



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### Contact:

Mike Mullet

Community Relations Director

(770) 265-4250

[michaelmullet@highlandrivers.org](mailto:michaelmullet@highlandrivers.org)

### **Highland Rivers Health to host community town hall on youth and mental health June 15**

CHATSWORTH, Georgia – June 7, 2018 – Highland Rivers Health will host a Community Family Town Hall on Youth and Mental Health, Friday, June 15, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Chatsworth City Park, 400 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., in Chatsworth. The event is free and open to the public.

Beginning at 5:45 p.m., there will be a community discussion and Q&A with a panel of mental health experts and local representatives. The panel will include Murray County Chief Magistrate Judge and Highland Rivers Health board member Gale Buckner; Noelle Beard, LPC, manager of suicide prevention services at Highland Rivers Health; Murray County Juvenile Court Judge Philip Woodward, and others.

“Youth today must grapple with a lot of challenges that young people didn’t face even a generation ago,” said Highland Rivers CEO Melanie Dallas, a licensed professional counselor with 30 years’ experience in child and adolescent mental health, who will facilitate to community panel discussion. “We want to focus on how we as a community can foster resiliency in our youth, help them build healthy coping strategies, and teach them where to turn for help if they need it.”

Dallas said it is not uncommon for children and adolescents to experience mental, emotional or behavioral challenges; approximately 20 percent of youth ages 13 to 18 live with a mental health condition. But timely intervention, support and access to mental health services can help children build resiliency, improve academic performance and have more positive social interactions.

Highland Rivers Health is a state-designated provider of mental health and substance use treatment services for children, adolescents, adults and families. The agency’s outpatient center is on Shugart Rd., in Dalton, serves Murray County residents and has counselors that specialize in child and adolescent mental health. The Dalton facility also has separate a separate waiting area and intake hours for youth. Because of the demand for services, Highland Rivers is exploring the possibility of opening a facility in Murray County.

“As someone who works in the court system, I see the impact of mental health and substance use on the Murray County community and families every day,” said Chief Magistrate Judge Gale Buckner, who represents Murray County on the Highland Rivers governing board. “As we continue to work to meet the needs of Murray County residents, we want to increase awareness of Highland Rivers Health and the resources it offers to local families and youth.”

The Community Family Town Hall will allow local families to learn more about the services Highland Rivers Health offers and how people can access them. The event was scheduled after work hours to encourage parents to attend with their children, and will include games, music, and free hotdogs and soft drinks.

**About Highland Rivers Health**

Highland Rivers Health provides comprehensive treatment and support services for adults, children and families, and veterans affected by mental health disorders, intellectual developmental disabilities and addictive disease. One of the state’s largest public safety net providers, Highland Rivers operates more than two-dozen treatment facilities across a 4,400-square mile area of Northwest Georgia that includes Bartow, Cherokee, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk and Whitfield counties, and serves nearly 16,000 individuals annually. Highland Rivers is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and is a Tier 1 safety net Core Provider for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. For more information, visit <http://highlandrivershealth.com>.

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