



Public Information Release

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Date of release: 8/9/18

On Sunday, August 12th, student athletes from North Cobb High School's football team will graduate from the Power of Peace Project program (POPP). This 40-day, summer program was provided to the students by utilizing civil asset forfeiture funding that was donated by the Acworth Police Department. Civil asset forfeiture is a process by which local jurisdictions are able to seize funding from criminals who have used their assets in criminal activities – usually drug trafficking. POPP is an outstanding organization that helps build students up and inspires student leaders in ways that benefit the entire student population. According to founder, Kit Cummings, “Whether someone is a tough kid from an inner-city school, or a college-prep kid living in the suburbs, it no longer matters – this is not a rich or poor, black, white or Hispanic issue– because believing in the power of peace is a common bond that we all share – and now with POPP, we are collectively putting that belief into action.”

The program was a catalyst for change for many of the members of North Cobb High School's football team, who participated in the POPP program, and the police department has provided funding for even more students to participate in it throughout the 2018-19 school year. This summer, Acworth Police Detective, Lamar Almon, joined in the program and encouraged students to identify their “Dream Killers” or temptations, and helped guide them to make positive choices in their lives. Detective Almon is a native of Acworth, and he attended North Cobb High School and played on the football team when he was a student. Through this program, he was able to connect with students on a personal level, and he believes that the experience has been invaluable. Detective Almon stated that one of the most important messages that the athletes received through the program was one of empowerment. He says, “The Power of Peace



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Project empowers students to realize that they are leaders.” Detective Almon believes that it is important for teens to be able connect with police officers on a personal level and that teens must able to trust the officers and understand that the officers are there to help them when they are in need.

Acworth Police Chief, Wayne Dennard commented on the importance of this program and said, “While we do our best to keep drugs out of our community, they still manage to creep in. One of the best ways to combat drug dealers is to hit them where it hurts – in the wallet. Through the process of civil asset forfeiture, we were able to seize assets from criminals, specifically from drug dealers, and use those assets to benefit the community. As a result of our officer’s hard work and the diligence of our local, state, and federal law enforcement partners, we were able to re-route drug dealers’ funding and pour it into our North Cobb High School to invest it in our young people, instead. We have the power and opportunity to make our world a better place. We can choose to inspire our young people and in turn, teach them to inspire each other. We can teach them to use the power of their position as leaders and the tools of social media to benefit each other in a positive way. I am grateful that we have partners like North Cobb High School, our law enforcement partners, the Power of Peace Project and that we are able to take something so negative and turn it into such an overwhelming positive. We are truly blessed in this community and as long as we continue to put our energy into building each other up, there is no limit to what we can achieve together.”

For more information on POPP, please visit www.powerofpeaceproject.com.

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