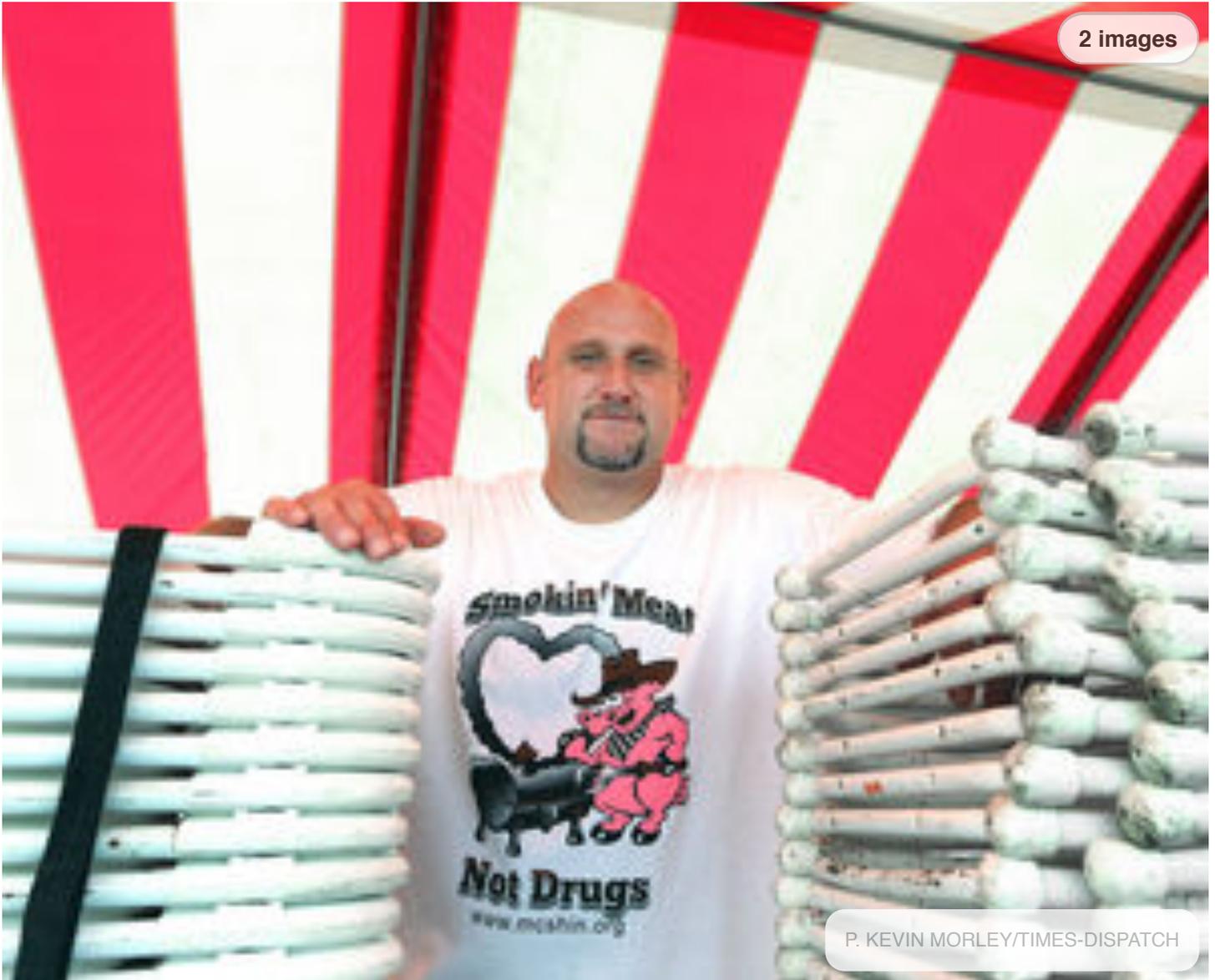


Recovery Fest marks 10th annual event

Addiction-fighting group marks a 10th anniversary fest



David Rook, intake coordinator for the McShin Foundation, took a break from setting up tents and chairs for the foundation's Recovery Fest at Hatcher Memorial Baptist Church on Saturday.

3

BY LAURA KEBEDE Richmond Times-Dispatch | Posted 2 weeks ago

A bright shirt with a cartoonish pig and “Smokin’ Meat, Not Drugs” across the front made David Rook, an intake specialist at the McShin Foundation, stand out among a group of men setting up tents and a stage outside Hatcher Memorial Baptist Church for the foundation’s annual festival Saturday.

He joined the McShin organization six months after he started its recovery program for his heroin addiction. For 20 years he had been in and out of various clinical treatments and visited psychiatrists, but nothing stuck until the McShin Foundation’s peer-to-peer model.

“They offered an instant community of people,” he said of the group’s support and accountability. “People do recover. It’s not all drunk driving and shootings.”

The McShin Foundation will host its 10th annual Recovery Fest from 12 to 5 p.m. Saturday at Hatcher Memorial Baptist Church at 2300 Dumbarton Road in northern Henrico County.

The event will commemorate the 25th national Recovery Month and feature local musician Evan Barlow and also the Bitter Creek Band, as well as a BBQ cook-off with local restaurateurs, remarks from area politicians and candidates, children’s activities and addiction-service providers.

The Henrico organization is a peer-run organization, meaning staff members and group coordinators are also in recovery from alcohol and drug addictions.

The event garnered national attention through the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as a winner for the last two years in the special celebrations category of Recovery Month events, CEO Honesty Liller said.

“You can have so much fun in recovery,” Liller said of the event’s message to addicts. She expects more than 5,000 people to attend Saturday. “We’re doing so many more things as an organization.”

McShin Foundation co-founder and president John M. Shinholser has shared the organization’s model with groups from Alaska to the United Kingdom in recent years. Its program in the Richmond City Jail was featured in the documentary “Anonymous People,” which included the recovery stories of Miss USA 2006 Tara Conner and actress Kristen Johnston.

Rook said the event helps others unfamiliar with addictions and addicts to challenge stereotypes.

“We use (the event) for what we call ‘stigma reduction,’” he said.

“I’m not an addict on the streets anymore,” Liller said. “I’m a wife, I’m a mother, I’m a CEO. I’m all these things.”

The organization recently launched a family council, mostly parents of addicts, to promote prevention and better equip the McShin Foundation to aid families in the healing process.

It follows the initiative-driven pattern of the organization, Liller said.

“One of the mothers (of an addict) took charge and is running with it,” she said. “Everyone is affected by the alcoholic or the addict.”

Three generations were represented during setup on Thursday. John Ondra and his grandson Daniel Ondra helped Thursday to show support of John’s son and Daniel’s father Patrick Ondra, who is in the McShin Foundation’s recovery program.

“Everyone takes a role here,” Rook said. “There’s another side of recovery and we’re it.”

Lkebede@timesdispatch.com

(804) 649-6243

Twitter: @kebedefait

McShin Foundation Recovery Fest

What: The 10th annual event to commemorate national Recovery Month will include local musicians, a BBQ cook-off, children’s activities and addiction-service providers.

U.S. Senate candidates Ed Gillespie and Robert C. Sarvis are slated to make remarks at the event, as are David Brat and James A. Carr Jr., candidates in the 7th Congressional District race. Del. Betsy B. Carr, D-Richmond, also plans to attend.

When: 12 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6

Where: Hatcher Memorial Baptist Church, 2300 Dumbarton Road

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.meshinfoundation.org or call (804) 249-1845.

Similar articles

Two dead in Richmond apartment shooting

Mayor's office mum on Marshall departure

Ex-employee in City auditor's office faked doctor's notes

City planning commission announces changes to Floyd Avenue bike boule...

Byrd House Market a family affair

