



Participants hold red and purple ribbon during Saturday's event.

Photos by Kevin Walker

Recovery still carries stigma

'Hope' event draws a dedicated few

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Kathy Holland's battle with substance abuse began when she was just 14.

She would frequent "drink houses" on her way to and from school. By the time she was a high school junior, she had graduated to smoking marijuana. She was booted from school when officials found the drug in her possession.

After earning a GED, Holland, then 18, moved to New York City, supporting herself and her

newfound cocaine habit by dancing in seedy clubs. By the early 1990s, her drug habit and the bad choices it

caused her to make had earned her 11 separate jail arrests and three stints in prison. She had had enough.

Holland, who had moved back to Winston-Salem, started working with a local recovery program. She has been clean for 12 years. Although she is a new person, Holland doesn't want to completely bury her old self. She shares her story openly, hoping to inspire others, uplift and put a human face on a widespread problem.

"I am not proud of it, but it was a journey that I took," she said. "That was who I used to be. I am not that person anymore."

Holland was among a small group of people who took part Saturday in Hands Across the Plaza, an event sponsored by the Coalition for Drug Abuse Prevention to mark National Recovery Month. The plan was to have dozens, even hundreds, of people in recovery and their families and friends to come to Corpening Plaza to celebrate hope, unity and resolve.

Organizers brought enough purple (representing recovery) and red (representing prevention) ribbon — which participants clung to like a chain during the short service — to stretch a city block. But only about a dozen people showed; most of them were spe-



Kathy Holland holds her grandniece during the ceremony.

cial invited guests not in recovery. While organizers surmised that competing events kept some from attending, they also conceded that shame kept many people away.

"It is a shame-based disease," said Cecelia Westmoreland, the chair of the coalition's board. She says that there are countless people in recovery who would never be suspected by their friends, co-workers and neighbors. But she says as long as those people choose to keep that part of their lives private, there will always be a stigma attached to substance abuse.

Westmoreland is not just talking the talk. Today, she runs New Dawn Recovery in Yadkinville, but she fought a more than 15-year-long battle with substance abuse, beginning when she was a teenager. She hopes the day will come when substance abuse is seen like any other disease. No one is ashamed to say he or she has diabetes or heart disease, she said.

"It is a disease like any other," she said. "And without treatment, you will die."

The Coalition for Drug Abuse Prevention is a partnership of several local agencies, professional and individuals. Helping those in recovery is one part of its mission, but as its title implies, prevention is even a greater charge. The

coalition works with local schools on several programs aimed at educating young people about the dangers of substance abuse.

County Commissioner Dave Plyler, who attended Saturday's ceremony, applauded the coalition for its work. Pointing toward the nearby, overcrowded Forsyth County Detention Center, Plyler said that most of the inmates there have some kind of drug charges. Prevention is key, he said, to keep others from a similar fate. Plyler told the group to not fret over the small turnout but celebrate the concept.

"It is not how many people you get. It is the determination of an idea," he said.

Also as part of National Recovery Month, the coalition is screening "Saving Carrick," a recent Dateline NBC special about a family's struggles with a drug-addicted child. The program will be shown tonight (Sept. 22) from 7-9 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Summit Avenue.

News Clips

Compiled from staff wire and submitted reports

Old Salem gets grant

Old Salem has received a \$20,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The money will be used to improve Old Salem's interpretation of history for school groups and to create new printed materials for school groups visiting Old Salem.

Sara Lee Apparel sale to benefit United Way

The public is invited to the annual Sara Lee Branded Apparel product sale on Saturday (Sept. 24) from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Madison Park parking lot at 5660 University Pkwy. All proceeds will benefit United Way of Forsyth County. The sale will feature great buys on apparel from Hanes, L'eggs, Champion, Playtex, Bali, Just My Size and more, with prices starting at \$1. Only cash and credit cards will be accepted (no checks).

800 volunteers needed for Special Olympics N.C. Fall Games

Special Olympics North Carolina will return to Winston-Salem for the 2005 SONC Fall Games presented by BB&T to be held Nov. 4-6, according to SONC President/CEO Keith L. Fishburne.

An estimated 800 volunteers are needed for positions that range from setting up tents and keeping score, to line judging and presenting medals. To volunteer, call 1-800-843-6276 and select option 4, or visit www.sonc.net. The registration deadline is Sept. 30. After this date volunteers will receive their assignments and training dates.

The Games will showcase the talents of nearly 1,200 athletes competing in bocce, bowling, golf, roller-skating, soccer and tennis. Competition will

take place at the following locations: Winston-Salem — AMF Winston-Salem Lanes, Creekside Lanes, Hine Park Soccer Complex, Reynolds Park Golf Course, Skate Haven Roller Rink, Wake Forest University Indoor Tennis Center; High Point — Bank of America at Piedmont Centre; Kernersville — Countryside Lanes.

All events of the Fall Games are free and open to the public.

Church and state discussion planned

The Winston-Salem Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State will meet on Tuesday, Sept. 27, in Room 302 of Wingate Hall, the Wake Forest University Divinity School, at 6:30 p.m. Melissa Rogers will speak on church and state issues.

Rogers is an attorney, currently executive director of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in Washington D.C., and former general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. She has written on such topics as faith-based initiatives, governmental aid for religious institutions, school prayer, and political activity of churches.

Wingate Hall is adjacent to Wait Chapel. There is parking on the northwest corner on Wake Forest Road. Enter the door on Wake Forest Road and take the elevator to the third floor.

Bridge competition to benefit Katrina relief

The Winston-Salem Kings and Queens Duplicate Bridge Club will sponsor a Katrina Relief Charity Game on Tuesday, Sept. 27. The event will be held at the Rupert Bell Recreation Center, 1501 Mt. Zion Place.

Registration will begin at 6 p.m., and the game will begin at 6:30 p.m.

The fee will be \$10 per person. Proceeds from this event will go to the American Bridge Association (ABA) Relief Fund — Katrina Victims. Contributions (players who will not be able to play) may be sent to the local club, or Mid-Atlantic Section (Mary Young, president), Charles W. Gadson will be the director-in-charge.

Norma Vincent (661-1104) is the club's treasurer, Irma Gadson is the secretary, and Rudolph V. Boone Sr. (767-4087) is the president.

All bridge players are invited to come and participate in this charity game.

Gallery Hop Oct. 7

The Downtown Art District Association will hold its First Friday Gallery Hop on Oct. 7 from 7-10 p.m. in the Arts District, around the intersection of Sixth and Trade streets.

The area features shops, galleries, studios and businesses that carry art, crafts and specialty items. The Yoga Gallery will have a bake sale during the Gallery Hop to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina. There will also be bins set up to collect food for the relief effort via the Second Harvest Food Bank.

I-40 lane closures

The N.C. Department of Transportation will temporarily reduce I-40 Business to one lane in each direction between Linville Road and U.S. 158 in Forsyth County beginning Friday (Sept. 23) at 9 p.m., weather permitting. The lane closures will be in place for approximately two months.

Wide-load vehicles are restricted during the closures and should use I-40 as an alternate route.

The closures are necessary for construction of the I-40 Business rehabilitation project.

NCDOT reminds motorists to watch signs for construction information, stay alert and obey the posted speed limit. Plan ahead before you leave by visiting the NCDOT Traveler Information Management Web site at www.ncsmartlink.org or call 511, the state's free travel information line for current travel conditions.

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Parents, kids asked to dine together

'Family Day' is Monday

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System.

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Coalition for Drug Abuse Prevention, in partnership with the city of Winston-Salem, Forsyth County Drug Treatment Courts, and the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse of Columbia University, will sponsor "Family Day: A Day to Eat Dinner With Your Children" on Monday (Sept. 26). This event is a national effort to promote parental encouragement as a simple, effective way to reduce youth substance abuse risk and raise healthier children.

Research shows that young people who do not eat with their families are 72 percent more likely to use tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs. Those who do eat dinner regularly with their families are 31 percent less likely to engage in these high-risk behaviors.

Sponsors have negotiated "Family Day" discounts and specials at several local restaurants and are distributing information about the event to all middle school students in the

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Where: Bowman Gray Stadium
When: Saturday, Sept. 24
Who: Staff Sgt. Carmichael, 659-1393

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