

The Intelligencer.

H.C. Ogden, Publisher 1904-1943

Perry A. Nardo, General Manager
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Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Celebrate Recovery From Opioid Abuse

It has been more than a decade since opioid abuse exploded into an epidemic in West Virginia and the nation. Shady pain clinics, pill mills and unscrupulous doctors became “legal” drug dealers as they reaped as much profit as they could before government caught on.

For years, before we truly understood the powerful addiction associated with these pills, those who became addicted were looked down on by society. But today, as we learn more about this addiction, we understand that opioids do not discriminate, and that a friend or loved one can become addicted and see their lives overtaken by this drug.

An event Saturday in Wheeling celebrated those who have recovered from their addiction as Youth Services System Community Impact Coalition organized the “Day of Hope” at Centre Market.

“People can and do recover from substance abuse,” said Valery Staskey, substance abuse proj-

ect coordinator for YSS. “Recovery is both possible and joyful.”

Staskey is right: it’s easy to simply point to the deaths associated with opioid abuse, or to the economic and social ravage it has caused our communities and thousands of families. While it’s imperative that we understand the full story of how opioids are devastating our communities, we also *must* take the time to celebrate the success of those who beat this powerful drug. And it takes a community effort to see that happen.

“We have to care for our neighbors, and help them find their way to healing,” Rabbi Joshua Lief said during the ceremony.

Substance abuse and overdoses are a symptom of a much larger problem in our society. As we work to overcome the issues that lead to substance abuse, let us not forget to celebrate our friends and neighbors who overcome its grip. It’s one more way we can understand how truly to defeat this powerful foe.

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