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For Immediate Release

Saving Kids: Governors State University program to hold open house at Jones Community Center

University Park, April 26, 2005 – Governors State University's Project SKIPP will hold an open house at the Jones Community Center, 220 East 15th St., in Chicago Heights for its "All Stars" and "Strengthening Families" programs on Friday, May 6, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The Chicago Heights community is invited to attend.

The SKIPP programs were created for children in School District 170 in Chicago Heights.

"We really want members of the community to come to the open house to see how SKIPP can help kids make the right choices," said Dr. Linda Samson, dean of Governor State's College of Health Professions. "SKIPP is here to help prepare them for a better future."

Chicago Heights Mayor Anthony DeLuca will be the guest speaker.

SKIPP's "All Stars" and "Strengthening Families" are part of the larger SKIPP Program at GSU. SKIPP – short for Saving Kids Through Integrated Prevention Programming – is funded through a \$1 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The program is designed as a comprehensive approach to steering kids away from risky behaviors, including substance abuse, school absences, and early sexual activity.

"Convincing young adolescents to make the right choices has never been easy," said Talia Palanca, a prevention specialist for Governors State, "but parents and grandparents need help today more than ever."

Palanca added that SKIPP steers kids into activities that increase their self-esteem and encourage higher levels of academic achievement. Ultimately, participants are better able to resist poor choices and risky behaviors.

The SKIPP Open House will show parents and grandparents of District 170 students how to enroll their children in the "All Stars" and "Strengthening Families" Programs.