

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Washington Celebrates *The Power of Recovery* from Alcohol and Drugs

Seattle, WA - October 31, 2006 - The crowd came for a celebration and to make a statement. And that's just what they did! From across the state of Washington, and beyond, people in recovery, and those that support them, gathered at Kirkland Marina Park on September 23rd, 2006, to participate in *The Power of Recovery Walk*. Organized by Residence XII, a women's treatment center in Kirkland, WA, the event took place to recognize National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, and offer "living proof" that recovery from alcohol and drugs is possible so that those still struggling may feel inspired to seek the treatment they need.

The opening ceremony which took place at 10 a.m. was emceed by recovery advocate and radio host, Neil Scott (*Recovery Coast to Coast Radio*.) Speakers included Senator Luke Esser, Kirkland Mayor James Lauinger and former Husky football player Spider Gaines. All spoke about the devastating costs and impact of addiction on the family, the workplace and the community.

Neil Scott, quoted statistics from a 2005 study by The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) which concluded that the total cost of alcohol and drug addiction to society was estimated at \$500 billion. "We all pay the cost," said Scott, "through the increasing demands on our health care and criminal justice systems. Untreated, substance abuse and addiction costs are seen in drug related violence, property crimes, prison expenses, court and criminal costs, emergency room visits, healthcare utilization, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, lost child support, foster care, welfare costs, reduced productivity, and unemployment."

The City of Kirkland, a strong supporter of the walk, was represented by Mayor James Lauinger.

Lauinger spoke about hope and the importance of communities supporting recovery.

"Acknowledging that alcohol and substance abuse impacts all of us, is the first step," said Lauinger. "But then we need to acknowledge that with help, people can get well and lives and families can be healed.

Hosting recovery walks in our cities, demonstrates that as a community we support the power of recovery.

Addiction is tragic, but those who choose to turn their lives around deserve our respect and admiration."

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Senator Luke Esser, who was one of only three elected officials who accepted the invitation sent to all state and federal legislators in Washington asking for support and participation, applauded Mayor Lauinger's enthusiasm for supporting recovery. A big proponent for increasing funding to domestic violence programs, he knows first hand the impact of alcohol and drugs on violence and abuse.

"More funding is important but we also need to reduce the stigma for seeking treatment so that more families can get the help they need," Senator Esser urged. "By making recovery accessible and acceptable we can help reduce the staggering numbers and accounts of domestic violence."

After the opening ceremony concluded, walkers rallied together and walked through downtown Kirkland to Carillon Point to support the power of recovery in their own lives. Walkers included people in recovery, families, friends, employers, health care professionals and staff from highly respected treatment centers. At Carillon Point, adults were inspired by recovery speakers, children participated in kids activities and everyone enjoyed refreshments provided by Costco and the Kirkland Kiwanis.

At 1:30 p.m. walkers were then encouraged to return to Kirkland Marina Park to visit with Kirkland Chamber members and exhibitors who supported recovery. At 3:00 p.m. the event concluded with presentations by Former State Representative David Ceccarelli, recovery advocate Lorie Dwinell and the Executive Director of the 24 Hour Alcohol/Drug Helpline, Ann Forbes. Although *The Power of Recovery Walk* was not a fundraiser, donations were gathered through t-shirt sales, collection boxes and exhibitor donations to help support the Helpline, a nonprofit that operates on a shoe string budget to provide treatment resources to callers from across the state of Washington. Following the presentations, all attendees joined together and recited the Serenity Prayer, a mantra for the recovery community.

"It was quite a day," said Brenda E, a participant in *The Power of Recovery Walk*. "It is an amazing feeling for me, as someone in recovery, to see so many people who support recovery in public celebrating how important recovery is. I will definitely be walking in next year's event too!"

The Power of Recovery Walk was such a great success, both in participation and public awareness, that planning for next year's event is already underway. A date is being chosen for sometime in September and information will soon be available at *The Power of Recovery Walk* website: www.recoverywalk.org

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