



# ECSAAG Coordinator's Update



...Providing our community with substance abuse prevention strategies and solutions

FALL, 2011

## National Recovery Month Celebrated In Eaton County at Path to Wellness 5K Run/Walk

### 2011 Recovery Month

#### Activities

- \* 5K Race for Recovery: September 5th at Grand Woods Park in Delta Township
- \* SUD Conference: September 12th-13th at the Lansing Center
- \* Rally for Recovery: September 13th at the State Capitol

Nearly 100 runners and walkers participated in the Labor Day Pathway to Wellness 5K Walk/Run at Grand Woods Park in Delta Township on September 5, 2011. On hand for the awards ceremony afterward were Charlotte Mayor Dee Smith and Eaton County Commissioner John Boles. Boles presented a County Proclamation recognizing "National Recovery Month". State and local organizations came out to support the event and to educate the public about substance abuse prevention and recovery.

The Michigan Department of Community Health and The Michigan Bureau of Substance Abuse and Addiction Services both registered teams of runners who competed in the race. The Barry/Eaton Health Department, ECSAAG, Lansing Area AIDS Network, SMART Recovery, MCRUD, Great Lakes Wellness Group and Recovery Network Inc all hosted booths at the resource tent.

Victor Bratz, coordinator of the race and executive director of Recovery Network says, "We hope that in the future even more support will be forthcoming from both stakeholders and people in the recovery community. Many thanks to those who took time out of Labor Day to recognize that substance abuse and mental health issues are a 24/7 reality."



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### ECSAAG Members Attend 2011 Michigan SUD Conference

ECSAAG was well represented at the 2011 Michigan Substance Use Disorder Conference in Lansing on September 12-13th. The theme of the conference was "Time for Change" and highlighted the new era of prevention that

is emerging at SAMSHA and nationally. ECSAAG Member Sara Lurie co-lead a breakout session on supervising prevention specialists. ECSAAG Members Deb Frost, Victor Braatz, and Crystal Wawiernia,

Warren Lester, Jeremy Mulvany and Martha Adams attended and were joined by EISD Staff Holly Makimaa, Micki Fuhrman, Wendy Sellers, Harriet Dean, Sara Lurie and Gary Owen.

"Gatherings like the Rally for Recovery demonstrate that with a hand-up, people can and do get better. Those in recovery can become useful and productive members of our society."

Victor Braatz, Executive Director of Recovery Network, Inc.

**Prevention Works**  
**Treatment is Effective**  
**People Recover**

**ECSAAG Gets a New Look**

Check out our new reconfigured website at [eatondrugfree.org](http://eatondrugfree.org)

Compliments of Gary Vittoz, Vittoz Computer Consulting, LLC

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook too for the latest updates and happenings!



**RALLY FOR RECOVERY AT CAPITOL**

Almost 1200 people congregated at the State Capitol on September 13, 2011 for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Rally for Recovery. Attendees from across the state stood with signs and banners urging legislators to continue their support for substance abuse treatment and prevention. The crowd occupied the front the steps of the capitol building and the surrounding area during a sunny afternoon of speeches, recovery testimonials, proclamations, live music and cheer-



ing. Supporters could be seen waving signs that said, "Prevention Works," "Treatment is Effective" and "People Recover."

The rally followed on the heels of the Michigan Substance Use Disorder Conference that took place at the Lansing Center earlier in the day - both activities part of Michigan's celebration of National Recovery Month. Many conference-goers stayed on to march to the capitol for the rally. Walkers assembled at Louis Adado Park to commence the march -- with the Lansing Sexton High School band leading the procession. Groups of supporters lined up along the river with banners and t-shirts identifying their respective organizations. Treatment facilities based in residential clients from the greater Detroit area to walk and carry banners to show



their support for treatment. Many of the states' coordinating agencies including Mid-South and Network 180 showed their encouragement by participating with marchers. The Eaton County Substance Abuse Advisory Group (ECSAAG), Recovery Network Inc. Prevention Network, Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking (MCRUD) Lansing AIDS Network (LAAN) and the Recovery Month Coalition were just a few of the many local agencies who participated in the walk and rally.

Benjamin Jones from the National Council on Drug and Alcohol



Dependence, greeted the crowd when they reached the capitol and acted as the master of ceremonies for the rally. Deb Hollis, Director of the state Bureau of Substance Abuse and Addiction Services presented a proclamation from the governor acknowledging September as National Recovery Month. Over 25 proclamations were gathered in total this year from local, county and state government bodies recognizing September as National Recovery Month.

Keynote speaker Jeff Jay shared his story of recovery from a heroin

addict to nationally-known author and substance abuse counselor. Jay's booming words echoed throughout the crowd, eliciting huge cheers and applause from the supporters and onlookers. Adding to the lively scene, the Detroit Rescue Mission Choir provided a music and inspiration. Second keynote speaker Michael Johnson, MSW, also shared his story



of recovery. A moment of Remembrance was held for all those who lost their battle with addiction.

Victor Braatz, executive director of Recovery Network, Inc., says that the rally was "a positive event that helped to spread the message that prevention works, treatment is effective and that people do recover."

"Gatherings like the Rally for Recovery demonstrate that with a hand-up, people can and do get better. Those in recovery can become useful and productive members of our society."



## A Close Up Look at Teen Rx Abuse With Janice O'Donnell, ECSAAG Member

### National Drug Free Community Grant Winner!

The EISD was awarded the Drug Free Community Grant by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. They selected 88 awards from 452 applicants across the United States. Eaton Intermediate School District will receive funding for 5 years to support the efforts of the Eaton County Substance Abuse Advisory Group.

ECSAAG initiatives are funded by:

- Mid-South Substance Abuse Commission
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/ Drug Free Communities Support Program
- Eaton County Juvenile Justice Millage Funds.
- Eaton County United Way

Janice O'Donnell, an Eaton Rapids mother, says that her daughter Holli's death from prescription drugs is not a waste. "If it can be used to help prevent others from heading down the same path, Holli's death will not be in vain." Holli was just fifteen when she was prescribed her first pain medication following a surgery for endometriosis. A lingering endometrial pain condition and an undiagnosed mental illness would keep Holli going back to doctor after doctor for more prescription drugs to ease her symptoms. By age sixteen, the Eaton Rapids teen was hooked on pain medications.

Holli was a straight A student. "She was a smart girl, so we thought she knew what she was doing with her prescriptions," O'Donnell said. The concerned mom thought the moodiness and behavior changes Holli exhibited all were side effects from the prescribed medications. It wasn't until Holli overdosed at 18 and was sent to a rehab unit that O'Donnell understood that her daughter was addicted to prescription drugs. It turns out that Holli had been lying to multiple doctors and hospitals to get her pain medications refilled in excess. The teen was also suffering from Borderline Personality Disorder which had not been properly diagnosed or treated. Despite counseling and numerous interven-

tions, Holli remained addicted and died from taking a combination of prescrip-



tion drugs at 26 -- leaving behind her beloved daughter for O'Donnell to raise.

Even though Holli's death was eight years ago, O'Donnell is working as hard as ever to get the message out about prescription drug abuse and misuse. She joined two prevention groups in Eaton County that aim to reduce prescription drug and substance abuse among youth. "I got involved in Eaton Rapids Alliance for Substance Abuse Elimination (ERASE) to channel my energies into preventing prescription drug abuse" O'Donnell says. ERASE was created to mobilize the Eaton Rapids community to eliminate substance abuse and underage drinking. "I felt I had something I had to offer to the group," O'Donnell said.

She didn't stop there, though. This mother on a mission also joined the Eaton County Substance Abuse Advisory Group (ECSAAG) to continue to create a legacy for her daughter. One activity that both these local prevention groups support is the correct handling of prescription medications. O'Donnell urges everyone to lock up their medications and to dispose of old prescription and over-the-counter drugs properly. She says that Holli used to rummage through people's drug cabinets in search of pain killers to feed her addiction.

The National Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) cites that the majority of persons age 12 and over who abuse prescription pain killers get them from a relative or friend -- and often from a home medicine cabinet. Teens do not realize that prescription drugs can be just as dangerous as street drugs. "Just because they are prescription drugs doesn't mean they are safe for you" warns O'Donnell. More Americans currently abuse prescription drugs than the number of those using cocaine, hallucinogens, and heroin combined, according to the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

### National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Activities in Grand Ledge and Eaton Rapids on October, 29, 2011

The Eaton Rapids and Grand Ledge Police Departments are joining the national movement to curb prescription drug abuse by hosting a Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, October 29, 2011, from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm at their respective police depart-

ments. Residents in either location can bring their old prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin or cold medicine to their police station. In Eaton Rapids, medications can only be accepted in pill form; liquids and inhalers are not acceptable at this event.

