Art Exhibit about Pittsburgh’s Opioid Epidemic Coming to Carnegie Mellon University

Eye of the Needle installation and documentary set for October 1-5

PITTSBURGH, PA- In 2017, 735 people died from a potential overdose, according to the Allegheny County Medical Examiner. This is an increase from 2016, when, according to the Allegheny County Medical Examiner, 613 people died from an overdose, which was up from 424 overdoses in 2015.

Light of Life Rescue Mission and Carnegie Mellon University are raising awareness about the opioid epidemic to students and the surrounding community by hosting Eye of the Needle, an art installation and short-form documentary on campus. It will open to the CMU community on October 1 and then the general public from October 2-5, from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. in a tent behind the Jared L. Cohon University Center. Campus and Pittsburgh community members are invited to attend a documentary screening and panel discussion on October 1 at 7 p.m. in Simmons Auditorium A in the David A. Tepper Building.

A media walk through of the Eye of the Needle art installation is scheduled for 6:45 p.m. on October 1, 2018, before the panel discussion about the opioid epidemic is held on campus.

Eye of the Needle was created for Light of Life Rescue Mission as part of its outreach for education and awareness about homelessness and the opioid epidemic. It was launched at their annual gala in October 2017 and has since been a tool for raised levels of conversation at Point Park University, Robert Morris University and McKeesport High School.

Artists Jennifer Schlieper and Courtney Gumpf of Flying Scooter Productions, Rick Werner, Emmy-award winning photographer Emmai Alaquiva, videographer Phil Atkins and Anita Harnish collaborated on this project for Light of Life Rescue Mission to reveal the story of life as someone who lives in the eye of the needle.

To watch the 11 minute documentary, visit www.lightoflife.org/eyeoftheneedlepgh and to view photos of the art exhibit click here.

Carnegie Mellon strives to make real impact on issues that face our world and local communities, and the opioid crisis is one area of focus across the university. Each year, CMU’s Office of Student Leadership,
Involvement, and Civic Engagement partners with Light of Life Rescue Mission during its annual Thanksgiving basket drive and the 1000plus community service projects which take place in the fall and spring semesters. As part of the Eye of the Needle exhibition, the CMU community will come together on October 3 to assemble toiletry kits for individuals struggling with homelessness and/or addiction.

Additionally, Carnegie Mellon’s Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy is a host and satellite location for the Code4PA Opioid Codeathon, which kicks off September 21 and 22, with projects pitches and awards taking place on October 20, in a month-long effort to use data and artificial intelligence (AI) in the fight against opioids. Across the university, CMU faculty are focusing their research and classwork with students on the opioid crisis, including Dr. Bruce Armitage in the Mellon College of Science in his Chemistry of Addiction course, Dr. Kasey Creswell in the Department of Psychology in her Development and Maintenance of Addiction course, Dr. Jonathan Caulkins from the Heinz College and his work on drug policy, and Dr. Caroline Jean Acker from the History Department and her course about medical and scientific ideas about opiate addition in the U.S. since 1890, to name a few.

For more information about the Eye of the Needle art installation, documentary screening and panel discussion, and other opportunities to learn more and take action on Carnegie Mellon’s campus, visit the Student Leadership, Involvement, and Civic Engagement website.

Photograph and interview opportunities are available.

Background on Light of Life Rescue Mission: Established in 1952, Light of Life Rescue Mission is a Christian nonprofit organization providing life changing recovery programs and food and shelter for Pittsburgh’s poor and homeless. Men, women and children are provided case management and programs designed to meet diverse needs, including recovery from substance addiction, help for mental health issues, and educational courses to prepare them for careers and independent living. The Mission is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. No one is denied services based on race, creed, gender, religion, age or national origin. Light of Life is supported largely by private donations. To learn more, call 412-258-6100 or visit lightoflife.org.

###