

Belknap County Observes National Recovery Month

LACONIA: Belknap County is participating in its third annual observance of National Alcohol and Drug Addictions Recovery Month, as stated in a Proclamation presented by the County Commissioners to those attending a special briefing on Thursday, September 1 at the County Complex off North Main Street in Laconia.



County Commissioner Bud Daigneault reads the Proclamation declaring September as National Recovery Month in Belknap County.

The document signed by all three Commissioners celebrates the efforts and progress of the many residents of Belknap County who are in recovery from the disease of alcohol and drug addictions as well as those who have helped them find treatment and provided support along the way.

Plans for this year's observance have been developed by a task force of members and friends of

the Recovery Community from Belknap County and elsewhere throughout the state. Chaired by Ruth Castonguay, who is also the Chair of the Belknap County Addictions Task Force and a member of the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families, this planning committee emphasizes that recovery from alcohol and drug addictions heals lives, families, and communities.

“We want people to know that there are many, many people living full and productive lives in Belknap County who are in recovery and successfully managing their disease of alcohol and drug addictions,” says Castonguay.

She explains that alcohol and drug addiction is a complex and chronic disease that affects more than 9% of the general population, adding that “more than 500 residents in Belknap County fall in this category.”

“In order to break out of the cycle of addictions, these people must change their habits and life patterns in a manner that supports complete abstinence from alcohol and drugs,” Castonguay adds.

Castonguay notes that treating addictions is just as successful as treating any chronic disease such as asthma or heart disease.

A centerpiece of the September 1 event was the unveiling of the “Voices of Recovery” CD project, a year-long effort to gather and record personal statements of recovery from residents of Belknap County and beyond. Funded through the Rogers Family Trust for the Lakes Region, a component fund of the NH Charitable Foundation Lakes Region, with additional support from the Belknap County Citizens Council, the Nathan Brody Chemical Dependency Program and Friends of Recovery-NH, copies of this “Voices” CD were distributed by Jacqui Abikoff, the Executive Director of Horizons Counseling Center and the project coordinator.

The list of planned activities for the 2005 countywide observance of National Recovery Month includes a petition of 220 signatures in support of recovery that was mailed in a special presentation at the Laconia Post Office to close to 200 county and state legislators, officials, and leaders of local and state organizations.



Mailing the 220 petitions at the Laconia Post Office following the walk.

Five service organizations around Belknap County will hear presentations on recovery and five churches located in Laconia, Gilmanston, and Center Harbor will feature recovery as a sermon topic from the pulpit.

Nassau Broadcasting will air public service announcements through its local affiliates, WEMJ and WLNH. Based on stories of recovery from teens throughout New Hampshire these PSAs have been interpreted and taped by teens from the Laconia High School Drama Club.

The CoRe Prevention Program, based in the Interlakes School District will sponsor a countywide youth dance on September 17th and the Horizons Counseling Center will host its annual benefit auction on Saturday, September 24th.

The month-long observance ends on the last weekend of September with the New England Regional Woman-to-Woman Conference in Nashua. Planned by women in Belknap County, this three-day conference features programs and activities relevant to women in recovery and their family and friends.

For more information on Recovery Month, one may call the Belknap County Citizens Council, a member of the large task force planning this observance, at 528-3185.

MORE PHOTOS FROM RECOVERY MONTH



Registering participants in the Recovery Walk



Walkers ready to cross at the intersection of Church and Main Streets in downtown Laconia.



Officers from the Laconia Police Department escorted participants along the 2 mile course.



Walkers (and riders) of all ages participate in the Recovery Walk from the Belknap County Complex to the Laconia Post Office.



Three walkers ready to mail their petitions following the Recovery Walk to the Laconia Post Office.