

## Senate Resolution 17

By: Senator Unterman of the 45th

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending Ari Russell on the occasion of her retirement; and for other  
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Ari Russell, one of the pioneers of the prevention field, is retiring as the  
4 executive director of GUIDE, after 28 years and 3 months of service; and

5 WHEREAS, GUIDE was formed as a joint effort between the Gwinnett County Board of  
6 Commissioners and the Gwinnett County Board of Education in order to provide a  
7 comprehensive, coordinated and proactive approach to reducing and preventing substance  
8 use and abuse; and

9 WHEREAS, the number of lives impacted through the work GUIDE has accomplished in the  
10 last 28 years are immeasurable, and Ari has been the catalyst for the change that has occurred  
11 in Gwinnett County and across Georgia; and

12 WHEREAS, under Ari's leadership, GUIDE has had many significant accomplishments,  
13 including:

14 (1) Conducting a prevention needs assessment in 1986 that led to recommendations to the  
15 Gwinnett County Board of Education that were subsequently adopted, including the  
16 adoption of K-12 drug prevention curriculum, providing staff development about  
17 prevention issues, conducting drug use surveys on a regular basis, and adopting a  
18 no-smoking policy that included faculty and staff;

19 (2) Working with the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Department to develop the ADVANCE  
20 program, a substance abuse and violence prevention curriculum that was conducted by  
21 deputies in all fifth grade classes in Gwinnett County;

22 (3) Overseeing all state-funded prevention services in Gwinnett, Rockdale, and Newton  
23 Counties for five years, helping to build the infrastructure in Rockdale and Newton  
24 Counties until the Family Connection collaboratives were able to take on the  
25 responsibilities;

- 26 (4) Partnering with the Department of Public Health to secure a CDC tobacco prevention  
27 grant that led to the formation of Smoke Free Gwinnett and, eventually, the adoption of  
28 clean indoor air ordinances in three Gwinnett cities, followed by the county;
- 29 (5) Establishing the Gwinnett Alliance With Youth that formed Community Cluster Care  
30 Teams in every school cluster, increased public awareness about risk and protective factors  
31 and developmental assets, and instituted the "Champions" project;
- 32 (6) Originating the Georgia Teen Institute in 1989, which has operated annually since then  
33 with over 12,000 youth having participated in the program;
- 34 (7) Developing Youth Volunteer Centers in 1998, with the first located at Collins Hill  
35 High School and supported by funding from United Way. The initiative evolved into the  
36 Youth Leadership & Action program and the 3-Year Youth Action Team Empowerment  
37 Model. Since 1998, over fifty Youth Action Teams have been established, providing youth  
38 leadership and service opportunities for thousands of middle and high school students in  
39 Gwinnett County; and
- 40 (8) Establishing the GUIDE Youth Advisory Board and College Advisory Board; and

41 WHEREAS, Ari was one of the founders of the National Association of Prevention  
42 Professionals and Advocates, a membership organization that advocated on a national level  
43 for professionalism in the field and adoption of research-based strategies and of the  
44 Prevention Credentialing Consortium of Georgia, bringing a professional certification to  
45 prevention specialists in Georgia. A mentor, friend, and role model for other GUIDE Staff  
46 and many others across the state, Ari's leadership has influenced many prevention  
47 professionals and partners and is felt throughout the field and our state; and

48 WHEREAS, though there are countless partners in the work GUIDE does that makes their  
49 work successful every day, the work GUIDE has accomplished would not have been the  
50 same without Ari Russell, whose influence will be felt far and wide for many years to come;  
51 and

52 WHEREAS, Ari can retire knowing that her life, her work, and her leadership made a  
53 difference.

54 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body  
55 commend Ari Russell for her over 28 years of service to this state and extend their heartfelt  
56 wishes for her continued health and happiness.

57 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed

58 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to Ari Russell.