



National
Recovery Month
Prevention Works • Treatment is Effective • People Recover
SEPTEMBER 2014



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AGENDA 2015:

Planning Partners' Meeting (in person)	Jan 22
Planning Partners' Meeting via Teleconference	Mar 11
Planning Partners' Meeting via Teleconference	June 10
Planning Partners' Meeting (in person)	Sept 9
Kick-Off Luncheon	Sept 10



Editor's Column

Welcome to the fall 2014 edition of our *National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)* Planning Partners' issue of *The Road to Recovery* Newsletter. In this issue we bring you a profile of the three winners of the 2013 *Recovery Month* Event Awards that were honored at the 2014 *Recovery Month* kickoff luncheon sponsored by NAADAC—the Association of Addiction Professionals.

As we look toward our next 25 years of this September observance, some in the field question what *Recovery Month* is and where it ought to be heading. They rightly observe that the singular most evoked activity of the observance is the more than 1,000 events posted on the *Recovery Month* website. They also rightly note that, up to this point, we have not stopped to gauge the impact of these events on the broader community and planned more deliberately as to how we can further advance the recovery movement as a whole. These questions merit further analysis and debate, and I want to encourage all of our readers to engage in that process.

I, for one, see definite value in the work being accomplished through the events and other activities that the *Recovery Month* observance has achieved: the more than 25,000 calls per month, on average, received by the 1-800-662-HELP line. Such calls are driven by the airing of the *Recovery Month*-supported public service announcements (PSAs) and the

more than 57 million households that can potentially view and listen to *The Road to Recovery* television and radio series. This series airs on our nation's public educational and government channels and features the PSAs and helpline number. These activities help put forward a message of recovery—and reconciliation—for those who have achieved recovery from mental and substance use disorders. This message indeed helps educate the broader public about these issues and maybe—just maybe—creates an open mindset willing to hear the more poignant messages that will help change negative behavior and attitudes about mental and substance use disorder issues.

Finally, I encourage you to read the stories of the organizations that were honored this year. I hope that their stories spark an interest in all of you to get involved and engage in hosting an award-winning event in 2015 that will be recognized in 2016. Moreover, I ask those event planners who held events in 2014 to please submit your event for award consideration starting in January at the *Recovery Month* website www.recoverymonth.gov. Our continued work will make a difference for those who have achieved recovery and those who still need to achieve recovery.

Peace,
Ivette Torres
Associate Director for Consumer Affairs
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
SAMHSA



One quarter of a century—that is how long *National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)* has existed. *Recovery Month* has grown from the original concept created in 1989—*Treatment Works!*, which honored the work of the treatment and recovery professionals in the field—to what it is today, a national celebration that highlights the benefits that prevention, treatment, and recovery bring to society. Each September and throughout the year, thousands of organizations and individuals plan community events celebrating those in recovery from mental and/or substance use disorders.

Special Celebrations Winner: The McShin Foundation

Sizzling meats, the scent of honey barbecue mesquite, and thousands of hungry participants made up the scene in Virginia at the 2013 *Recovery Fest and BBQ Cook Off*. The McShin Foundation won in the Special Celebrations category of the 2013 **Recovery Month** Community Event Awards. Honesty Liller accepted the award on behalf of the McShin Foundation in her role as the organization's Chief Executive Officer. *Recovery Fest* got its start in 2004, and the *BBQ Cook Off* was added in 2009 through the leadership of McShin Foundation President John Shinholser. The program at the McShin Foundation teaches various trades such as smoking meats, and that trade was incorporated into McShin's annual *Recovery Fest* as "Smokin' Meat ... Not Drugs." The *BBQ Cook Off* was an instant hit, bringing in hundreds more participants. Advocacy and getting the word out are the goals of the McShin Foundation's *Recovery Fest and BBQ Cook Off*.

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The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) 2014 **Recovery Month** Event Award Program honored three organizations that planned and held exemplary **Recovery Month** community events in 2013. The winners were recognized at the Annual **Recovery Month** Luncheon this past September. The 2013 **Recovery Month** Community Event Award winners were Odyssey House New York in the Rally and Walk/Run Events category; Xavier University, New Orleans, Louisiana, in the Educational Events category; and McShin Foundation, Richmond, Virginia, in the Special Celebrations category. If you believe your 2014 **Recovery Month** event is worthy of an award, please visit <http://recoverymonth.gov/Community-Events/Community-Event-Award.aspx> for more information.

Heroin is the most prominent substance abuse issue facing the community that Mrs. Liller serves, but the McShin Foundation has various strategies to combat the heroin problem. One such strategy, led by Mrs. Liller and Mr. Shinholser, is the REVIVE! project. This pilot program teaches people how to administer nasal naloxone to someone experiencing an opiate overdose. Mrs. Liller believes that **Recovery Month** events are the most widespread and effective way to get the message out that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover. She stated that the McShin Foundation not only attempts to hold an event once a month but also supports other organizations by attending their **Recovery Month** events. Mrs. Liller expressed the importance of reducing stigma and demonstrating that recovery can be fun.



The success of *Recovery Fest and BBQ Cook Off* is attributed to "volunteers, alumni, word of mouth, speakers such as Michael Botticelli who have a great influence to change stigma, and the Kansas City Barbeque Society who make the *BBQ Cook Off* possible," noted Mrs. Liller. She also mentioned the importance of the years of support shown by SAMHSA and Faces & Voices of Recovery, "We appreciate the representatives making it to our events and are honored by the award as it demonstrates to our community that the blood, sweat, and tears are all worth it by the changes seen in the broader community and the world." ■

Rally and Walk/Run Events Winner: Odyssey House New York

Run for Your Life is the winning event for the 2013 **Recovery Month** Community Event Awards under the Rally and Walk/Run category. During the 2014 **Recovery Month** Event Awards ceremony, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer John Tavalacci accepted the award on behalf of Odyssey House New York, a nonprofit organization based in New York City. The organization is committed to providing comprehensive, holistic services to New Yorkers coping with substance use and mental health disorders. Mr. Tavalacci noted that Odyssey House chose the event's clever name, *Run for Your Life*,



"to convey the sense that treatment is a life-saving experience and running can be a big part of that." *Run for Your Life* started in 2005 with the participation of other treatment and recovery agencies across New York City, and over time they have welcomed the addition of programs from upstate New York. Through these agencies' and programs' commitment, Odyssey House can provide services to more than 1,200 people every day as well as educate others about the effectiveness and benefits of treatment and recovery from these disorders.

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The backbone of the annual 5K is Odyssey House's very own running team. The team members can be seen training twice a week in Central Park and in community races throughout the year in preparation for the New York City Marathon. Mr. Tavolacci stated that "the race has benefitted from the running team's visibility." However, a person does not have to be a runner to support recovery at *Run for Your Life*; Odyssey House also offers other activities, such as Zumba classes, yoga demonstrations, children's races, and field events. Mr. Tavolacci noted that they have "started diversifying the activities to make the event appeal to a wider audience,"

and this appeal was validated through the 1,500-plus turnout that Odyssey House welcomed in 2013. "Wellness & Recovery" areas were added to this year's *Run for Your Life*, which provided nutritionist consultations and education on Odyssey House's Peer Mentor Recovery Program. Odyssey House is looking forward to celebrating the 10th anniversary of *Run for Your Life* in 2015. Mr. Tavolacci also stated that the goal is to "make it our most successful yet in terms of attendance, activities, and fundraising."

Recovery Month events, such as *Run for Your Life*, are vital for raising awareness about recovery; according to Mr. Tavolacci, "What's great about our race is that it combines

the treatment population with those in the community who may have misconceptions about people in recovery. Running or otherwise interacting with people in treatment demonstrates that treatment is effective and people do recover, lessening the stigma surrounding addiction." Mr. Tavolacci listed one of the biggest issues facing the New York City community as "breaking down the stigma that people with behavioral health issues are a lost population." He also stated that Odyssey House plans to overcome these misconceptions through education and exposure, "The more people know about our clients and what they have accomplished in treatment, the more people understand that recovery strengthens communities." ■

Educational Events Winner: Xavier University

For the past 4 years, Xavier University of Louisiana has dedicated one week in September toward the celebration of recovery. Xavier University's *Recovery Week* is based on an education model that supports prevention and treatment. It addresses the issues of domestic violence, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, loss, shame, bullying, physical health, and other topics. *Recovery Week* was the 2013 winner for **Recovery Month** Community Event Awards under the Educational Events category. Shirley Labbe, Associate Director of the Counseling & Wellness Center, accepted the award on behalf of Xavier University. *Recovery Week* is a holistic piece that was supported in the theme "We Are All in Recovery!" Ms. Labbe added that *Recovery Week* helps students to understand the signs and symptoms of these issues as well as "allowing them to realize that you can be in recovery from anything."

Ms. Labbe identified anxiety and depression as the major issues facing the

university's students. Xavier University's Counseling & Wellness Center assists students with developing healthy coping skills for managing stress; makes referrals to community agencies; and provides students with information, resources, wellness checks, and counseling sessions. Ms. Labbe recognized that "it is important to let the students know what is available; behavioral health education is also helping with student retention."

The students' passion for recovery is the force behind what makes *Recovery Week* such a huge success. Ms. Labbe's advice to other universities trying to start a **Recovery Month** event is to allow the students to be creative and encourage their input as much as possible; she said, "When the students get excited, the community takes notice which leads to more sharing." She also mentioned that it is important to reach out to student organizations, staff, faculty, and the administration because "the more people involved ensures sustainability."



In addition to internal support, Ms. Labbe described SAMHSA's **Recovery Month** toolkit as a valuable resource, "It is great to know that the information does exist, and it works as a model for what we are trying to do." According to Ms. Labbe, this year's *Recovery Week* was a success, as well; it was highlighted by the Mock Car Crash Demonstration, Recovery Board, and a student discussion panel. The planning for *Recovery Week 2015* will begin in March, and Ms. Labbe stated that they welcome students' ideas and suggestions for the coming year. ■

Spotlight: New Planning Partner—The Campbell Center

To come full circle: That is what Iden Campbell, a native of New York City, has done and hopes for his Washington, D.C., community where he has lived for the past 20 years. Growing up in the foster care system, Mr. Campbell experienced the effects of being “aged-out”; he found himself financially and emotionally alone at the age of 18. He sought support through behavioral health organizations, but soon recognized weaknesses in the system. The idea of starting an advocacy group to provide wellness and recovery services, as well as community-based programs, to individuals with behavioral health issues was always in the back of his mind, but he got “caught up in life.” Mr. Campbell began a working relationship with the Pathways Program, a human services organization, where he was reintroduced to the concept of “recovery” and began his work as a peer specialist. Pathways provided him with the basic knowledge, skills, and tools that he would eventually need for realizing his dream. He was also able to form connections with others in recovery on personal and professional levels. While working with Pathways, Mr. Campbell was presented with the prospect of a 5-year contract through Washington, D.C.’s Department of Behavioral Health to open his own center. He responded with excitement and anticipation at the opportunity and wrote the proposal, with the assistance of Pathways’ Executive Director Christy Respress, within the week. Through Mr. Campbell’s determination and ingenuity, he was awarded the contract. With a heavy heart and gratitude, he left Pathways to pursue his dream. This milestone was not the end of his relationship with Pathways, however; he continues to receive its support and collaboration with his organization, The Campbell Center.

Washington, D.C., has experienced its own struggles over the years. Particularly, alcohol, drug abuse, and crime have been prominent issues for the nation’s capital. The Campbell Center is currently located in a high-crime area: Police sirens are a common sound; alcohol continues to be used at high rates, drugs such as heroin and meth are making a comeback, and newer drugs such as synthetic marijuana (aka K2 or spice) are finding a home in corner stores. Despite these issues, the area is beginning to see changes, with new businesses moving in and property values increasing; this gentrification process has placed a financial strain on The Campbell Center. Fortunately, the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner at Mr. Campbell’s former church was looking for an organization that provided behavioral health services and offered him the space as an even exchange. He stated, “It was a big relief; I was beginning to think I might have to rethink my concept of how we were going to do it without losing our vision.” The Campbell Center is scheduled to move to its new location close to the Navy Yard before the end of 2014, thanks to this “divine intervention” and service need. Mr. Campbell believes that the new space will be able to serve between 50 and 60 people, almost double the number of those served daily.

SAMHSA has been an additional support to The Campbell Center and its mission by funding programs such as the center’s DC Recovery Network, which promotes wellness and recovery through peer support. Mr. Campbell is not new to working

with the government and states that his collaboration with SAMHSA has been a fresh positive experience. He hopes that serious changes will begin taking place soon in Washington, D.C., regarding behavioral health. Currently, he and The Campbell Center have several partnerships and projects such as a contract with Child and Family Services to focus on and provide services to



the younger population, a series on Google Hangouts featuring published authors in recovery, and a gender-neutral bathroom campaign to reduce harassment and violence of transgender and gender nonconforming people. Mr. Campbell appreciates the publicity that SAMHSA’s *Recovery Month* Planning Partners have given The Campbell Center and the additional opportunities to connect with other organizations for future partnerships.

Iden Campbell is a busy man with an inspiring story to tell. His passion for those he serves in the Washington, D.C., community is demonstrated through his perseverance to provide quality behavioral health services to those in need. He began as an “aged-out” foster child with a dream, but became a role model for all underrepresented people. “Looking back at 18-year-old me, I needed that time in order to really help other 18-year-olds and say let me give you this hand,” he noted. ■