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Commissioner

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Have Some Fun...and Be Renewed!

What are you doing this Saturday around 11:30 or 12:00 noon? Want to have a good time, feel a sense of pride and be around folks who will bring a smile to your face? Come to Bushnell Park in Hartford (across from State Capitol) and join in the celebration of September as National Recovery Month and Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery's 10th Annual **Recovery Walks!** Bring the family and a friend. The theme of this year's celebration is **"Join the Voices for Recovery. Together We Learn, Together We Heal."** It is all about healthy people and healthy communities.

I believe there are three essentials for effective care and services for persons with a substance use and/or mental health disorder. First, the person must increasingly understand that they *may* have such a condition. I said "may" not "must." Many people and families are initially quite reluctant to state that these serious health conditions have hit them. As one said, we belong to the "Elephant Club"...the family, the living room, the workplace, the neighborhood where these disorders exist but no one will say so, even if they are being effectively dealt with through formal or informal support and care.

Second, a person not yet in recovery needs to learn that there are "tools" they can use to manage their illness and advance their recovery – treatment, recovery supports, the fellowship and/or "natural recovery" thanks to faith, peer, family or other resources. There is no one path into recovery; one must choose and learn what works for them.

Third, the person needs to see others who began this journey and are better as a result. As harmful as substance use and illicit drugs are, do not underestimate their extraordinary power. In their own way, they work. People in recovery need to be seen and heard to serve as models of how one can combat and offset the power.

There are thousands of people in recovery in Connecticut. You will meet a few thousand of them this Saturday as has been the case for the last nine years of **Recovery Walks!** events. Some will openly proclaim their recovery of 10 or more years and wear a sash as a member of an Honor Guard who will kick off the walk at 1:00 pm around the park. Collectively, they will have thousands of years of being in recovery.

A service provider? You'll recognize some distant yet familiar smiling faces and feel a sense of pride for their recovery and your efforts, and a renewed spirit as you work with others having a hard road now, despite all of the "tools" you teach and offer them.

In recovery yourself? As a person in recovery or as a family member of one, you'll see many others who experienced some of what you have gone through – all of which may bring a sense of renewal, pride and a smile to your face. Keep managing your recovery.

In treatment now? You'll meet people who will help you to understand that being in recovery is real, that rather than just hoping for it, it is to be expected. Do your part.

Come to Bushnell Park this Saturday. For more information reach CCAR online at www.ccar.us.
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