



Georgia Bureau of Investigation

Director Vernon Keenan



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GBI Hosts Youth Suicide Prevention and Awareness Summit

Lawrenceville, Georgia (November 20, 2017) – The Georgia Bureau of Investigation’s (GBI) Child Fatality Review (CFR) Unit hosted a Youth Suicide Prevention and Awareness Summit on Friday, November 17th, at the Gwinnett County Justice and Administration Center.

The summit was held to address the rise in youth suicides in Georgia, discuss how to recognize warning signs, and promote prevention efforts. So far in 2017, 38 youth suicides have been reported in the state. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 15 to 17.

“Youth suicide is a serious public health problem that has long lasting effects on families, friends, schools, and communities,” said Vernon M. Keenan, Director of the GBI. “Since the causes of suicide among youth are complex, no one person or agency can implement prevention efforts alone. Education and active involvement can make a difference. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the Georgia Child Fatality Review Program are proud to work with our partners in promoting awareness and prevention strategies.”

Also presenting during the summit were:

Trebor Randle, Special Agent in Charge, GBI Child Fatality Review Unit
Sally Vander Straeten, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
Jeff Lukich, Deputy Division Director, Division of Family and Children Services
Eric Thigpen, Executive Director, Gwinnett County Public Schools
Kim Jones, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Georgia
Jewell Gooding, Mental Health America of Georgia
Peggy Walker, Douglas County Juvenile Court Judge

Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford) served as the honorary guest. “I would like to thank the GBI CFR Unit for allowing me to speak at their summit this past Friday,” said Sen. Unterman. “It is so important to me that people are aware of indicators that a child may be experiencing suicidal thoughts. There are so many steps that we as parents, mentors and leaders amongst children can take in order to prevent suicides of children within our communities. Thirty-eight is an unacceptable number of youth suicides in Georgia in 2017 and I am confident that with leaders such as the GBI CFR Unit, educators, parents and caregivers throughout Georgia, we can recognize thoughts of suicide in our children and do everything we can to prevent the loss of a precious life.”

For more information on the GBI’s CFR Program, please follow this link:

<https://gbj.georgia.gov/CFR>

