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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Support STEPS Program peer-to-peer efforts through  
MC Gives! Fundraising Campaign**

**Did you know?** The Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula (CHOMP) saw more opioid-related drug overdoses in the first four months of this year, compared to the last four months of 2019. Help build a healthy Monterey Peninsula, by supporting our youth in taking a stand against drugs & alcohol through the **Monterey County Gives!** campaign.

This year, **Sun Street Centers' Safe Teens Empowerment Project (STEPS) program** take their prevention activities to social media, proving that COVID-19 cannot stop Sun Street Centers from keeping the community informed about the dangers of gateway drug use. Anecdotal evidence gathered by Sun Street Centers suggests that many youth – who have been out of school since spring and have had many of their summer activities cancelled – have a higher risk of using alcohol, tobacco (vaping), marijuana, and/or prescription medications – the gateway drugs, as a way to cope with stress or simply boredom. Gateway drugs are easily accessible and commonly abused which can lead to addiction and/or the use of much more dangerous drugs.

Since COVID-19 has pretty much eliminated our youth leaders' ability to hold group sessions and being out in the community with their peer-to-peer mentoring prevention programs, they've decided to go all-in virtually, creating content for sharing across multiple social media platforms, including TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Zoom, and Twitter. To support STEPS, visit: [www.MontereyCountyGives.com/SunStreet](http://www.MontereyCountyGives.com/SunStreet).

*The Monterey County Gives! campaign is a partnership between the Weekly, the Community Foundation for Monterey County and the Monterey Peninsula Foundation to help local non-profits reach their fundraising goals, while letting local philanthropists donate to multiple non-profits in Monterey County.*

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**About Sun Street Centers**

Since 1968, Sun Street Centers has been providing the most comprehensive and effective services for education, prevention and recovery of alcohol addiction and drug abuse in Monterey and San Benito Counties. Relying on a proven social model developed by founders Martin and Nancy Dodd, as well as the compassion and experience of an expert staff, Sun Street Centers welcome all individuals and families to hope, heal, share and thrive with a drug-free and alcohol-free lifestyle. For more information please visit [sunstreetcenters.org](http://sunstreetcenters.org). Like us on Facebook @Sun Street Centers, Follow us on Instagram and Tik Tok @sunstreetcenters, and Tweet us on Twitter @sunstreettweet