Georgia Meth Project Builds on Success; Launches Georgia Prevention Project

Driven by the success of its four-year campaign against methamphetamine, the Georgia Meth Project takes a major step forward as it creates the Georgia Prevention Project, a statewide drug-prevention program aimed at reducing the use of all kinds of dangerous drugs among teens and young adults.

The Georgia Prevention Project will continue the strong message against Meth, as the Georgia Meth Project remains a signature program of the organization. Complementing its anti-meth work, the Georgia Prevention Project now launches the Georgia Rx Abuse Project to educate teens about the risks associated with abusing prescription drugs.

The Georgia Prevention Project will accomplish its work against Meth and the abuse of prescription drugs through awareness campaigns, educational programming and strategic partnerships with national and community based organizations.

Langford pointed to recent survey results that demonstrate the effectiveness of the anti-meth message. The new survey shows that only 11.6 percent of teens now see “little or no risk in trying Meth once or twice.” Before the launch of the campaign in 2010, more than 35 percent of teens saw little or no risk in trying Meth.

Two other statistics stood out among many others in the new survey: 88 percent of teenagers now report “moderate or great risk” for using Meth and 68 percent now see “great risk” in trying Meth. These percentages tallied 65 percent and 41 percent, respectively, in 2010.
When Linda Stafford took liquid hydrocodone for the first time it was for a legitimate purpose - she was 14 years old and had a bad cough. Based on her mother’s advice, she expected it to make her feel drowsy. She didn’t expect the effect it would have on her after mistakenly taking two tablespoons instead of two teaspoons. “I really liked the feeling that it gave me. I ended up using all of that and would go to school on it. Once I used all of that I started taking night time cough syrup to try to maintain that buzz.”

Later on in high school she got another cold. She immediately saw this as an opportunity to manipulate her doctor into prescribing more liquid hydrocodone. Then she had a wisdom tooth pulled and began to use more of the drug than was prescribed for her pain.

Once she graduated high school, her problems resurfaced and escalated in college. That’s when she began to feel the pressure of keeping up with academics, athletics, and an active social life. “I’d pretty much gotten to where I’d fall asleep on any amount of caffeine,” Stafford said. “I was unable to stay awake and study while I was having my whole night life and fun in college. I played rugby and all that kind of stuff too. So, of course I put my homework off to the last minute. It ended up that one of my friends offered me Adderall.”

Stafford says the reason most college students use Adderall is because, “It keeps you up all night and it makes you feel really engaged in what you’re doing.” She immediately loved the feeling of it. “It made me feel extremely focused, like I could study for as long as I wanted to. But I probably only got through maybe two pages of the material, where I was supposed to get through maybe ten.”

Eventually relationships began to crumble, and Stafford quickly spiraled into a cycle: take Adderall for the high and Xanax to come back down. “I lost a lot of relationships. It pretty much got down to where all I cared about was Adderall. I can remember one of my friends telling me she thought that the only reason I wanted her around was because she had Adderall. That was pretty much true, I was so scared of other people finding that out, but that was the honest to God truth.”

Stafford got to the point where she could no longer function without drugs. She ended up leaving school and moving back home with her parents. That’s when she was confronted with her addiction and forced to get help.

She’s now 24 years old and on the path to sobriety, one and a half years and counting. Armed with a Bachelor’s Degree in Health Education and Promotion and a minor in Sociology from Georgia Southern University, Stafford warns all teens that abusing prescription drugs has damaging effects on your life.

“They’re going to lose a lot if they do choose to go down that road. I ended up having to stay in school for longer.”

Stafford said the addiction to Adderall is a weird contradiction. “You feel like you’re on top of the world and like you’re smarter than everybody else, but really I wasn’t doing a thing. All of my papers were late. A lot of them rambled on. They didn’t make that much sense” After she got sober she saw the truth. “One of my teachers told me that I had done one of the best literature reviews he’d ever seen once I got sober. I made the best grades in college that I’d ever made once I started focusing on the good things in life.”

“As we’ve learned at the Georgia Meth Project, teens don’t want to listen to a high school principal or authority figures,” explained Jim Langford, Executive Director of the Georgia Prevention Project. “But they will listen to peers, so these kinds of stories are really important for teens to hear.”

Adderall & College...Toxic Mix?

Adderall is a prescription stimulant used to treat narcolepsy and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It is one of the most commonly abused drugs by college students. It is used non-medically by 6.4 percent of full-time college students aged 18 to 22, according to SAMHSA’s National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

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Out of Reach – Medicine Abuse, Through the Eyes of a Teen

“I just took pills … from the medicine cabinet.”

“I don’t remember what it was but it was a pain killer. So he gave me two of those and it just didn’t hurt anymore.”

“They don’t really realize what they’re taking but they’re just taking it because they can.”

“Out of Reach” captures the countrywide issue of teen prescription drug abuse. The special documentary was created by a teen filmmaker, in collaboration with director Tucker Capps (of A&E’s “Intervention”) and The Partnership at Drugfree.org’s Medicine Abuse Project. View the full trailer at www.georgiapreventionproject.org.

Georgia Prevention Project Launches Website

The Georgia Prevention Project launched its new website (www.GeorgiaPreventionProject.org) on April 22nd. Accessible from any device, the site provides resources targeted at the four major groups affected by dangerous drugs: teens, parents, college students and educators. Find past campaigns – Georgia Meth Project – current campaigns – Georgia Rx Abuse Project – and future campaigns all in one central location.

Past, Present & Future

2009

Georgia Meth Project becomes a 501(c)3 organization and forms relationships with business leaders, educators and other nonprofit organizations.

2010

Since its launch in 2010, the Georgia Meth Project raised more than $18 million in private donations and in-kind contributions and kicked off the highly successful “Not Even Once” campaign, placing 23,000 primetime television ads, 26,000 radio spots and 600 billboards in Georgia.

2011

Georgia Meth Project launches community programs, bringing the Meth prevention message to nearly 26,000 students in schools, recreation centers, boys and girls clubs, and teen conferences. In total, the Georgia Meth Project visits 95 schools in 33 counties.

2012

Georgia Meth Project continues Meth prevention message, conducting 468 presentations to more than 36,000 students in 154 schools, in an additional 50 counties. Georgia Meth Project also launches its Meth Prevention Lesson, an online tool designed for classroom teachers.

2013

Georgia Meth Project trains 364 teachers at 225 schools across 41 targeted counties to use Meth Prevention Lesson in the classroom.

2014

Georgia Meth Project expands to create Georgia Prevention Project; Georgia Prevention Project announced at the 2014 National Rx Drug Abuse Summit.

Georgia survey statistics show that 24 percent of Georgia teens say they have taken a prescription drug that was not prescribed to them. Out of startling statistics like this, the Georgia Rx Abuse Project was born. The campaign will spread prevention messages, and get ahead of this emerging epidemic in our state.

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Georgia Rx Abuse Project Fights Prescription Drug Abuse in Georgia continued

In our own backyard, hospital admissions for overdoses of opiates – not including heroin – jumped by almost 1,000 percent between 2000-2012. In the year 2012, about 76 percent of the drug overdoses in Georgia resulted from prescription drugs.

“We have a potential epidemic on our hands in Georgia, just like we did with Meth a few years ago,” warns Jim Langford, Executive Director of the Georgia Prevention Project. “We must work together to get out front of this prescription drug abuse problem before we lose more lives.”

The reality of drug abuse is that every 15 minutes, one American dies from an unintentional overdose, most due to prescription drugs. The Georgia Rx Abuse Project urges educators and parents to act now, before prescription drug abuse spirals out of control.

Georgia Meth Project Builds on Success; Launches Georgia Prevention Project continued

The Georgia Prevention Project is an affiliate of the Partnership at Drugfree.org, the oldest and largest non-profit organization that focuses on drug abuse prevention.

“We applaud the Georgia Meth Project’s highly successful efforts to communicate the risks and effectively address the issue of methamphetamine use across the state. We are now committed to joining Georgia Prevention Project and tackling another devastating health crisis – the dangerous behavior of medicine abuse,” said Steve Pasierb, President and CEO of The Partnership at Drugfree.org. “The majority of parents in this state and across the country tend to deny that their teens could be abusing prescription drugs. It is up to all of us to come together and educate parents, our communities and our teens about this epidemic and in turn, save lives.”