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For immediate release:

Epworth to Participate in National Runaway Prevention Month Nonprofit to “Shine a Light” on the homeless youth issues during the month of November

(St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 5, 2019) Epworth Children & Family Services will host a “Light the Night” tree lighting on Tues., Nov. 19 at 5:30 p.m. at its headquarters located at 110 N. Elm Ave. in Webster Groves. The symbolic event is part of National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM), which is designed to raise awareness of the issues faced by runaway and homeless youth while educating area residents about strategies that help prevent youth from running away from home.

According to a study from Voices of Youth Count and Chapin Hall, 4.2 million young people age 13 to 24 experience some form of homelessness—such as couch surfing, sleeping in the streets or staying in shelters—in the course of a year. Research has shown that family dynamics including conflict over rules, divorce, blended families and teen parenting strongly impact youths’ desire to run away. By creating a safe and accepting home environment where youth are encouraged to be honest, the likelihood of them running away may be reduced or prevented.

Epworth’s campus will be decorated with 50,000 green and white lights in support of NRPM’s The Green Light Project. Month-long activities include an online educational series from Nov. 4 through Nov. 8 conducted by the National Runaway Safeline, as well as a dress in green day on Nov. 12.

“Youth homelessness is an urgent issue nationwide and throughout the St. Louis community,” said Epworth’s President and CEO Michael Panicola, Ph.D. “For 155 years, Epworth has been dedicated to eradicating youth homelessness and getting all of our area’s young people off the streets into safer, stable environments. In collaboration with others, we will persist until that goal is achieved. Through our ‘Light the Night’ event, we hope to educate our community about the significance of this issue as well as the multi-faceted solutions that are available.”

Founded in 1864, Epworth Children & Family Services is a multi-service agency that helps children, youth and families move toward self-sufficiency by focusing on health, housing, education and employment. Epworth offers emergency shelter, residential and intensive treatment, in-home family therapy, transitional housing, psychological evaluation and testing, foster care services, prevention services and a 24-hour help line. The agency is headquartered at 110 N. Elm Ave. with offices in Normandy and University City.

For more information, call (314) 961-5718 or visit www.epworth.org.

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Portions of program costs have been underwritten by the Missouri Department of Economic Development, Youth Opportunity Program, Neighborhood Assistance Program, and the taxpayers of the State of Missouri.

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