

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JELLENIK, YOUNG, AND OTHER COMMUNITY LEADERS TO OFFER FORUM ON DRINKING, DRUGS, AND DEPRESSION IN TEENAGERS

NEWTON, MA, December 22, 2006 – On January 18, 2007, Project I.N.T.E.R.F.A.C.E. will hold a forum on “Drinking, Drugs, and Depression.” A panel of experts will share information, tips and resources. The panel will include Dr. Michael Jellenik, President of Newton Wellesley Hospital; Dr. Jeffrey M. Young, Superintendent of Newton Public Schools; Dr. Nadja Reilly, Director of the Swensrud Depression Prevention Initiative at Children's Hospital; Julie Totten, President and CEO of Families for Depression Awareness; Chris Fortunato, Vice President of Newton Community Service Center and Director of TeenReach; Nanci Ginty, Coordinator of School and Community Programs at Riverside Community Care; Rich Catrambone, Social Worker at Newton South High School; and, Dr. David Gotthelf, Psychologist at Brown Middle School. The forum will be held at Newton Wellesley Hospital’s Shipley Auditorium, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Thursday, January 18, 2007. There is no cost to attend.

More than 800,000 American teenagers suffer from depression each year, and more than 500,000 make a suicide attempt that requires medical attention (Columbia University 2003). Often these children have been experimenting with alcohol and other drugs.

Margie Daniels, Newton Public Schools Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services, said, “This is a great opportunity for parents and other concerned Newton residents to hear from the experts about the connection between substance use and depression in teens. Moreover, it is a great opportunity for community leaders to hear from parents about this important issue, and for all of us to work together to help support children and their families.”

The forum is sponsored by Project I.N.T.E.R.F.A.C.E. and the Newton Public Schools PTO Council.

About Project I.N.T.E.R.F.A.C.E.

In September 2005, Newton Public Schools was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education under “Grants to Improve the Mental Health of Children Program” (CFDA# 84.215M). The grant of \$297,295 is in effect from 9/15/2005 through 3/14/2007. The grant created Project I.N.T.E.R.F.A.C.E., which is an acronym that summarizes the project’s major features: **I**ntegrating Services, **N**ourishing Families, **T**raining Teachers, **E**nhancing Supports, **R**especting Cultures, **F**acilitating Linkages, **A**ddressing Needs, **C**onvening Partners, and **E**valuating Efficacy.

In addition to community forums, Project I.N.T.E.R.F.A.C.E. conducts teacher training, maintains a database of local mental health services, and has constructed a community-friendly web site (www.projectinterface.org) with information on mental health services, resources, and events. Project I.N.T.E.R.F.A.C.E. includes a network of more than 40 local agencies who are partnering with the school system to help inform the community about children’s mental health issues.

For more information about Project I.N.T.E.R.F.A.C.E. or to get involved, contact Margaret Hannah, Project Director, at 617.559.6042 or margaret_hannah@newton.mec.edu.

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