

For immediate release: August 29, 2023

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**You're Invited:**

**Meeting You Where You Are**

**International Overdose Awareness Day-Milwaukee**

**Presented by RISE Drug Free MKE**

**10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. | Thursday, August 31**

**Samad's House 10 a.m. to 12 noon | UMOS Inc. 1 to 3 p.m. | Mitchell Park Pavilion 4 to 7:30 p.m.**

Milwaukee—The [RISE Drug Free MKE](#) coalition and partners ask the community to observe International Overdose Awareness Day by coming together for support, remembering loved ones lost, and gathering resources and information so that we can end the opioid crisis for good.

“We chose the theme ‘Meeting You Where You Are’ because almost everyone has been touched by the overdose epidemic, and everyone copes with it in different ways,” said RISE Drug Free MKE Chair Aaron Lipski, Milwaukee Fire Chief. “We want folks to know that we and many others share your sense of loss and we are here to support you, no matter where you are on your journey. A variety of community partners are taking part in these events to provide more resources and education about how to prevent substance misuse and overdose so that we don’t lose any other friends and loved ones.”

RISE Drug Free MKE (then known as Milwaukee County Substance Abuse Prevention coalition) launched its local observance of International Overdose Awareness Day in 2017 with a small gathering of survivors and supporters in Kosciuszko Park. The event has now grown to encompass three sites, dozens of partnering organizations, a march, and activities and resource giveaways throughout the day.

“Too many lives have been lost and too many families tragically disrupted by overdoses in our city,” said Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson. “Raising awareness and taking action is the path forward. It is essential that we make progress because more lives are at stake.”

All events and activities are free and open to the public thanks to support from Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Services. Go to [RISEdrugfreemke.org](https://www.risedrugfreemke.org) to RSVP (recommended but not required) and for details about each site’s activities.

“Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Services is committed to investing in prevention to save lives,” said Jeremy Triblett, Behavioral Health Services Prevention Integration Manager. “International Overdose Awareness Day gives us an opportunity to elevate conversations around this crisis facing our community, and to remember those who are gone too soon from overdose.”

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**Event locations are:**

- **Samad's House, 2875 N. 23rd St., Milwaukee, 10 a.m. to 12 noon**
- **UMOS Inc., 3701 S. Chase Ave., 1 to 3 p.m.**
- **Mitchell Park Pavilion, event organized by Team HAVOC and RISE Drug Free MKE, 524 S. Layton Blvd., 4 to 7:30 p.m.**

Highlights of the day include:

- Guests are invited to write the name of a loved one on a purple ribbon to be hung on a Memorial Tree as a memorial
- Narcan training and fentanyl test strips to prevent and reduce overdose and save lives will be offered at all events
- An open mic at all events to allow survivors and loved ones to share their experiences
- Grief counseling for those impacted by overdose
- A prayer led by Pastor Marty Calderon at UMOS Inc.
- A Memorial Lantern release in Mitchell Park to remember individuals and families touched by overdose
- A march to end overdose beginning and ending in Mitchell Park to join the South and North Sides of Milwaukee in healing our community
- Free resources, activities, and more

*In addition, the Hoan will light up purple on August 30 and 31 to show support for those living with a substance use disorder and their loved ones. The lighting is courtesy of Light the Hoan.*

RISE Drug Free MKE partnering organizations include: City of Milwaukee Health Department, CleanSlate Medical Group, Community Advocates Public Policy Institute, Community Medical Services, Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Services, Milwaukee Fire Department, Nar-Anon, Onepillkills, RISE Drug Free MKE, Samad's House, Street Angels, Team HAVOC, UMOS Inc., Vivent Health, and Wauwatosa Health Department.

*Reporters are invited to attend any or all of these events to document Milwaukee County's resilience in the midst of the opioid crisis. For details, download the media kit at [RISEdrugfreemke.org](https://www.risedrugfreemke.org) or contact Lisa Kaiser at [lkaiser@communityadvocates.net](mailto:lkaiser@communityadvocates.net).*