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Georgia Meth Project Takes on Middle Georgia

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Created 2010-06-10 18:08

Thirty-five percent of Georgia teens see no risk in trying Methamphetamine. Now, a statewide initiative is in full-swing, aiming to keep teens from even trying the dangerous drug.

Billboards, radio ads and commercials stress: Don't even try it once. That's the message The Georgia Meth Project is spreading across the state. The ads are an effort to keep teens and young adults from becoming a statistic related to the highly addictive drug. "This drug is 4-5 times more powerful than cocaine," said Jim Langford, Executive Director of the Georgia Meth Project. "This is a drug so powerful that for some young people, for anybody of any age group, to try this drug even once, they become addicted."

That's what happened to Ricardo. He struggled with addictions to meth, cocaine and crack for 35 years. "The longer you stay on it, the more you get stolen by it, the more you get tricked by it, the more you get taken away from the real reality...had I gone much longer, I would have been a casualty for sure," he said.

Langford said the results of the project's survey show a high percentage of young people know about the drug and 20% even say it's easy to get. "That's polling done all across Georgia, including schools in this area."

Leaders of the initiative say, 80% of meth used in the U.S. is made in Mexico; and Atlanta has become the East coast distribution hub. State officials estimate 3,100 people are behind bars in Georgia on charges relating to Meth, and another 9,000 on probation. James Rockefeller is the President of a local non-profit agency called Families Against Meth Abuse. He said, "Georgia is one of the worst states in the country in terms of spending money on mental health abuse and substance abuse. With budget cuts, it's even worse and there isn't enough out there that's government provided, so it's going to have to be private and community-based."

The Georgia Meth Project campaign travels around Georgia encouraging local governments, churches, organizations and schools start anti-meth programs in its community.

The ministry "Off crack, on track" is something Ricardo has been doing since kicking the habit 12 years ago. He says God now works through him to help struggling addicts. "If we allow other people to fall into the same hell we have been delivered from, we will answer to that when we stand before him."

The Georgia Meth Project just kicked off in March, modeled after a national anti-meth campaign. After traveling the state, leaders will train volunteers to help create anti-meth programs in communities across the state.

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