

RISING!

IN THIS ISSUE

Recovery Walks! Strikes a Chord

by Phillip Valentine

It was just one idea during a brainstorming session at a Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) meeting back in 1999.

We were all about promoting recovery and reducing stigma. We thought if we could get 50 people to walk in front of our state capitol, maybe gain a little press, we'd be off to a good start. We assembled a walk committee and got to work.

To our amazement, over 700 people came. We struck a chord that resonated deep within the heart of the recovery community. Over the last five years Recovery Walks! has become CCAR's signature event. In 2004, we drew close to 4000 people. From our incredible experience with Recovery Walks! 2001, held just five days after 9/11, we produced a video, *The Healing Power of Recovery*. Through the walk, we have:

- Promoted recovery throughout our state
- Helped sustain recovery
- Gained respect and support among elected officials, media, businesses and funding agencies
- Increased membership
- Solidified a leadership team and provided concrete volunteer opportunities
- Lifted morale

Promoting recovery remains our primary purpose. We have a vision that some day we'd love to see the crowd in Bushnell Park swell to 50,000. We have long entertained the idea of a national walk on The Mall in Washington drawing a million plus in support of recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction.

'It's about putting a face on recovery.' The walk has a profound impact on families. In some ways, it resolves issues of shame. Recovery Walks! has reduced the piercing and debilitating stigma associated with addiction and recovery. "Hey, there are lots of folks with this problem and lots of folks are now in recovery," family members say. "Maybe, there is some hope after all. If they can do it, so can my loved one." Often, recoverees re-entering the community from treatment or prison experience a hard reception, running into walls, smashing into barriers and being cornered by the demons of addiction. Recovery Walks! helps to soften the recoveree's landing.

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Save the dates! September 6-8, 2005

Kick off Recovery Month 2005 in Washington, DC, with recovery advocates from across the country. Save September 6, 7 and 8 for an exciting Faces & Voices of Recovery convening in the nation's capital.

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Visit www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org
for more!

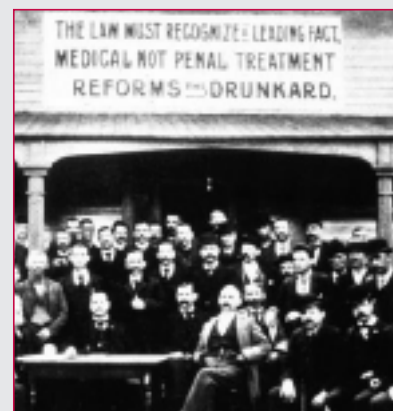


Photo courtesy Illinois Addiction Studies Archives

Keeley League members march on Pennsylvania's state capital in the late 1890s to demand state alcohol treatment funding. More on Our History on page 6.

Faces & Voices of Recovery
www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

Rising! Recovery in Action is a quarterly newsmagazine of Faces & Voices of Recovery. "Letters to the Editor" and your thoughts and ideas can be posted on our discussion board at www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org.

We welcome your feedback! We are grateful to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and people in the recovery community for their support of this resource for people in recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, their family members, friends and allies who are mobilizing to make recovery a reality for millions more Americans.

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Lisa Mojer Torres



NEWS FROM FACES & VOICES

Dear Recovery Advocate,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Faces & Voices of Recovery's quarterly publication, Rising! Recovery in Action. We hope this unique publication will prove to be a valuable tool for our growing recovery community and a window through which the public can learn more about us. We want it to serve as a vehicle of hope and inspiration to all who aspire to achieve and maintain a quality recovery.

We hope this issue's focus on recovery celebrations will encourage new people to speak out. Every issue will highlight the expertise of recovery advocates. We're so proud that Bill White will contribute a regular column, The Voice of History. Learn more about policy groups and agencies in Alphabet Soup, and find new ways to strengthen your advocacy through our Toolbox feature. Contributions from recovery advocates nationwide will help us to appreciate the breadth and depth of our experiences and Quick Study will keep us up to date on research.

Throughout the 4-year history of Faces & Voices, my commitment has been to encourage diversity in recovery, by which I mean that we enthusiastically welcome everyone to Faces & Voices. We make no distinction based on what substance or behaviors — legal or illegal — your disorder involved; on whether your treatment was traditional, professional or self-administered; whether you relied on medication or faith, or received conventional or unconventional forms of support. Faces & Voices is an all-inclusive effort. We believe that there is no single, universally best path to recovery; that we are unique at birth and we each experience addiction differently. Diversity in recovery enriches our choices and thereby enhances our success. The more we learn about addiction, the advances of science, the full range of treatments and the variety of paths leading to recovery, the better prepared we will be to choose our own path. Join us in celebrating all recovery roads.

I invite people in recovery, their family members, friends and allies to join our national recovery advocacy movement. We need to have our faces counted and voices heard. We depend on the courage and tenacity of those who have succeeded in recovery in order to overcome highly distorted public images of recovery and the people who have achieved it. For those who cannot participate with their faces, there are many other ways to have your voices count and to support our effort.

Recovery celebrations help change attitudes and policies about addiction and the potential of recovery. We see these attitude changes as a priority, because they lead to the eradication of stigma and discrimination. By celebrating recovery together, we share our stories as living proof of the dignity of each person; the value of our lives, and the hope of recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

Visit our online discussion board to share your thoughts and suggestions about Rising! and about our movement. I look forward to hearing from you! And if you aren't receiving our eNewsletter, go to our website and sign up today. Thank you to the members of the Faces & Voices steering committee who are giving countless hours to guide us and a special thank you to Johnny Allem, Gabrielle Antolovich, Don Coyhis, Maryanne Frangules, Anara Guard, Flo Hilliard, William Cope Moyers and Bill White for serving on the Rising! planning committee. ●

Lisa Mojer Torres is a civil rights attorney and the chair of Faces & Voices of Recovery.

Recovery Walks! ● *continued from page 1*

Over the years we have worked hard to get treatment providers to support the walk as part of our efforts to sustain recovery. Last year we paid for more than 20 buses to bring people in recovery to the walk. More than one-fourth of the 4,000 attendees were just starting out on their road of recovery. We hear that the walk can lift the morale of a treatment program, and that people in long-term sustained recovery appreciate the opportunity to give back, to reflect on their own recovery and to consider a powerful 12-step slogan, “But for the Grace of God.”

“As we got on the bus on Sunday, the mood was sullen,” we learned from one program. “But when we got back on the bus, there was laughter and singing! Clients were more engaged in their recovery. The enthusiasm carried over for weeks and weeks.”

Building CCAR

Recovery Walks! builds our organization by increasing its visibility, adding members and strengthening leadership. As we wrote press releases, distributed posters and flyers and talked with members of the media, the CCAR name became better known. In the last month we’ve received calls from our local NBC affiliate, the nationally televised program Inside Edition and the cable network HBO. Recovery Walks! has been a key factor in increasing our name recognition.

We always make sure that team leaders are given responsibility and support, yet not micromanaged. Our 5-year entertainment coordinator is now the board of directors president. The walk also filled the need to have a concrete volunteer opportunity for interested persons. This helped our retention. There’s nothing worse than having someone excited about contributing and then having nothing for them to do. While money has never been the priority for this walk, out of necessity, we expect it to not only pay for itself, but to add funds to our overall work.

The event forced us to establish relationships and gave us the platform to approach businesses, reporters and legislators. Because of the effort and talent of the recovery community, the public is now beginning to understand that people in recovery are amazing and together we make up a community worthy of respect.

Recovery Walks! convenes, in the words of recovery advocate Bill White, a large-scale intervention of hope. It’s about putting a face on recovery. For more information, or to read Phillip Valentine’s Recovery Walks! speech, *I Am Not Ashamed*, visit www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org ●

*Phillip Valentine is the executive director of Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery.
www.ccar.org*

‘We struck a chord that resonated deep within the heart of the recovery community.’

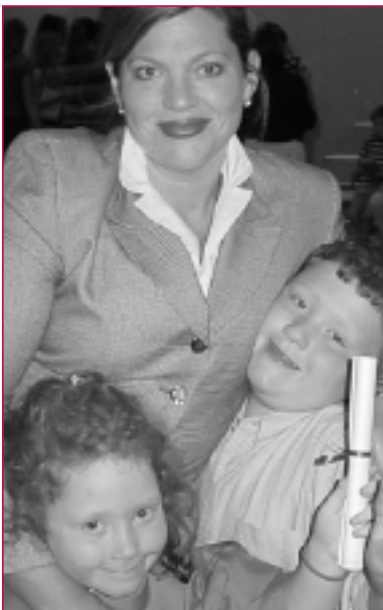


Top: Four thousand strong, the recovery community shows its strength in Hartford.

Bottom: Clowning around with families and friends at Recovery Walks!

QUESTIONS FOR SAMANTHA-HOPE ATKINS

'Many of us don't even realize how much the greater community wants to support something like SoberJam.'



Samantha-Hope Atkins with her children, Savannah (left) and Andrew.

Q *What makes a celebration a celebration to you?*

A *Recovery celebrations are a kind of a landmark for people who have overcome the great struggles of alcoholism and addiction. It's a new day when "real" people in recovery bring the community together. It's a wonderful opportunity to be a part of something that is giving back to the community. There's a personal reward. So much comes back to me as others are being helped.*

Q *How did you get the idea of SoberJam?*

A *People in recovery wanted to come together and have music without alcohol. I stumbled upon National Recovery Month in 2002. We did our first SoberJam in 2003. That was sort of a turning point in the movement locally and nationally. We wanted to take our [Louisiana] culture, which is very much one of having a good time, and create our own recovery month. To be honest, there was a disconnect between the federal government's National Recovery Month and people in recovery. Very few people across the country had ever even heard of this. So it was a wonderful opportunity to practice what we preach and be part of a solution.*

Q *What were some of the fun things the adults did?*

A *The dancing and music is just the heart and soul of SoberJam. The health and info fair provides valuable information on services and supports. We had wonderful food, of course. Louisiana food! Many of us don't even realize how much the greater community wants to support something like SoberJam.*

Q *How do you involve your children in your recovery work?*

A *I have two kids, Andrew, 10, and Savannah, seven, who, thank God, have only known me as a sober mom. Having them involved and engaged in all this has really been fun. My children have the benefit of going with me wherever I go, meeting other moms and dads dedicated to recovery, being exposed to different people and communities and learning why this is so important to mommy. We had a committee that worked on the SoberJam children's area, a safe place where kids could be seen by their parents during the whole event.*

Q *You've organized strong support from the state of Louisiana to mount SoberJam. Can you talk about that relationship?*

A *We find a warm welcome from Michael Duffy, our single state agency director. We hold meetings in every region of the state and local substance abuse clinics help coordinate at the local level. We've created a model and online toolkit about working with states. Building the structure and infrastructure in our organization and in the government really does allow the bottom to speak to the top. ●*

Samantha-Hope Atkins founded and directs the WeRecover Foundation, organizers of SoberJam. www.werecover.org and www.soberjam.com

White Bison Celebrates Wellbriety

by Richard Simonelli

The White Bison annual conference is one of the greatest recovery celebrations in the yearly Wellbriety Movement calendar. Grassroots community members from across Turtle Island (the Native American name for North America) embrace this opportunity to celebrate addictions recovery.

White Bison, based in Colorado Springs, offers sobriety, recovery, addictions prevention and wellness/Wellbriety learning resources to the Native American community. Past conferences have been held in Colorado Springs, Rapid City, Billings, and Albuquerque. This year it will be in Denver, and everyone's invited!

The 4-day Wellbriety conference includes early-morning 12-Step meetings, a full agenda of presentations, workshops, sharing circles, question and answer sessions with elders, traditional entertainment, the Wellbriety powwow and the honoring banquet. Presenters are both Native American and non-Native people who have something to share in recovery, healing and wellness with community-based people from Native American communities. At one Wellbriety conference, a Navajo humorist called Mutton Man had the crowd in stitches with Indian humor that was at times decidedly Navajo. This year's entertainment features 2005 GRAMMY winner Native American Bill Miller who expresses wellness with music.

The hard work of recovery is celebrated throughout each Wellbriety conference with many ceremonies involving the Hoop of 100 Eagle Feathers, which has come to symbolize the Wellbri-

ety Movement. Recovery is also celebrated by one or more sobriety drums whose presence rounds out a Native sobriety event. There are parallel tracks for Native youth, as well as a youth presence at the all-conference events.

The Native American Wellbriety conferences are open to every person walking his or her own Wellbriety journey regardless of race, ethnicity or other heritage and background. White Bison cordially extends an invitation to come to the Denver conference to be held from April 21-24, 2005, and see for yourself. ●

Richard Simonelli has come through his own recovery journey and edits Wellbriety! Online Magazine. www.whitebison.org



Don Coyhis, center, founder and president of White Bison, Inc., talks to youth who will carry the 100 Eagle Feathers Hoop in an opening ceremony.

A LPHABET SOUP

CSAT

*Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
H. Westley Clark, MD, JD, MPH, CAS, FASAM, Director
www.samhsa.gov*

A center in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (or SAMHSA). CSAT's programs are vital to the recovery community. They promote the availability and quality of services for treatment of alcohol and other drug problems by administering the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Program, the Targeted Capacity Expansion grant program and Access to Recovery program.

Among the many programs CSAT supports are the Treatment Improvement Exchange's toll-free and Internet-based HELP line for referral to treatment services; Recovery Month (www.recoverymonth.gov), this September marking its 16th annual celebration; and the Recovery Community Services Program's (RCSP) peer-to-peer services grant program.



THE VOICE OF HISTORY

‘For more than two centuries, recovery celebration events have served as a ritual of mutual support and recommitment to recovery.’

QUICK STUDY

Eighty-eight percent of the recovery community believes that it is very important for the American public to see that thousands get well each year.

Peter D. Hart Research Associates, The Face of Recovery, 2001.

A majority of Americans (74 percent) believes that people should not be ashamed to talk to others about their own or a family member's addiction. Only 19 percent say that it is acceptable for people to be ashamed.

Peter D. Hart Research Associates/Coldwater Corporation, Faces & Voices of Recovery, 2004.

The Evolution of Recovery Celebrations

Private and public celebrations of addiction recovery have evolved for more than two centuries. The roots of recovery mutual aid society meetings and recovery celebration events are closely intertwined and date to the Native American “recovery circles” of the mid-1700s. These celebrations continued with the public “experience sharing” meetings of the Washingtonian Temperance Society in the 1840s, the marches of the recovery-oriented fraternal temperance societies and reform clubs of the mid-1800s, the Keeley League marches and newspaper columns of the 1890s, and the Boozier Brigade marches through the streets of America’s Skid Rows in the early 1900s.

The closed celebration of recovery birthdays returned with new, mid-twentieth century recovery societies (AA, NA and Alcoholics Victorious), but these powerful stories of recovery rarely penetrated public consciousness until Marty Mann organized the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism (NCEA) in 1944.

NCEA spurred many celebrities to go public about their recovery, but these were isolated events until more than 52 prominent Americans stepped forward as part of NCEA’s Operation Understanding (1958) to publicly disclose their sustained recovery from alcoholism. While going public became something of a phenomenon among recovering celebrities in the 1970s and 1980s (famed actresses Lillian Roth and Mercedes McCambridge broke the ice of such disclosure much earlier), it wasn’t until the late 1990s that recovery celebration events (e.g., marches, concerts, neighborhood clean-ups) as we know them today began. For more than two centuries, recovery celebration events have served as a ritual of mutual support and recommitment to recovery, a means of reaching out to the still-suffering addict and an instrument of public education and public policy advocacy.

History often proceeds in small steps. There could have been no civil rights marchers in Washington in 1963 if there had not first been those who walked in the 1955-1956 Montgomery bus boycott. There would have been no Martin Luther King, Jr. without a Rosa Parks. On the day a million people in recovery stand together in the nation’s capital, we will honor the early recovery walks in states like Connecticut. We will honor the Hoop Journeys, the SoberJams and SoberFests. We will honor the power of a video called The Healing Power of Recovery and the humble brilliance of the Recovery is everywhere campaign. And we will honor the work of an organization called the Faces and Voices of Recovery.

Recovering people have celebrated together for a long time, but compared to what is coming, the celebrating has just begun. ●

Bill White of Chestnut Health Systems is the author of Slaying the Dragon: The History of Addiction Treatment and Recovery in America.

Baseball Hits a Home Run for Recovery

by Dona Dmitrovic

Last September, seven Major League Baseball (MLB) organizations proved that not all great comeback stories take place on the baseball diamond.

The Los Angeles Dodgers, St. Louis Cardinals, Cleveland Indians, Minnesota Twins, Pittsburgh Pirates, Atlanta Braves and Baltimore Orioles sponsored 2004 Recovery Month celebrations. The Minnesota Twins honored more than 1,700 supporters of addiction recovery and even more teams will host pregame ceremonies and fan recognition activities this year.

“Recovery Month celebrations in our MLB stadiums are important reminders that recovery happens often and brings happy outcomes,” said Johnny Allem, president of the Johnson Institute, which sponsored the events with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. ●



Fans of baseball and recovery at a 2004 Minnesota Twins game.

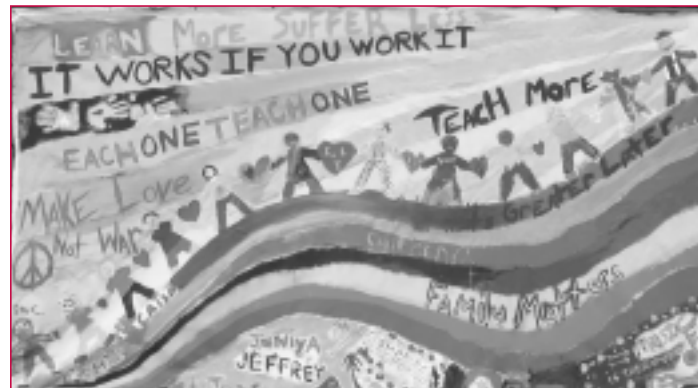
Dona Dmitrovic is director of education and advocacy at The Johnson Institute, based in Washington, DC. www.johnsoninstitute.org

Recovery Expo in Pennsylvania Fosters Exchange

by Wendy Beck

Eureka! In 2003, I realized that I could combine talents from my prior life of addiction with my passion for recovery. With help from my church and the Chester County Council on Addictive Diseases, where I work, the Recovery Expo came to life.

We recruit help from those who are *interested* in recovery as well as those who are *in* recovery. Chester County’s Drug and Alcohol Department, community coalitions, nonprofit organizations and schools are great places to connect. The presence of most of the 12-step groups as well as local treatment providers sparks lively interaction. A well known speaker and child care draw participants.



Kids painted this mural at Recovery Expo 2004.

The lessons: plan early, bring passionate people to the table, listen to the needs of individuals and families, use the planning tools, try not to reinvent the wheel, delegate, organize and leave the outcome up to the Higher Power.

The Third Annual Recovery Expo will be held on September 24. More information is posted at www.recoverymonth.gov ●

Wendy Beck is a mom, wife, worker, recovering person of 16 years and passionate about educating the faith community. www.umcr.org

www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

Recovery is everywhere

www.recoveryiseverywhere.com

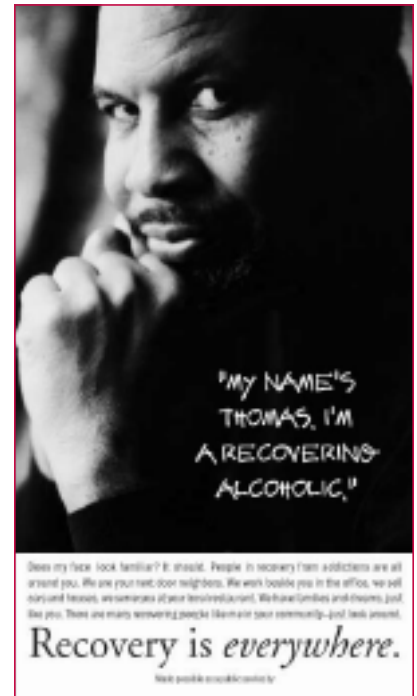
Most of us already know that recovery is everywhere.

Now some Michigan activists have developed an exciting grassroots media campaign that can help our friends, neighbors and coworkers realize it too.

Use the campaign's free print ads, postcards and posters in newspapers, movie theaters or in electronic and print postcards. Advocates in Buffalo, New York, have placed Recovery is everywhere ads on local billboards. The possibilities are limitless—shopping carts, doctors' offices, coffee mugs and program inserts.

Recovery is everywhere will send electronic computer files for ads to any group with the condition that the materials may not be used to promote professional services or other business interests—they are intended to reduce stigma, offer hope and challenge stereotypes without any competing interests.

Contact: Jason Schwartz or Jim Balmer at Recovery is everywhere, P.O. Box 981098, Ypsilanti, MI 48198, info@recoveryiseverywhere.com. ●



A Recovery is everywhere advertisement available for use in local campaigns.



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