



RECOVERY WALKS!

Putting a Face on Recovery

Sunday, September 16th, 2001

Bushnell Park

Hartford, Connecticut

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Pat Howard
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Executive Summary

On a picture perfect Sunday, only five days after the terrorist attack on the United States, CCAR hosted the 2nd annual Recovery Walks! drawing between 1800-2000 people in support of recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. Organizers made a difficult decision to proceed with the walk and it turned out to provide a much-needed time for grieving and healing. As CCAR Area Coordinator Diane Potvin would write,

“Considering the events of September 11th and the Walk today, (one extreme to the other), recovering bodies to recovering lives, was almost too much for my heart to bear. God bless America...God bless those in and out of recovery.”

Bushnell Park in Hartford was set up using the existing Bandshell, a tent for Registration, a tent for CCAR Information (beautifully decorated by CCAR Secretary Dottie Callahan) and a tent for T-shirt and hat distribution as the magnificence of the Capitol building commanded attention on the adjacent hillside. White, yellow and green helium balloons dotted the landscape.

The entertainment schedule, coordinated skillfully by CCAR member Ken Aligata flowed perfectly and included Sister Deborah and her poetry, the Teen Challenge Choir from New Haven, Devon (the one-legged tap dancer), Amanda Halsted with a stirring rendition of the National Anthem, Arno Groot with a powerful Lords’ Prayer solo on alto saxophone, Crossroads Choir, Selfish Steam, Tommy Dest and the Celtic Pirates. Javier Maldonado, age 2, cut the ribbon to start the walk. Speakers were DMHAS Commissioner Thomas Kirk, CCAR Project Director Bob Savage, CCAR Associate Director Phillip Valentine and CCAR Board Secretary Felix Rivera who welcomed the crowd in Spanish.

14 entries were made in the Team competition with many carrying colorful banners and one carried a large American flag. Many treatment providers brought staff and clients and cited that the hope and power of the recovery community was an incredible boost to morale and attitude. 27 different agencies, businesses, organizations and individuals sponsored the event. The program listed 55 specific acknowledgments. There were hundreds of children enjoying the bounce house, the cotton candy, the sno-cones and the 3 clowns. 2000 hot dogs, boxes of chips, baked goods by the dozen, hundreds and hundreds of bottles of water, soda by the gallon and other beverages were all donated and happily consumed. The Recovery Walks! planning committee poured countless hours into preparing for this event. On Sunday, more than 145 CCAR volunteers rose to the occasion led by Felix Rivera, Ron Verderame, Ed Marrero, Chuck Berry, Al Bolin, Donna Gold, Karl Russotto, Sandy Pelley, Catapult, Loretta Vasso, Albert Kydd, Dave Armstrong, Brian Roy and others.

480 surveys about recovery community demographics, dynamics and attitudes were completed that will help shape CCAR policy and action over the next year. 338 individuals registered to become new CCAR members. The Hartford Courant and Channel 3 covered the event. Over \$19,000 was raised in support of recovery advocacy. *CCAR extends a heartfelt “Thank you!” to all who participated, volunteered, sponsored or otherwise made Recovery Walks! 2001 an extraordinary event. Thank you.*

Welcome

Thank you for being part of CCAR's 2nd Annual Recovery Walks! and your willingness to play a role in putting a positive face on the recovery community. We seriously thought of canceling the walk in consideration of the tragedies that happened in New York City and at the Pentagon. After carefully reviewing the pros and cons, we decided to continue as planned as a testimony to the United States' and the Recovery Community's resolve and determination to stand firm in the face of terror. We are saddened about what happened and the mood of our walk will be different. However, we will continue to put a positive face on the Alcohol and Drug Recovery Community that includes persons in recovery, family members and friends.



Our program will provide an opportunity for prayer, moments of silence for the many that have died and for the support of the injured and the families of loved ones. Our appearance here today shows that the alcohol and drug recovery movement is alive and well.

Bob Savage, CCAR Project Director



Hartford Courant Article

2,000 Celebrate Sobriety In Bushnell Park

By JOHNNY MASON
The Hartford Courant
September 17, 2001

The crowd at Bushnell Park in Hartford Sunday came for a celebration, even as much of the country was still struggling with its sorrow.

Nearly 2,000 people gathered at the park to celebrate sobriety at New England's second annual Recovery Walks!, an event designed to put a human face on alcohol and drug addiction.

The participants stressed the importance of seeing drug addiction as a disease, not a weakness. Removing the stigma can help addicts and their relatives receive better treatment and care, said Dee Georgette, founder of Legacies, a support group for parents.



Labeling addiction a disease reduces the shame felt by addicts and their relatives and might encourage city and state legislators to fund more treatment beds and post-treatment support programs, Georgette said.

Georgette, whose 24-year-old son, Tony, died of a heroin overdose on April 23, 1998, said she doesn't want any parent to go through what she did.

"We want parents to be aware that if their children are drinking or doing drugs that it may not be a phase that they're going to grow out of," said Georgette. "What our children didn't get, we want to make sure other children get."

The event, sponsored by the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery, attracted recovering addicts, their relatives and people from human services agencies. The agency offers support and advocacy programs for substance abusers,

The group celebrated the theme, "We Recover Together: Family, Friends and Community," with hugs and kisses as they walked around the park three times before enjoying a cookout and music.

Speakers told stories of how 12-step recovery meetings, which helped lead to self-awareness and recovery, turned around their once-destructive behavior.

"When I looked in the mirror I didn't like what I had become," said Joey Petrello, 46, whose years of alcohol and cocaine addiction grew out a teenage habit of smoking pot and drinking whiskey. He has not touched a drink or drug since Dec. 23, 1992.

"I never realized I could enjoy something like this event without taking a drink," Petrello said.

The deaths caused by the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon provoked painful feelings for anyone whose children had overdosed on drugs, said Linda Andreili, whose 24-year-old son, Scott, died of a drug overdose.

She sympathized with parents dealing with the uncertainty of their loved ones who have yet to be officially classified as dead.

"It's been a devastating week," she said. "I'm heartsick over what they're going to feel."



Amanda Halsted's singing of "The Star Spangled Banner" moved the audience to tears and received a standing ovation from a crowd whose applause had the 18-year-old college student blushing after her performance.

"I was the most nervous person here," said Amanda, minutes after walking off the pavilion's stage.



Comments

“Hope you are all well and finding ways to come to some resolution about the horrific event of last week. I know for me the opportunity to spend a day in the sun, in Bushnell Park, Hartford, CT went a long way to restore my positive spirit. "Great event CCAR!!!" Lots of people. Lots of good music. Lots of good energy and support.” **Denise Devlin, NEAAR Coordinator**

"YIPPEEEEEEEEEEEEE! FRONT PAGE OF THE CONNECTICUT SECTION! You and the members of CCAR are not only putting a face on recovery but speaking in daylight of the darkness of addiction." **Bonnie, Granby CT**

“I've heard it was a wonderful tribute to recovery and to the fallen victims of September 11th. You guys do great work. Hope to talk to you soon.” **Janice**



“Congrats to you and all of your colleagues...great job!” **DMHAS Commissioner Tom Kirk**

“Congratulations, I can't wait to hear the details and most importantly the stories.” **Bill White**

“Unbelievably wonderful -- although I had already heard of your success in New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts and New Jersey! I am so honored to be a friend of CCAR.” **Jim Wuelfing**

“I am so glad to hear. As you may know our offices were in Tower 2 and today, 2 weeks to the minute that Tower 2 collapsed (10 am), we were walking through our newly secured office space. Recovery here as well. Regards.” **Alexandre Laudet, PhD - NDRI (formerly 2 World Trade Center, NYC, NY 10048)**

“Congratulations! That is very impressive!” **Denise Adams, New England Institute of Addiction Studies and AdCare Educational Institute**



Personal Accounts

Diane Potvin, CCAR Area Coordinator

When I got this assignment, I thought I would be starting at the beginning of the Day but I realized that one of the miracles of Recovery Walks! had started the day before. When my husband (owner of Hosmer Mountain Soda Company) agreed to do the soda for the Day I got the impression that it was because I asked him to do it....not because he had a burning desire to do it. I was wrong.

Just to explain a little, John only takes Sunday off (sometimes) from the soda company and I knew asking him to provide soda for the Day would be an added burden to his day off. What surprised me was that he started planning the day before...and how he paced himself and how he made certain he got a little more sleep than normal so that he could not only get the soda to the event, but also be able to enjoy this important Day. I could see that he wanted it to be a success and I know he enjoyed it.

With that being said, it is my impression that the Day was almost perfect. The weather cooperated again, much to everyone's delight. Earlier in the week, there was a hurricane off the coast of Florida and I must admit when I learned that, I stopped checking...until Friday....and then it was only good news...good weather for the whole weekend.



John and I got to the Park about 8:30 a.m. and there already was this liveliness about the Park. People were greeting each other with extra long hugs that day and I knew it was because of the incident on September 11th and for the recovery at hand...both in New York, Washington, Pittsburgh and Bushnell Park Connecticut.

It was nice meeting spouses (significant others) of people that I see on a regular basis. And their children. Children...there were so many more this year than last year. Seeing the kids walking around with cotton candy, a flag or a smiley face on their cheek, jumping up and down in the bounce house, getting candy from a clown or just running around, smiling, having fun. Having fun with their parent/s and other kids. It was great.

My own son Ric and my granddaughter Krystal were at the walk and walked with me a lap around the Park. That is what recovery is all about, regaining your family back and having them with you on important days, such as this. That alone made my day worth millions.

I was truly grateful that Commissioner Tom Kirk was able to give a welcome to everyone. People truly appreciated it. I was speaking with a state worker who didn't know if Commissioner Kirk would be able to attend because of Connecticut's commitment to New York City for counseling services, but he did. Once again, he has shown the recovery community that he's truly a supporter of ours.

The Eleventh Step Prayer has always held a special place in my heart (if only I could live like that) and when Phil read it, it just seemed to fit as the events of the day were proceeding. When John and I got married, we got married in a church that had a minister in recovery and unbeknownst to us...he chose to read St. Francis of Assisi's Prayer. It added something special to the ceremony and was a wonderful lead in to the National Anthem and the Lord's Prayer.

The entertainment was really great this year. There were a lot of comments about how great it was. I could see people 'bobbin their heads' and 'tapping their foot' as the music played throughout the event. Amanda Halsted singing the National Anthem put goose bumps over my body and tears to my eyes.



If that was not enough, with the saxophone being my favorite musical instrument and hearing Arno Groot play the Lord's Prayer, I almost passed out. The events of September 11th and the Walk today, (one extreme to the other), recovering bodies to recovering lives, was almost too much for my heart to bear. God bless America...God bless those in and out of recovery.

As I walked, there were a few gentlemen behind me who were talking about how their life was different today. One of the gentlemen had started recovery a number of years before his other friends and he was relating to them how his life was now. It was interesting hearing the difference in the language of recovery and how they were talking with each other. When you've got it, you want all your family and friends to get it and it was obvious that this guy wanted his friends to stick around with him, in recovery. It was agreed by all three that recovery was a blessing and a shame they didn't find it sooner.

I sat alone for a while during the afternoon, thinking about my son and granddaughter, my brother and his wife (who were also at the Walk and taking a video for our cable show "Positive Faces" to give the Walk a local flavor), my husband as he pumped out soda for those that wanted some, my dear friends from life, and people that I had so much in common with but haven't met yet. I just knew right down to the core of my being, that I didn't want or need to be anywhere else in the world except right where I was...in Bushnell Park celebrating recovery. For me, I feel that having this walk is probably the most important statement that people can say without

saying a word and I feel that it's important for them to have this opportunity. Some people can't do what we do, but they can show up or support the Walk.

Melissa Scheffey, CCAR Administrative Assistant

My job for Recovery Walks Day was to try to get attendees to fill out as many of my 750 three-page surveys as possible. I had three helpers for the day. We showed up around 9:30 AM when set-up in the park already looked complete. Already there were a large number of people – most wearing gold volunteer t-shirts. We were given a table in the registration tent as home base, but mostly I wanted my helpers to fan out and approach people. At first they got a lot of turn-downs because everyone was so busy they couldn't pause, but around 10 we began to get serious business, and for the rest of the day until about 3 we were very busy. It was hard to get people to consider filling out a survey without some kind of incentive. A hat was a powerful incentive.

After the hats gave out we really had nothing to offer people but “the good of the cause” or a t-shirt. People were grateful to sit down (I had four chairs) and once I had them relaxed and in my clutches I could usually get them to fill out a survey. Mood was cooperative and friendly no matter what – after I offered “the troubled man” a survey – which he took – Donna Gold took me aside and warned me about him – but he turned it in beaming, and wore his hat with pride throughout the day – even when he was karate chopping an invisible enemy.



I was disappointed that we only managed to get 480 surveys filled out – I had been shooting for 500. I think with more hats we could have done it!

The day had a very different “feel” to it from the first – compared to last year. It was much less *serious* – which I know seems extraordinary in the light of what happened September 11. But the presence of children, clowns and balloons gave it a “family picnic fair” feeling that I think just lifted people's spirits. I also think that we've made a psychic difference in Hartford that's



important to examine. For the last walk, what we were trying to do was much more inchoate – less recognized – we had to explain harder to people. This year everyone seemed to know *what recovery is*.

I saw a lot of emotion – but it was positive. When people's eyes filled with tears they were happy tears –

there was no anger or frustration about “the system” or the long way we have to go or the problem of countering public denial in a culture fixated on pleasure – all remarks I heard last year. I heard one negative comment the entire day – that our balloon colors are those of the Irish Republican Army!!! I think we can discount that. I thought it was interesting to see how effortless it really was to tie our message of recovery in to the differentness of life following the disaster September 11. We don’t ask for disaster – it just happens to us and to the people we know. Friends at school take the same substances – some become addicted – others do not. Some derail their lives – others do not. Who can say why? But the message of recovery is not just something we all can *preach* – it is something we can *use*. When I think about our state motto – *he who can transplant survives* – it’s really saying the same thing! It’s not what you’re born with – it’s what you make of yourself – in the face of what happens to you - that counts. Recovery is a vital survival technique in today’s world. We really become stronger at the broken places.

Michael Askew, CCAR Area Coordinator

Sunday morning, on September 16, 2001, I walked into the Bushnell Park in Hartford on a beautiful morning. I was really excited because Recovery Walks! was finally here. I quickly went to the registration tent and handed my pledges in.



I looked around and noticed Melissa walking around with a clipboard. It was a survey that she wanted everyone to fill out. “Free hat for filling out a survey”, she cried out. I noticed people all around. They were gathering around a catering truck having coffee and doughnuts, signing up as volunteers, registering or just helping out, having their face painted, and introducing themselves to other people. I already felt a hum in the air of anticipation. There was music in the background and everyone was flowing. A few people were attending to a few loose ends.

I started greeting people; CCAR members, persons in recovery, family members, friends and many I had never met before. I noticed a bus pull up and realized that it was one of the four buses that I had arranged from Stamford. There were about 35 persons coming down the hill from the State Capitol Building parking lot. I quickly directed them to the registration table to sign up. They already had their Recovery Walks! T-Shirts on.

Then came Casa Hostos, another group, from the street. All were from the Hispanic Community and I approached them also to register and pick up T-Shirts. They seemed eager to be at the Walk and for all of them it was a first.

I ran into a young lady who grew up in my neighborhood. She is with the Perception Program in Willimantic. I told her that someone she knew from the neighborhood was here and she got so excited to see them. I pointed her out and she quickly went running towards her. Later that afternoon driving home, I talked with Louise about how we saw the desire in her more so than ever before. We both think that she will make it.

I spotted the other 3 buses on the street that splits the park. I had been looking for them on the hill behind the Capitol Building because I wanted to make sure that everyone went straight to the Registration Tent. I ran in hope to catch them before they unloaded. They were unloading when I arrived and quickly informed the staff of what they should do. Most of the residents had seen me from the CCAR Presentations I did at their facilities. As I walked back across the street I felt really pleased that they had made it to the Walk.

There were 142 persons from the Stamford area alone. Last year there were none that I knew of. There were another 32 from the Waterbury area and over 130 that arrived from the New Haven area. They all made it!

I noticed the park swelling in numbers and people just being in high spirits. There was a diversity of people that I noticed. Treatment Providers, People in Recovery, Politicians, SA Counselors, Advocates and Families just to name a few.

I turned around and here comes Crossroads, Inc. with approximately 85 persons, the entire program from New Haven, with a big banner in front of them coming into the park. "Wow!" I thought, this is really getting big.

I had my face painted and enjoyed the company of persons standing around the table. I noticed the children playing in the bounce house. A long line of children and adults stood for cotton candy. This was really a great turn out.



There were by far more children than last year. It was nice to see the park filled with children, running, jumping in the bounce house, holding hands with their parents, having cotton candy, eating apples and getting their face painted. It was evident that they were enjoying themselves, evidenced by a little one clapping her hands to the music. Everyone seemed to be enjoying the day.

The entertainment was great! I liked all of it; the choirs, Selfish Steam and Sister Deborah's poetry. The Tap dancer (I don't think many people knew that he lost a leg to addiction) was first-rate. I was touched by Amanda's solo performance of The Star Spangled Banner and completely blown away by the Saxophonist playing the Lords Prayer. The crowd expressed their delight also.



The walk began with the cutting of the Ceremonial ribbon and away we went. The line of people bunched up at the start and clearly hit the street on the other side of the hill as people were still waiting to leave the start line. I was in front of people from a treatment facility and they were talking about how wonderful this was and the amount of people that were there. The line started to thin out halfway around the park and people in their cars started to take notice as they drove by.

I made it once around and noticed that help was needed at the grills where the hot dogs were being cooked and given out. Louise and our friend grabbed some water and made their way back up the hill for the second lap. I noticed the Tap dancer and some CCAR members behind the grills helping out the cooks.

I took a break and had a couple of hot dogs with chips and a soda. Most people who walked had lined up for dogs and very few had attempted the third leg. With the entertainment non-stop you could feel the energy as Recovery Walks! was in full swing. I noticed that the Registration Tent volunteers hadn't eaten and quickly scooped up some dogs, chips and soda's and brought them over to the tent. I was greeted with smiling faces, especially Carlton's. "Thanks a heap," Carlton said.

I started to reline garbage cans with Ron Verderame. We took empty boxes and garbage to a City Truck stationed by the grill area. Other persons were helping in that respect also.

As 3:00 came around I begin to tire out. Louise and I headed up the hill to the parking lot and as I looked back I knew that this walk would be remembered by many for along, long time... including myself.

Dottie Callahan, CCAR Administrative Assistant

At this year's walk the eagerness of the volunteers to work hard to make the day a success strongly impressed me. There was a warm feeling of gratitude in the air for the gifts so many in the crowd have received in recovery. People seemed full of the desire to give back in any way they could that day. The atmosphere was friendly enough for a homeless man to come right into the center of the activities. It was an inviting place to be with all the hugs being exchanged and hands reaching out to help.



Although I was exhausted from arriving early in the morning I was rejuvenated over and over by the crowd's positive energy. People were curious about how they could help out with next year's walk thus, I know that the crowd is going to grow in number again. Devon, the tap dancer, summed up the sentiments of many when he said he would not have missed the walk for the world, as he is grateful to be alive today.

I was glad that some of my family members were able to observe the work that CCAR does. It was easier to endure the time and work required to put on the walk knowing how crucial and valuable the cause is.

Recovery Walks! 2001 Sponsors

Associate Sponsor

Lee's Auto Ranch
Maneely's, Inc. Banquets and Catering

Leadership Sponsors

Catapult Restoration, Inc.
Community Substance Abuse Centers, Inc.
Diamond Cab Company
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Sponsors

The Windsor Recovery Club
Rushford Center, Inc.
Jan P. van der Werff
Alcohol & Drug Recovery Centers, Inc.
Leaird Designs
Hosmer Mountain Soda Company
E. E. Mucke & Son's, Inc.
SOBE Beverages
Taylor Rental, Enfield
Verderame Construction Co.

Supporters

Connecticut Chapter American Society for Addiction Medicine
Connecticut Women's Consortium
Tires Plus Wheels
Hartford Roofing
In memory of Pat Russotto
Substance Abuse Action Council of Central CT
In memory of Pat Russotto
Chris Parakilas
StudioDigital
Superior Sportswear
Selfish Steam

Sponsorship Guidelines

Thank you for considering to become a sponsor of this walk. Sponsorship will demonstrate your support for recovery and provide visibility for your organization. There are several levels of sponsorship that will contribute greatly to the success of our walk. They are listed as follows:

An "Associate Sponsor Gift" donation of \$2,500 or more: With this donation your organization will be included in all promotional materials including;

1. Top billing on the back of the Recovery Walks! T-shirt, over 3000 will be distributed.
2. Receive an award and recognized at the CCAR Annual Meeting and Awards Night in November.
3. Immediate posting on the CCAR website (www.ccar-recovery.org) as an event Associate Sponsor
4. Listed in the Recovery Walks! program.
5. Listed in the Recovery Herald - the CCAR recovery newsletter that has a circulation of 7000+.
6. Opportunity to display a banner or sign with your organization's name and logo in Bushnell Park on the day of the walk

A "Leadership Sponsor Gift" donation of \$1,000 - \$2499: With this donation your organization will be included in all promotional materials including;

1. Name on the back of the Recovery Walks! T-shirt, over 3000 will be distributed.
2. Receive an award and recognized at the CCAR Annual Meeting and Awards Night in November.
3. Immediate posting on the CCAR website (www.ccar-recovery.org) as an event Leadership Sponsor.
4. Listed in the Recovery Walks! program.
5. Listed in the Recovery Herald - the CCAR recovery newsletter that has a circulation of 7000+.
6. Opportunity to display a banner or sign with your organization's name and logo in Bushnell Park on the day of the walk

A "Sponsor Gift" donation of \$500 - \$999: With this donation your organization will be included in all promotional materials including;

1. Immediate posting on the CCAR website (www.ccar-recovery.org) as an event Sponsor.
2. Listed in the Recovery Walks! program.
3. Listed in the Recovery Herald - the CCAR recovery newsletter that has a circulation of 7000+.
4. Opportunity to display a banner or sign with your organization's name and logo in Bushnell Park on the day of the walk
5. Recognized at the CCAR Annual Meeting and Awards Night in November.

· A "Supporter Gift" donation \$100 - \$499: With this donation your organization will be included in all promotional materials including;

1. Immediate posting on the CCAR website (www.ccar-recovery.org) as an event Supporter.

2. Listed in the Recovery Walks! program.
3. Listed in the Recovery Herald - the CCAR recovery newsletter that has a circulation of 7000+.
4. Opportunity to display a banner or sign with your organization's name and logo in Bushnell Park on the day of the walk

CCAR is a private, non-profit organization and all contributions are tax-deductible. Through your support of this event and CCAR, you will help showcase the remarkable benefits of recovery and the citizens of our state will see addiction treatment and recovery in a positive light. We are certain that a change in attitude will result in more people entering treatment and getting the help they need to live productive, addiction-free lives. Please help us make Recovery Walks! a successful event.

Recovery Walks! Planning Committee

Ken Aligata	Chuck Berry	Allen Bolin	Dorothy Burkle
Biff Finocche	Donna Gold	Marva House	Wayne Jarvis
Kathy Keena	Michael Kennedy	Irene Nurse Cohen	Jay Paul
Sandy Pelley	Melagros Reyes	Felix Rivera	Karl Russotto
Ida Terry	Loretta Vasso	Ronnie Verderame	



Acknowledgements

Alcohol & Drug Recovery Centers, Inc.
Big Y, Mansfield
Bob's Discount Furniture
Bristol AIC
Burnside Ice Company
Casa Hostos
Catapult
Center for Serenity
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
Chicago Sam's Sports Bar & Grille
City of Hartford
Community Prevention & Addiction Services
Community Renewal Team
Connecticut Association of Non-Profits
Connecticut Renaissance
Connecticut School of Broadcasting
Connecticut Valley Hospital
Country Diner, Enfield
Coventry House
Crossroads
Connecticut Department of Mental Health and
Addiction Services
Dunkin' Donuts, Buckland
Dunkin' Donuts, Willimantic
Ellington Volunteer Ambulance Corps
Fighting Back, New Haven
General Rental, Tolland

Ground Round, Enfield
Hartford Courant
Hartford Dispensary
HELP, Inc.
High Point Communications Group, Inc.
La Notte Restaurant
Legacies
Liberation Meridian Guenster
Mary Magdalene House
McCall Foundation
Morrison Electric
New Directions
Papa Gino's, Willimantic
Recovery Walks! Planning Committee
Recovery Works
Shaw's Supermarket, Willimantic
Stop & Shop, Enfield
Stop & Shop, Willimantic
Subway, North Windham
Taylor Rental
The Chronicle
Viewpoint Recovery Program
Western Auto, North Windham
WFSB Channel 3
WILI Radio
Women's' Alternative Living Center
WTIC 96.5 FM
WTNH News Channel 8

Program

10:00 AM	Welcome	Bob Savage, CCAR Project Director
10:05 AM	Poetry	Sister Deborah
10:30 AM	Choir	Teen Challenge New Haven
11:30 AM	Stand Up & Tap	Devon Allen Williams
11:45 AM	Live Music	Selfish Steam
12:45 PM	Speakers	
		Bob Savage, CCAR Project Director
		Tom Kirk, DMHAS Commissioner
		Felix Rivera, CCAR Board Secretary
		Phillip Valentine, CCAR Associate Director
1:15 PM	National Anthem	Amanda Halsted
1:20 PM	Lord's Prayer	Arno Groot
1:25 PM	Ribbon Cutting	Javier Maldonado, age 2, & Family
1:25 PM	Walk Begins	
1:30 PM	Choir	Air
2:00 PM	Live Music	The Best of Tommy Dest
3:00 PM	Live Music	Celtic Pirates
3:30 PM	Live Music	Selfish Steam and Friends

Individuals

	<u>Pledges</u>	<u>Amt. Collected</u>
Albert Kydd, Norwalk	32	\$681.00
Michael Burke, Bridgeport	76	\$428.40
Judith Macri, Willimantic	33	\$295.00
Mike Olschafskie, Enfield	16	\$220.00
Debbie Petrello, Enfield	10	\$140.00
Felix Rivera, Hartford	4	\$108.00
Rod & Liz Desrosiers, Enfield	22	\$83.00
Michael Askew, Norwalk	14	\$69.00
Tim Grant, Willimantic,	12	\$54.00
Debbie Halsted, Windsor	16	\$18.00

Teams

	<u>Captain(s)</u>	<u>Pledges</u>	<u>Amt. Collected</u>
Alcohol & Drug Recovery Centers, Inc.	Kimberly Platt	74	\$1205.00
Catapult	Glenn Remmers		\$910.00
Legacies	Dee Georgette	45	\$643.00
Center for Serenity	Renee Batignani	26	\$384.00
	Nancy Mandly		
Women's Alternative Living Center	Michelene Longo	13	\$325.00
	Janet Rodriguez		
STAR Program	Donna Brooks	22	\$223.00
Bristol AIC	Pam Ferguson	13	\$165.00
Community Prevention and Addiction Services	Joseph Sisk	14	\$151.00
Blue Hills Substance Abuse Services Outreach Services Program	Nick Gilbert	23	\$148.00
		6	\$140.00
New Directions	Kathy Keena	13	\$91.00
Hartford Dispensary	Carolyn Delgado		\$67.00
Casa Hostos	Wilfredo Erba	-	-



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 2001

For Further Information, Please Contact
Phil Valentine, (860) 571-2985

RECOVERY WALKS!

Putting a Face on Recovery

Hundreds upon hundreds walk in support of recovery from drug and alcohol addiction.

Hartford, Connecticut – Recovery is real. Recovery from drug and alcohol addiction is a reality for thousands upon thousands of individuals in Connecticut. They hold jobs, raise families, vote, pay taxes, become involved in civic groups, local government, local churches and give back what was so freely given to them. To dramatically illustrate this point, the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) is hosting the second annual *Recovery Walks!* event to be held on Sunday, September 16, 2001 at Bushnell Park. Live music from persons in recovery begins at 10 AM and the walk begins at 1 PM. The event is open to the public.

Last year over 700 people courageously stepped out and offered themselves as LIVING PROOF that recovery is real. This year, at least 1500 people are expected to show up. Walker will include individuals in recovery, their family members and friends, and persons who support recovery. Teams from addiction treatment centers, shelters, human service agencies, businesses, and other organizations will be walking. Combined, there will be representation from every corner of our State.

The primary purpose of the walk is to “put a face on recovery”. People in recovery know first-hand the sting of the stigma associated with addiction. They also come from a unique perspective – they know what got them well. This is a strong position from which to advocate. They know that recovery from addiction is possible and demonstrate it quietly every day. This walk is about demonstrating the positive power of recovery that offers hope to those who are still ill.

The Hartford event is one of many taking place around the country in September, which is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month 2001 – We Recover Together: Family, Friends, and Community. The US Department of Health and Human Services, through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), is sponsoring its 12th annual month-long national celebration of recovery as a time to focus on those with the courage to embrace recovery.

Op-Ed

On September 17, 2000 an incredible event took place in Bushnell Park; over 700 people participated in a walk to support recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. It was perhaps the first walk EVER of its kind. People hidden for years from the public spotlight emerged to publicly declare their support for recovery on a brilliant sunshine-filled day. On that day I walked in the sunshine and I plan to do so again this year.

I am a person in recovery. Yes, I said it...publicly. (Some people I know may flinch when they read this). Specifically, I am in recovery from alcoholism and cocaine addiction. I am living proof that recovery is a miracle that is within reach. And it is up to me to share my experience.

Since September is national Recovery Month, this is a perfect time to share some of my story. In order for me to initiate my recovery I had to take a heroic step of faith. I'm not talking heroic in the traditional "cartoon" sense. To me, a "hero" is someone who **Honestly Embraces a Recovery Opportunity**. In my case, the recovery opportunity was embraced because my other option was death. Today, almost fourteen years later, I am truly blessed. I love and cherish my wife, love my children, always vote, pay taxes, coach soccer, chaperone my children's field trips, and serve my church. In short, I try to give back every day what was so freely given to me. You would never know I was in recovery unless I told you. There are dozens of people just like me in your town, at your work, in your church, and in your neighborhood. You just might not know it.

It is no accident that, largely due to my recovery, I have found the perfect job. I am the Associate Director for the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR), a grassroots addiction recovery advocacy organization whose primary purpose is to put a personal face on recovery. Our mission is vital, as people suffering from alcoholism and addiction are once again being objectified, dehumanized and demonized. Family members are watching their loved ones get thrown in jail when they should be entering a hospital. When people prepare to take that heroic step toward recovery, they risk facing jail instead of a hospital. People that are seeking to become a HERO are forced to run a gauntlet of intense fear and loathing. This MUST change.

As I look around at the CCAR membership, I understand the accuracy of that word "HERO". All these individuals have bravely stepped forward to put their own story "on the line." They have experienced success, and they have all learned that they are the heroes of their own recovery. By fully embracing the challenges of today, their heroic journey serves to inspire others to recovery. Their stories infuse a depressed and depressing healthcare system with hope. They encourage society to look at the still sick and suffering in the light of *what they could become*. That is why our light must not be hidden. And we have a way for you to help.

Recently, CCAR has been investing countless hours in planning the second annual Recovery Walks! event that will take place Sunday, September 16th at Bushnell Park in Hartford as part of National Recovery Month. This year, an incredible crowd is anticipated. We are hopeful that you will join this walk. It's not just for those who have recovered. It is for everyone whose lives have been touched by the darkness of addiction or the heroic light of recovery. Please join us.

Phil Valentine, Person in Recovery
CCAR Associate Director

For more information visit us on the web at www.ccar-recovery.org or call us toll free at 1-800-708-9145.

Brief History

Since November 1997, the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) has emerged as a well-respected, highly visible and vibrant grassroots organization that includes persons in recovery and their family members, friends, and allies. Simply, we seek to “put a face on recovery”. CCAR is an integral part of a new recovery movement that is coming to life all across America. Recovering people constitute one of the largest and most invisible communities in America and they are beginning to again assert themselves as a teaching and healing force. The centerpiece of this movement is not the proclamation that "alcoholism is a disease" or that "treatment works", but instead it is the proclamation that "recovery is a reality" in the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals, families and communities.

As William White, a noted addictions historian and author of the book “Slaying the Dragon, The History of Addiction Treatment and Recovery in America” writes, *“Today, at the cultural and social policy level, there is considerable evidence that alcoholism and other addictions are being demedicalized, restigmatized, and recriminalized. The care of alcoholics and addicts in the public health arena is once again being shifted to the punishment and control of alcoholics and addicts in the criminal justice system. The true face of recovery is being lost as images of alcoholics and addicts are again being dehumanized, objectified, and demonized. On the professional front, many feel that the field of addiction treatment is in trouble—that treatment has become disengaged from its historical roots, detached from the larger and more enduring process of recovery, isolated from the communities out of which it was born, and divorced from significant breakthroughs in addiction science.”*

CCAR has made a long-term commitment to bridge the gap between the recovery community and the treatment community, funding agencies and policy makers. CCAR has recruited persons in recovery, their family members and friends; trained them; and provided them with opportunities to advocate on issues of importance to them and to the addiction field as a whole. Because CCAR members now stand in the gap--telling their stories and advocating for change—we believe that all those who are still sick and suffering will eventually have an opportunity to receive the help they need and to start their journeys of recovery. CCAR members’ advocacy will result in positive changes in the addiction treatment systems and in the actions of policy makers and community members at the local, state, and national levels.

As of August 2001, the CCAR membership list had grown to over 725 representatives supportive of recovery from addiction. Approximately 110 “core” members participate in CCAR in a meaningful way by serving as Board or committee members, attending the Central or one of five Chapter meetings, or taking an active role in education and advocacy activities. 35 members are part of the CCAR Speakers’ Bureau and now have experience publicly speaking out on recovery advocacy issues at conferences, media events and other public events. Data collected over the past year support the fact that we have been successful in recruiting a diversified membership. These data show that individuals in recovery represent about 95% of our membership. Of our active membership, 17% are African American, 11% Latino, 58% Caucasian and 14% other, 46% male and 54% female and the age range is from 23 to 74 with 46 years as the median. Another source of data is a survey developed by CCAR and the National Development and Research Institute (NDRI) in which 51 members participated. The results showed that 65% had

been in formal addiction treatment and that the average number of treatment episodes was six. The average time in treatment was 208 days. 55% of respondents had been charged with a crime and 41% served time in jail. Today, 90% are active in a 12-Step program, the average length of abstinence is 12 years, 71% work full-time and 18% work part-time. 97% percent have a high school diploma, 26% hold college degrees and another 31% have postgraduate degrees.

CCAR's growth and accomplishments are grounded in our Vision and Mission Statements, which have remained unchanged since our members adopted them in early 1998. These statements serve as the umbrella under which we conduct all our program activities. Members have developed a sense of pride in and ownership of both statements and refer to them frequently as they participate in speaking engagements and meetings.

Our Vision is that, "Society sees addiction treatment and recovery as a heroic and positive effort by the year 2005."

Our Mission is that, "Each and every person in the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery will strive to ensure that people in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction will be treated with dignity and respect in their recovery process, regardless of the type of addiction, treatment or support. We seek to involve recovering people, their families, significant others and friends in educating policy makers, service providers, legislators and the general public about the addiction recovery process. Our goal is to empower recovering people in their physical, emotional and spiritual growth and provide the opportunity for them to make significant contributions to themselves, their families and our society."

Before CCAR was founded, there was little or no organized representation of the recovery community in the State of Connecticut. As we have grown, and especially during the past 10 months, more and more individuals and organizations are responding positively to our initiatives and to the main theme of our work--to give a positive face and voice to recovery. Our message is being delivered by our members at our high-profile events, on television and radio, in newspapers and during speaking engagements. We are being asked more frequently to participate in conferences, advisory meetings, and policy development sessions.

Including the 2001 walk, we have been very fortunate in having successfully organized, implemented and participated in ten successful high-profile events as well as having developed several effective products that have and are continuing to play a key role in developing CCAR's credibility as a Recovery Community Organization. Having a high level of credibility is essential to our growth, to developing working relationships with other organizations and to raising additional funds. Some highlights of CCAR events and accomplishments are as follows:

June 1998: Five CCAR members spoke at a statewide DMHAS addictions conference. The DMHAS Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner were present, along with other key leaders in the State. It was at this session that we first realized the power of persons in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction speaking out and putting a face and a voice on recovery. The successful presentations by our members that day were key to the DMHAS decision to fund a proposal that CCAR had submitted to the Department in April 1998. These funds were received in October 1998.

March 1999: CCAR hosted its first Legislative Day held at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Sixty people attended. Several members participated by telling their stories, specifying areas of concern to them, and stressing the importance of providing Community Recovery Support Services (for example, mentoring, transportation, access to treatment, housing, prevocational guidance) by recovering persons. This successful event helped move CCAR to a new level of acceptance in the eyes of the recovering community as well as of many key Connecticut officials and legislators.

June-July 1999: The suggested slate of Board of Directors was unanimously approved by the CCAR membership, and on July 7, 1999 the CCAR Board held its first official meeting. This event served as a foundation for implementing our organizational structure, committee structure, and obtaining our incorporation and initiating our application to become a 501C3 organization.

March 2000: CCAR hosted its Second Annual Legislative Day. This event was planned by the CCAR Education Committee and co-sponsored by 17 legislators. Rep. Michael Christ served as Legislative Host. CCAR members, led by a long-term member acting as Master of Ceremonies, facilitated the program. More than 100 people attended, including CCAR members, legislators, DMHAS representatives, other agency representatives and the general public. Clips from the new CCAR CD-ROM “Putting a Face on Recovery” were shown. The DMHAS Commissioner announced that CCAR would receive additional funding to hire three Area Coordinators.

September 2000: CCAR hosted “Recovery Walks!” in Hartford. To our knowledge this was the first walk of its kind and because of our initiative, is being duplicated this year (2001) in several venues across the country. Last September 17, on a crisp, sunny, autumn day with the golden capitol dome gleaming in the background, about 700 people marched three times around the park. Fifty-eight sponsors gave their time, space, or money to the event and more than \$16,000 was raised. Over 120 CCAR members volunteered the day of the event. The event raised community awareness of CCAR’s mission and, at the same time, participants had a good time. Four recovery bands and a one-legged tap dancer provided music and entertainment. Countless lives and hearts were touched by the experience. Cars stopped and parked, and their occupants joined the walk. For the first time in our history, CCAR received excellent support from the treatment provider community and several treatment centers carried banners. Everyone marched proudly. The DMHAS Commissioner addressed the crowd, and the children of a person in recovery cut the ribbon to start the walk. One hundred twenty-seven new names were added to the CCAR mailing list. Best estimates indicated that over 1500 people were directly touched by the promotion surrounding the event.

November 2000: CCAR held its first annual meeting, which was attended by 112 persons. The Board President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, four committee chairs and three new “cultural representative” members were elected. At the meeting, new CCAR videos were shown, a new poster was unveiled, Recovery Walks! awards were distributed and members shared about their experience with CCAR. Everyone who attended shared in the celebration and enjoyed music by persons in recovery.

March 2001: CCAR held its Third Annual Legislative Day. The attendance more than tripled from 1999, to more than 200. The overflow of people spilled out into the hallways. Passers-by

peeked inside out of curiosity, telling us that laughter, shouts, and applause ringing out from a legislative hearing room was rare indeed. The CCAR Administrative Assistant's son, home from college on break, described himself as "blown away" by the experience.

CCAR has developed and distributed a variety of products. Some examples are three recovery poster series, a CD-ROM, and a one-hour documentary, the "Recovery Basic Premises and Recovery Core Values", a newsletter "The Recovery Herald", Recovery Walks! T-shirts, hats, and flyers, CCAR brochures (available in Spanish), CCAR pins and key chains, a variety of PowerPoint presentations and a variety of highly acclaimed trainings.

The CD-ROM "Putting a Face on Recovery," which contains powerful personal stories of CCAR members on video, was finished in March 1999. Over 2,000 copies have been distributed in Connecticut and across the country. We have had a number of calls congratulating us on the quality and the power of the content. Our staff and members also receive positive feedback when we use the CD-ROM in our presentations.

The one-hour documentary video "Putting a Face on Recovery" was developed as a natural progression from the CD-ROM. The documentary was finished in March 2001 and is intended for use on cable access and network television. It also will be widely distributed to other advocacy organizations, treatment providers, prisons, and schools. We will also use it as part of our central and local chapter recruitment process. The content includes stories from the CD-ROM plus new clips of "Recovery Walks!" and another CCAR member. Interviews from CCAR members and staff frame the piece. The video clips are set to music and expresses the hope of recovery. Clips from the documentary and CD-ROM may be viewed at the CCAR website www.ccar-recovery.org. Please make an effort to visit this site. This video may prove to be the most powerful piece on addiction recovery that we have produced to date.