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Recovery Walks! 2011



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Contact: Bonnie Catone
bcatone@tresearch.org
Phone: 518-441-9847

Recovery Walks! 2011 Attracts Over 15,000 Walkers

Just as in 2010, Annual Walk draws Larger Crowd than Expected

Greater Philadelphia's First Recovery Idols, Deidre Atkinson and Bill Pressley, Announced at the Penn's Landing Event

Philadelphia; September 24, 2011: More than 15,000 people turned out this morning at Penn's Landing for Recovery Walks! 2011, an annual PRO-ACT sponsored walk in celebration of those in recovery from addiction to alcohol and/or other drugs.

The 15,000-plus total surpassed last year's record-breaking crowd of 11,000. The tremendous turn-out occurred despite gray skies and threats of rain.

"We are *extremely* gratified to see all of these people walk," said Bev Haberle, Executive Director of PRO-ACT and leader of the Walk. "This morning there was truly inspiration and motivation to all those who have accessed recovery – these walkers provide hope and opportunity for those still struggling with the disease."

Pat Taylor agreed. "More than 20 million Americans are in recovery. People can and do recover, and this morning's turn-out is testament to the power of the people," she said. Taylor is Executive Director of Faces and Voices of Recovery, the national group which sponsors Rally for Recovery events all across the nation and dubbed this year's Walk in greater Philadelphia the hub of all events during September, National Recovery Month.

One of many highlights of this morning's program was announcement of the 2011 Recovery Idols, Deidre Atkinson and Bill Pressley. Both performed during the stage program following the Walk and were announced as co-winners at the end of the program.

Laurie Dhue, veteran TV anchor and in long-term recovery, was this year's celebrity emcee leading the stage program that took place right after the Walk. Other dignitaries that joined the walkers included Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the White House Office on National Drug Control Policy; Pamela Hyde, Administrator of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental

Services Administration (SAMHSA); Dr. Westley Clark, Director of SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment; and Dr. Arthur Evans, Director of the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disabilities.

The Walk saw dignitaries from entertainment as well. Rock Star, Super Star, a two-person singing team of twin brothers, one of whom is in recovery, were a singing dynamo, performing during and after the stage show. Also participating were interventionists Candy Finnigan and Jeff van Vonderen from A&E's award-winning *Intervention* show, along with Dr. Libby O'Connell, A&E Chief Historian and Senior VP for Corporate Outreach.

But it was the walkers who made the morning event. By the thousands they came from Philadelphia and other Pennsylvania counties, in busses from New Jersey, and from nearby Delaware communities. More than 400 PRO-ACT volunteers amassed tents and put together all the touches that made the Walk and subsequent stage show possible for the 15,000 walkers who turned out.

"The Walk was a collaborative effort of *all* facets of recovery," said Haberle. "There are many people to thank, among them all the treatment programs and sponsors – but just as important are all the volunteers who worked tirelessly to make the event a reality."

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About PRO-ACT

PRO-ACT is a vibrant grassroots organization for people affected by substance use disorders and their families. Membership includes individuals in recovery, family members, and allies throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania. PRO-ACT works to shape public policy, reduce the stigma of addiction and actively promote recovery through community programs and activities. PRO-ACT provides hope!

**PRO-ACT is hosted by The Council of Southeast Pennsylvania, Inc.
252 West Swamp Road, Unit 12, Doylestown, PA 18901, 215-345-6644**

PRO-ACT is grateful to the following significant sponsors of Recovery Walks! 2011



PRO-ACT Administrative Office 252 West Swamp Road, Unit #12 Doylestown PA 18901 PH: 215.345.6644 FX: 215.348.3377
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