

## NOPE Candle Light Vigils Coming in Late October

More than 55 vigils will be held this year in towns and college campuses to raise awareness about drug-related deaths and open the doors to recovery for many. Learn how your community can benefit from hosting a vigil.

By Karen Perry

During the last week of October, thousands of people across the U.S. and Canada will be attending NOPE Candle Light Vigils to raise awareness about drug-related deaths and to open the doors to recovery for those suffering from the disease of addiction.



In all, NOPE is hosting more than 55 vigils in cities and college campuses, both large and small.

We've asked two of our vigil organizers to explain what their communities gain from hosting vigils and why more towns need to establish vigils.

Chris Smethie ([CS](#)) is hosting a vigil with Darell in Broward County, Fla. And Julianne Mazzola ([JM](#)) is helping to host a vigil at Ohio State University.

### **1) What do you hope to accomplish in the upcoming NOPE Candlelight Vigil in your community?**

[CS](#): Help to bring the community together and hopefully increase public awareness about the disease of addiction.

[JM](#): We hope to reach more students of the campus community for this year's vigil by spreading awareness to not only the college of pharmacy community but also the entire student body of Ohio State. We hope to

shed light on the consequences of addiction but also the hope and success of recovery.

## **2) Why is it important to have a vigil in your community?**

CS: For the purpose of educating the community, improving awareness and providing resources for those needing help and for those seeking support.

JM: Drug overdose is the #1 leading cause of accidental death in the United States. We also know that the average age of use is 18-25 years. This is an important issue to make students aware of. It is also a way to reach out to those students in recovery or those who have lost friends and family to addiction.

## **3) What do you hope residents and students will gain by attending your vigil?**

CS: A better understanding about the disease of addiction and an increased awareness that we have a problem in our community as well as other communities and cities in our nation.

JM: We hope that students are able to see the vast diversity of people affected by the abuse of medications through the use of the "Remembrance Wall." We hope they share this information with their loved ones to help spread awareness.

## **4) Why should other communities host similar vigils?**

CS: Because overdose deaths from prescription drugs and illicit narcotics are gripping our country, our young people are dying, and it is a public health crisis.

JM: Candlelight Vigils are a great way to spread awareness of prescription drug abuse in the collegiate community. It provides an outlet for those who suffer from addiction and those who have family and friends battling to come together to honor those lost to overdoses and provide hope for those in recovery.

*Is your community hosting a NOPE vigil in October? It's not too late to host one. Learn more about hosting a vigil by clicking [here](#) or calling us at 866-612-NOPE(6673).*