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HUNDREDS IN RECOVERY FROM SUBSTANCE ABUSE TO RALLY AT STATE CAPITOL ON FRIDAY

More than 200 people in recovery from substance abuse addiction will rally at the state capitol Friday, Sept. 24, from noon to 5 p.m., to show legislators and others that “recovery works.”

Sponsored by the Oklahoma Citizen Advocates for Recovery and Treatment Association (OCARTA), the “Rally for Recovery” is an annual event held to encourage legislators, community leaders and all Oklahomans to focus on the solution of recovery, rather than the problem of addiction, said OCARTA Executive Director Donna Woods Bauer.

“Today, thousands of Oklahomans lead productive, healthy lives thanks to the hope and strength found through recovery,” Woods-Bauer said. “This event will allow the entire recovery community – those in recovery, their families and their allies – to speak with one voice, to knock down the barriers that discriminate against people in recovery and restrict the efforts of treatment

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programs. We are uniting to show Oklahoma that recovery from drug and alcohol addiction is a reality. Together, we will deliver an important message of hope – that ‘recovery works.’”

The event will begin at noon on the second floor rotunda with the invocation presented by Bishop Robert Taylor, followed by a color guard presentation by the Seminole Nations Color Guard. After the flag song and pledge of allegiance, vocalist Philip Bauer will sing the “National Anthem” and “Amazing Grace.” The opening ceremony also will include a “Sacred Hoop” performance, followed by a welcome from OCARTA.

At 12:30 p.m., keynote speaker Don Coyhis, founder and president of White Bison, Inc., also known as the “Wellbriety Movement,” will talk, followed at 1 p.m. with Secretary of State Susan Savage reading a proclamation declaring September “Oklahoma Recovery Month.”

At 1:15 p.m., fifth graders from Horace Mann Elementary will be recognized for their contributions to a coloring contest, “Too Smart to Start.” The top three winners will be presented trophies and ribbons will be awarded to honorable mention winners.

At 1:30 p.m., Sonny Scott, executive director of Norman Alcohol

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Information Center, will read letters from Gov. Brad Henry and Sen. Tom Cole supporting substance abuse recovery. Then, at 1:45 p.m., Ben Brown, deputy commissioner for substance abuse services at the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, will present a “Lifetime Achievement Award” to Father Dick Virtue.

The event will include a free lunch of sandwiches and other refreshments, and those attending will have a chance to network until the event ends at 5 p.m.

For more information about the event, contact Woods Bauer at 405-848-7555 or toll-free at 1-866-848-7555.

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