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General questions: Andrea Cantu-Schomus, 503-449-7846

Technical questions: Karen Wheeler, 503-945-6191

National Recovery Month emphasizes the importance of community support

As part of September's National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, the Oregon Department of Human Services calls on friends, family and community members to educate themselves and support those with addiction problems and those in recovery from addictions.

"Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski has issued a proclamation recognizing September as Recovery Month here in Oregon," says Karen Wheeler, the addictions policy manager at DHS. "Now is the time to celebrate and educate. Addiction is a chronic, relapsing condition requiring life-long management but treatment works and recovery is possible."

In Oregon, nearly 260,000 adults and adolescents are in need of critical services to battle alcohol and drug addictions. Recovery Month is part of a national effort to raise awareness about the benefits of treatment, praise treatment providers for their work, reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with addiction and promote the message that with treatment, recovery is possible.

The 2009 theme, "Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Learn, Together We Heal," emphasizes the need to use all resources to educate people about the disease of addiction, seek help and heal. This is the 20th anniversary of National Recovery Month.

Patty Katz, a former addict, says, "I lost my child, my family, my health and my freedom to drugs and alcohol. Some said there was no hope for me but with the help of some very caring people I found my way back, got treatment and saved my life. If I can do it anyone can."

Katz is a lead organizer of this year's Hands Across the Bridge event, which brings thousands of people together in recognition and celebration of Recovery Month. The symbolic holding of hands across the Interstate Bridge (across the Columbia River between Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington) will take place Monday, September 7.

For more information about Hands Across the Bridge and a list of other Recovery Month events in your area please visit:

www.recoverymonth.gov/Community-Events.aspx

If you would like to locate alcohol or other drug treatment providers please visit:

www.oregon.gov/DHS/addiction/publications/provider-directory.pdf