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Celebrating the Varieties of Recovery Experience

In 2001, recovery advocates from around the country assembled in St. Paul, Minnesota, to launch a new recovery advocacy movement. There were many ideas competing for prominence at this first recovery summit, but two achieved rapid consensus and have since become key philosophical tenets of the movement:

- 1) *addiction recovery is a reality in the lives of millions of individuals and families, and*
- 2) *there are many pathways of long-term recovery, and all are cause for celebration.*

Nowhere are these ideas more clearly manifested than in local and national Recovery Month activities.

This month, more than 100,000 individuals in recovery and their families, friends, and allies will participate in public recovery celebration events. Our faces and voices will offer living proof of long-term addiction recovery and will illustrate more than any scientific study the growing varieties of recovery experience. The sights and sounds of these events will convey the rainbow of colors, classes, cultures, and languages that make up the contemporary history of addiction recovery.

This month, recovering people will stand together—transcending all manner of differences in our addiction histories; our distinctive religious, spiritual, and secular pathways of recovery; and our diverse life circumstances. We will stand as a people with a shared past and a shared destiny declaring to all: “If we can heal, you can heal. If we and our families can heal, then neighborhoods and communities can heal. And if communities can heal, then the wounds of our country and the world can also heal.”

William White

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