while supporting a meaningful cause.

Each year, students sell and deliver carnations during Valentine's week, with proceeds helping to support the Orkeeswa School.

READING NIGHT UNDER THE LIGHTS

A big turn out for this fun literacy event which was held on May 7th at the Hudson High School Memorial Stadium, open to all Pre-K to 5th Grade Students in Hudson, sponsored by Hudson Community First. This event helps instill in young people the asset of "reading for pleasure"



MICHAEL-WALY AWARD RECIPIENT

Congratulations to Lillian Musarra, the 2026 recipient of the Michael-Waly Award. This award is given each year to a graduating senior who has made a significant impact on other person's life. Congratulations to Lillian!



ADDISON MAXELL RECEIVES PRIMROSE LEADERSHIP AWARD

Addison will be attending the University of Tennessee this fall to study Interior Architecture with a minor in Entrepreneurship. While at Hudson High School, Addison participated in various clubs and organizations, however Hudson Community First was always the most meaningful. After her first experience volunteering with HCF, she felt that she had found her purpose in life. Beginning her sophomore year, Addison was selected for the Executive Youth Board, serving as her class representative Sophomore and Junior year, and as President of the youth board her senior year. Her position on the board surrounded her with people who felt like family, and the position allowed her to share her passion with peers. Alongside HCF, Addison has been part of Z Club's Executive Board, National Honors Society, National Art Honors Society, and worked at Everbowl. At the heart of all her extracurriculars is her love for helping others, whether that be through volunteering, creating art for the community, or helping customers. Addison looks forward to being a Tennessee Volunteer because she believes nothing has value unless you share it with others, something she looks forward to continuing in college. Congratulations to Addison!

Hudson Community First extends sincere congratulations to all Hudson students in the Class of 2026. We wish you the best of luck in all your future endeavors!



PLAYGROUND PALOOZA
KICKOFF EVENT!

SATURDAY
MAY 30, 2026
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

HOLDEN PAVILION
@ CASCADE PARK

PLAY, EXPLORE AND MEET NEW FRIENDS!

We will have music, snacks & refreshments!

Use your voice to help us create the new "Children's Guide to Hudson Parks".

HOSTED BY: Friends of Hudson Parks | Hudson Preschool Parents | Hudson Community First

PLAYGROUND PALOOZA KICK OFF EVENT

Hudson Community First in cooperation with Hudson Preschool Parents and Friends of Hudson Parks will be launching a brand new "Children's Guide to Hudson Parks". Come out and use your voice to help us create this amazing resource for our community. Let's kick off Summer with a fun filled morning.

For more information, please visit:
<https://friendsofudsonparks.org/event/playground-palooza-kickoff-event/>

Hope to see you there!



Hudson Home & Garden Tour

From remarkable interiors to thoughtfully designed gardens and landscapes, the Hudson Home & Garden Tour celebrates a tradition of beauty and community spanning more than 75 years. One of the Nation's Longest Running Home & Garden Tours.

**To be a stop on the Tour is an Honor,
To attend is to be part of a cherished tradition.**

Click here to purchase Tickets:
<https://hudsonhomeandgardentour.org/>