

Recovery celebrated from capitol steps to local park

By Gena Hodges*

On Sept. 17, the Iowa Voices for Recovery celebration was held in observance of September as National Drug and Alcohol Addiction Recovery Month. The celebration, starting at the state capitol steps, included speakers, a march to Union Park in Des Moines, and family activities. The event drew approximately 500 people throughout the afternoon.

According to a proclamation signed by Governor Vilsack, and submitted by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Bureau of Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention, 74 percent of Iowans say alcohol addiction has affected their lives. The governor's proclamation, on display for the event, urged Iowans to participate in September's activities to encourage those in recovery.

Speakers at the event included master of ceremonies Art Schut, director and CEO of the [Mid-Eastern Council on Chemical Abuse \(MECCA\)](#); Janet Zwick, director of the IDPH [Division of Behavioral Health and Professional Licensure](#); and Dr. [H. Westley Clark](#), director of the [Center for Substance Abuse Treatment](#), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Clark praised the event organizers and attendees for involving young people. "I'm pleased to see so many children at the rally, because we need to start alcohol and drug prevention at a young age to be effective." Clark also praised the alumni of the [Powell Chemical Dependency Center](#), who wore "I'm a Powell Miracle" T-shirts, for supporting one another in recovery. After Clark cut a ribbon that signified freedom from addiction, the Powell alumni led the march to Union Park.

Information, displays and activities greeted the marchers as they entered the park. A special wall displayed success stories and included an inspiration board on which attendees could write encouraging messages to those in recovery. Several organizations had also set up booths, including [Alcoholics Anonymous](#), [Narcotics Anonymous](#),

and a faith-based recovery community organized by [Point of Grace Church](#). Activities included volleyball, carousel rides, carnival games, and face painting. Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings were also held at the park.

The event was organized by substance abuse treatment providers from MECCA, [Employee and](#)



Approximately 200 people marched the 1.7 miles from the Iowa State Capitol to Union Park for the Voices of Recovery Walk.

[Family Resources](#), [House of Mercy](#), [Bernie Lorenz Recovery, Inc.](#), [Powell Chemical Dependency Center](#) and IDPH staff. The event was funded by community donations and a grant from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration, [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#), and the [Center for Substance Abuse Treatment](#).

* Gena Hodges coordinates the Targeted Capacity Expansion Adult Methamphetamine Treatment project in the Division of Behavioral Health and Professional Licensure.

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