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Gabriella Smith  
*Public Relations Officer*  
(434) 238-7727

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## **Horizon promotes importance of responsible gifting this holiday season**

**Lynchburg, VA** – Access to gambling has expanded dramatically in recent years, especially among children, and early exposure to gambling practices can have lasting impacts on the developing brain, even leading to gambling addiction ([American Psychological Association, 2023](#)). Research from the National Council on Problem Gambling also indicates that two million American adults in the U.S. meet severe gambling criteria and four to six million meet mild or moderate gambling criteria.

In line with the latest research, Horizon is committed to preventing problem gambling in youth and adults in Central Virginia by bringing awareness and connecting our community with helpful resources and information regarding problem gambling and gaming, reminding adults of the importance of 'responsible gifting' especially during the holiday season.

“Our aim is to remind the community that lottery tickets are not appropriate gifts for children, as early exposure to gambling can have significant effects on a child's developing brain,” explains Januwaa Davis, Horizon Prevention Program Manager. She continues, “While gambling can be an enjoyable activity for many adults, it's important to recognize the potential risks and to approach it with a clear plan in mind.”

Horizon encourages adults to spread cheer through gift giving this holiday season by finding creative alternatives to lottery tickets, such as books or puzzles, to foster creativity and knowledge; board games that encourage family bonding; or gift cards to places like movie theaters, amusement parks, or local restaurants where they can enjoy a safe outing.

Adults and parents can take proactive steps to prevent young people in their life from developing a gambling problem, such as

- Not allowing children to “pick out” a ticket or letting them select numbers
- Not encouraging a child to help you scratch a ticket
- Talking to children about gambling and how odds work, and the risk of addiction
- Knowing the warning signs of gambling addiction
- Teaching your children about budgeting and money management

For more information, please visit [www.horizonbh.org/education/problem-gambling/](http://www.horizonbh.org/education/problem-gambling/)