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**Northwest Family YMCA and Georgia Prevention Project Present  
a Night of Education: Understanding Rx Abuse and Heroin Use**

*Panel discussion with experts focused on how this epidemic is affecting families*

**Kennesaw, Ga.** (Nov. 18, 2016) - The Northwest Family YMCA is partnering with Georgia Prevention Project (GPP) to help bring more awareness around the growing epidemic of prescription drug and heroin abuse in the community. A summit will be held on December 4<sup>th</sup> from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Y, located at 1700 Dennis Kemp Lane in Kennesaw, bringing together parents, teens, educators, and community organizations among others to discuss the issue and how it is affecting teens and their families.

“We are now seeing more than 1,300 overdose deaths per year in Georgia,” says Jim Langford, executive director of the Georgia Prevention Project. “This is more than the number of people killed each year in car crashes in our state. These numbers should be a serious wake up call to our teens, our parents, and our communities.”

Keynote speaker Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens will join panelists including Cobb County District Attorney Vic Reynolds, Emory physician leader Dr. Justine Welsh, prevention experts, families with first-hand knowledge of this epidemic, first responders, and more. They will talk about the issue, how it is affecting teens and families, barriers to addressing the issue and prevention efforts.

“The Georgia Prevention Project believes that substance abuse education in schools is critical to helping kids understand the risks of using dangerous substances. And sometimes a doctor’s prescription, when used in the wrong way, can be just as deadly as buying heroin on the street,” continues Langford. “We also know that most heroin addicts begin their addictions with prescription pain-killers.” According to the CDC, 80 percent of heroin users become addicted by first using opioid pain killers.

The goal of this summit is to convene youth leaders (ages 16 and older or mature 15-year-olds), at-risk teens, parents, educators, professionals and law enforcement to help bring this issue to the forefront. Partnership for Drug-Free Kids says that simply talking to kids about Rx drugs makes them fifty percent less likely to abuse them. We hope that attendees will leave with more knowledge of the issue, ways to help those at risk before drug use begins and the passion to continue the conversation going forward so that we can save futures and lives.

The Northwest Family Y and GPP have collaborative missions. The Y is a cause-driven organization that is for youth development, for healthy living and for social responsibility. GPP has a mission to partner with community members, schools, and prevention professionals to develop strategy, build coalitions, and provide drug education and resources to prevent substance abuse among teens and young adults in GA.

For more information about the summit or how to get involved, email Kaitlin Burkly, director of programs for Georgia Prevention Project at [kburkly@georgiamethproject.org](mailto:kburkly@georgiamethproject.org) or email Felicia Wagner, Northwest Family YMCA board member at [feliciawagner22@gmail.com](mailto:feliciawagner22@gmail.com).

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