



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Kent County Teens Push Forward against Substance Abuse, Peer Pressure**

GRAND RAPIDS – Every teen’s life is filled with pressure, some of it good, some of it bad. The Above the Influence (ATI)-Kent County movement powered by the Kent County Prevention Coalition is helping teens stand up to negative pressures and influences, including the pressure to use drugs and alcohol. On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the ATI-Kent County Youth Summit will bring more than 1000 youth together in the name of substance use prevention.

The Summit is designed to empower middle and high school youth; getting them to think critically about personal choices and future ambitions, emerging community health and wellness trends related to underage substance use/misuse, and the power community teens have individually and collectively to impact peers, family, the community, and the world by making a personal commitment to live Above the Influence.

“This year’s Summit theme, ‘Push Forward,’ truly exemplifies the commitment to excellence that the Kent County Prevention Coalition consistently demonstrates in keeping young people ‘above the influence,’” said Benjamin Tucker, ONDCP Deputy Director of State, Local, and Tribal Affairs. “We know that prevention works. It’s the passion and support from community leaders like those here in Kent County that ignites the power of prevention in every sector, making every teen’s voice relevant and influential. The “Above the Influence” campaign will continue to celebrate the work of Kent County’s hands-on, youth-driven solutions, as research indicates that teens with increased awareness and engagement with ATI hold stronger anti-drug beliefs.”

The Summit is designed to:

- Engage youth in being visible, valuable, and vocal to underage substance use prevention efforts in Kent County;
- Champion the voices and engagement of youth in the work of underage substance use prevention;
- Understand the underage substance use issues and emerging trends in Kent County;
- Engage youth as investors in the health and wellness of Kent County;
- Develop adolescent leadership skills and talents;
- Foster relationship-building among teens across the county, state, and region;
- Create opportunities for youth to engage community leaders and elected officials;
- Use innovation, art, technology, and media to deliver prevention messages.

**We invite members of the media to see what we are doing to reach youth.** May 3, 2013, starting at 8:45 AM, we kick off the 2013 Youth Summit. This year’s Summit theme is ‘Push Forward’. “‘Push Forward’ is about recognizing the stressors, emotional baggage, pressures, and past history that impact teen behavior, struggles, and self-esteem on a daily basis. Yet ‘Push

Forward’ magnifies the capacity each teen has to successfully overcome obstacles, redefine their future, make positive life choices, and walk free of the past,” said Shannon Cohen, Co-Chair of the Kent County Prevention Coalition. “This year’s theme speaks to the summit’s goal of empowering every attendee to victorious living via high-octane, skill-building, ATI-Kent County activities, workshops, and peer-to-peer messaging.”

**MEDIA NOTE:** KCPC will have several youth and adult leaders available to speak about living Above the Influence at the event. A special video welcome will be presented by Ben Tucker, the Deputy Director of State, Local and Tribal Affairs for the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). In addition to the high-octane start of the Summit, there will also be a highly-visual balloon launch at 2:45 pm at GVSU.

View a snippet of the 2012 Youth Summit at: <http://vimeo.com/40166923>

### 2013 ATI-KENT COUNTY YOUTH SUMMIT LOGISTICS

**Venue(s):** Grand Valley State University – Allendale Campus [Daytime]

3 Mile Project [Evening]

**Date:** Friday, May 3, 2012

**Time(s):** @ Grand Valley State University [8:45 am – 3 pm]

@ 3 Mile Project [9 pm – 7 am]

\*FREE EVENT

ABOVE THE INFLUENCE - KENT COUNTY  
Powered by The Kent County Prevention Coalition Presents:

**YOUTH SUMMIT**  
2013  
PUSH FORWARD  
**FRIDAY, MAY 3RD**

**THE DAY**  
SUMMIT CONFERENCE @  
The Kirkhof Center  
Grand Valley  
State University  
(Allendale Campus)  
7:45 am - 3 pm

**THE NIGHT**  
LOCK-IN @  
The 3 Mile Project  
(3050 Walkent Drive NW, Grand  
Rapids, 49544)  
FRI. 9pm - SAT. 7am  
\*Transportation Provided For  
EVENING ACTIVITIES ONLY

**REGISTER TODAY @**  
<http://conta.cc/Xnt5U9>  
(REGISTRATION DEADLINE: APRIL 3, 2012) [WWW.KCPCREVENTIONCOALITION.ORG](http://WWW.KCPCREVENTIONCOALITION.ORG)



#### **About ONDCP’s “Above the Influence” Campaign:**

The “Above the Influence” campaign (ATI) has been reaching teens for more than six years through television, print, radio, and online media. A program of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy ATI’s efforts in local communities focus on connecting directly with teens and local youth-serving organizations to deliver messages, activities, and support to help the Nation’s youth stay “above the influence” of drugs, alcohol, and risky behavior. Multiple scientific findings indicate that teens who have increased exposure to, and engagement with the “Above the Influence” campaign, have stronger anti-drug beliefs than teens with low exposure to the campaign.