

# NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **New Jersey Rally for Recovery joins with A&E Network To build human recovery bridge on Brooklyn Bridge**

TRENTON ... (September 27 , 2008) – New Jersey’s Rally for Recovery 2008 secured a place in recovery history after it reached from Liberty State Park to Brooklyn, where New Jersey participants were ferried to help form a human bridge of recovery across the storied Brooklyn Bridge. Members of the state’s recovering community, their families, loved ones and supporters came to the event to join hands in spanning the bridge across East River, helping to create an image that appears destined to be a lasting impression of recovery.

This year’s rally – New Jersey’s seventh marking the many lives restored from addiction - was themed “Recovery Voices Count: Real People, Real Recovery” as part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association’s month-long recovery-oriented events. The inspiration for the human bridge of recovery came from A&E Network, which in recent years has produced several programs – “Intervention” and “The Cleaner” - related to addiction, treatment and recovery. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence and Friends of Addiction Recovery-New Jersey partnered with A&E in creating the event.

To make A&E’s vision a reality requires 2,000 people linking hands across the famous bridge into Manhattan, which is where Friends of Addiction Recovery-New Jersey and sister organizations from surrounding states come in. In recent years, the New Jersey Rally for Recovery has drawn nearly the number required itself. With members coming from Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut, there were more than enough participants to create the human recovery bridge.

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In addition to incorporating the Brooklyn Bridge into the event, the ferry ride from the New Jersey Shore passed the Statue of Liberty and travel along New York's skyline, creating a series of dramatic and symbolic backdrops for media coverage and for filming. The ferries departed from Liberty State Park dock at 7:30 a.m. The bridge of recovery will begin to form at approximately 9:30 a.m. as individuals join hands stretching across the Brooklyn Bridge and into Manhattan. All New Jersey participants in the Recovery Cruise will receive a commemorative T-shirt and will be served lunch on the return cruise to Liberty State Park, where the celebration will include a keynote delivered by author and New York Times columnist David Carr.

A&E Network has joined with National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence to have Recovery Delegates from each of the 50 states (and Washington, DC) to participate in the Recovery Rally. New Jersey has invited all 566 municipalities to send delegates to the rally, something it has done for the past two years.

Raquel Mazon Jeffers, director of New Jersey's Division of Addiction Services, said of this year's rally, "The annual rallies always unite people in order to raise awareness of the problems of substance abuse and raise the hopes that, together, we can help more people recover. But, I think this year, the rally is even more meaningful because the human bridge will serve as a powerful visual symbol for the community effort that is needed to support and sustain recovery throughout the state and region." The Rally demonstrates that addiction recovery is a reality, and gives hope to individuals and families still affected by the throes of addiction. It also offers those fortunate enough to be in recovery the chance to share in the recovery of others.

FOAR-NJ Community Organizer Jeanette Grimes, who has been involved in the planning of all the previous state rallies, said, "New Jersey's 2008 Rally for Recovery theme sums up the work of Friends of Addiction Recovery – New Jersey. Recovery Voices Count! Real People, Real Recovery. The original Recovery Walk has evolved into the Rally for Recovery! It has been our mission to educate the public about addiction recovery. This year's seventh annual New Jersey celebration made another bold statement about the work of those

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who have forged ahead in aiding in the decrease of stigma and the increase of celebrating recovery.”

With the great interest in this year’s Presidential Elections, voter registration was done on the ferry and also back at Liberty State Park as part of New Jersey’s Recovery Voices Count effort. The state was chosen along with nine others to build an addiction issues constituency, to educate both voters and candidates on addiction issues and to conduct a get out the vote drive on Election Day.

Following the human bridge on the Brooklyn Bridge, ferries brought the New Jersey participants back to Liberty State Park, where a program of music, guest speakers, including author and New York Times Columnist David Carr, and the third annual Battle of the Banners, which reflected the theme of the day.

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