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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mental Health Awareness Television Series to Launch Thursday
Your Mental Health Matters: It's Okay to Not Be Okay

BLUE RIDGE – “Your Mental Health Matters: It's Okay to Not be Okay” is a 5-part television series that launches this Thursday, August 19 on ETC 3 TV at 3:00 p.m.

The series is part of a mental health awareness campaign launched in Fannin County in May. The campaign is an initiative of Fannin County Family Connection and supported by the Blue Ridge Community Theater, Fannin County Department of Family and Children Services, Highland Rivers Health, North Georgia Autism Foundation, North Georgia Mountain Crisis Network, Inc., and The Craddock Center.

“Our goal is to implement a community educational anti-stigma intervention and prevention campaign to change negative stereotypes around mental health,” said Fannin County Family Connection Board Member Anna Speessen, who also serves as the mental health awareness campaign coordinator. “Through acceptance and mindfulness activities, we hope to change community values about mental health,” said Speessen.

The television series will air on the third Thursday of each month from August through December at 3:00 p.m. on ETC 3 TV. The shows will also air as Facebook Lives on the Fannin County Family Connection Facebook page.

The August 19 show will feature Anna Speessen, Fannin County Family Connection; Dr. Kyle

Raque, Psychologist; Steven Miracle, Georgia Mountains Health; and Michael Mullet, Highland Rivers Health.

The community is invited to submit questions to the show at: <https://fcfc1.org>. Mental Health, Mental Health Talk Series.

According to Speessen, the overall objectives of the mental health awareness campaign are to:

- Gain knowledge about mental health and/or knowledge & confidence in how to help people who are experiencing a mental health issue
- Motivate adult community members to engage in more helpful or supportive behavior toward those with mental health issues, and
- Encourage individuals and families to seek needed service

Earlier this year, the Fannin County Family Connection Board of Directors developed a Strategy Team and tasked the team with evaluating the community and identifying gaps in services. Led by Board Member Anna Speessen, many community organizations involved in the Monthly Collaborative joined the effort and began meeting to identify community needs.

Then in April, Fannin County Family Connection hosted a Civic Dinner. This was a casual conversation and dinner gathering in which community members and organizations came together to discuss challenges facing families, gaps in community services, how to eliminate those gaps, and serve needs. Attendees worked together to identify areas of concern, which included mental health awareness and removing the stigma surrounding mental health.

The Strategy Team took this information and began to develop a plan for a mental health awareness campaign.

The campaign launched in May, the month observed annually as Mental Health Awareness month. The first event was a proclamation signing by the Fannin County Board of Commissioners declaring the month of May as Mental Health Awareness Month in Fannin County.

Additional events will be added to this on-going mental health initiative, including the television series, community-wide viewings of the movie, Angst, in October, social media messaging, and more.

For more information about mental health awareness and this initiative visit the Fannin County Family Connection website at fcfc1.org and click on Mental Health.

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