

# 25 Years of Reaching to the World of Treatment and Recovery

By Autumn Kramer, NAADAC Director of Operations



September 2014 will inaugurate the 25th Anniversary of *National Recovery Month*, officially sponsored by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Over the past 25 years, *National Recovery Month* has promoted the benefits of prevention, treatment, and recovery. *National Recovery Month* marks a time to spread the message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover! NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, is proud to host the official launch of the 25th Anniversary of SAMHSA's *National Recovery Month*.

The theme for 2014 *National Recovery Month* is "Join the Voices for Recovery: Speak Up, Reach Out," and is intended to help spread the message that recovery is a reality, substance use, and mental health disorders need to be openly discussed, those in recovery need to speak out, and others should be encouraged to reach out for help. Each year, SAMHSA asks a recovery month partner to host the official *National Recovery Kickoff Luncheon*. NAADAC, the Association for Addiction

Professionals, was asked to host the 2014 *National Recovery Month Kickoff Luncheon*, due, in part, to the long and close history NAADAC holds with *National Recovery Month* as the founding and original sponsor of *National Recovery Month's* precursor, *Treatment Works!* in 1989. This year holds extra significance to NAADAC, as it also celebrates its 40th Anniversary of proudly serving the needs and interests of the addiction profession. Originally founded in 1974 as the National Association of Alcoholism Counselors and Trainers, NAADAC has since played a central role in elevating the quality of addiction treatment and recovery in the United States through its advocacy, credentialing, and education and training activities.

NAADAC has partnered with Entertainment Industries Council (EIC), Young People in Recovery (YPR), the Association of Recovery Schools (ARS), and SAMHSA, to host the special 25th Anniversary *National Recovery Month Kickoff Luncheon* on September 4th, 2014, in Washington, D.C. from 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm.

## Brief History: From Treatment Works! to National Recovery Month

NAADAC has a long intimate history with *National Recovery Month*. In 1988, NAADAC began to conceptualize a campaign that would recognize the hard work of individuals in the treatment field. By 1989, NAADAC along with partners on the Ad Hoc Coalition on National Alcohol and Drug Issues, led the effort to bring together an alliance of government and private treatment organizations to declare September as National Alcohol and Drug Treatment Open House Celebration, and referred to as Treatment Month, with the theme *Treatment Works!*

The purpose of Treatment Month was to educate the public and national leaders that "...treatment is an effective means to decrease the demand for alcohol and drug abuse..." The first kickoff celebration occurred on August 28, 1989 at the Alcohol and Drug Problems Association's 40th anniversary and National Conference in Washington, DC. Groups were encouraged to participate in Treatment Month by highlighting their treatment services and programs by holding open houses and rallies, scheduling press conferences, circulating literature, and obtaining proclamations to disseminate information with special events (September Declared as National Treatment Month, 1989)



Through its success, Treatment Month evolved and became *Treatment Works!* Through the 1990s, the *Treatment Works!* campaign continued to grow and became widely recognized through

NAADAC and NAADAC's affiliates. In 1991, Suzanne Somers was invited to speak, shared her family's story of addiction and recovery, and delivered the message that treatment works. *Treatment Works!* continued to flourish, and, in 1996, NAADAC passed the leadership role on to SAMHSA/CSAT to help continue the national growth of the campaign.



The focus of *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Month* was expanded to include the accomplishments of individuals in recovery, their friends, and families.

By 2002, all 50 states planned and held events, and the first Recovery Month Presidential Proclamation was signed declaring September as *National Recovery Month*. Since the signing of the 2002 Presidential Proclamation, all following United States Presidents have declared September as *National Recovery Month*. In 2003, Recovery Month received its own website [www.recoverymonth.gov](http://www.recoverymonth.gov).

Keeping with the times, SAMHSA launched a Recovery Month YouTube channel and Facebook page in 2009. The name of National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Month officially changed to *National Recovery Month* in 2011 to include all aspects of behavioral health.

Since 1988, Recovery Month has continued to grow into a large, national and multi-national observance. In 2013, *National Recovery Month* grew to more than 100 planning partners, 114 proclamations issued, 282,407,947 media impressions, 214,802 mobile website visits, and thousands of new social media loyalists (SAMHSA, 2014). Come join the movement!



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NAADAC and these outstanding partners will look through the history of the recovery movement and SAMHSA's *National Recovery Month*, celebrate NAADAC's 40th Anniversary, and honor the achievements of those who through their personal and professional lives have carried the message of hope for long-term recovery from addiction. Each of these organization has put in many hours of work to spread the message of *National Recovery Month* that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people do recover!

SAMHSA will launch the September 4th kickoff with a press conference, during which it will release the latest findings published in the *SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. The *National Recovery Month Kickoff Luncheon* will immediately follow, featuring the SAMHSA annual community event awards, approximately 160 high-profile guests and political leaders, keynote speakers, and a speaker panel, and will be streamed live through multiple outlets. In addition to celebrating the larger history of addiction treatment and recovery in the United States, we will celebrate many of the milestones within NAADAC's 40 years of rich history as a leader in the profession.

The event will also serve as the initial launch of the video trilogy, *Looking Back at Addiction, Looking Forward to Recovery*, with a debut of the first video: "The History of NAADAC and the Addiction Profession." The video trilogy will look back through the history of the recovery movement and honor the achievements of those who have carried the message of hope for long-term recovery from addiction through their personal and professional lives.

NAADAC and its partners are honored to host the *National Recovery Month Kickoff Luncheon* and encourage all members and constituents to

get involved in hosting a recovery month event. If you are interested in hosting a recovery month event, visit [www.recoverymonth.gov](http://www.recoverymonth.gov) to download the *National Recovery Month* toolkit, featuring materials to help plan your event from start to finish. The recovery month website also features a directory of recovery month planning partners to get involved with to help spread the recovery month message. Remember: You don't have to limit your *National Recovery Month* celebrations to September; recovery month events can happen all year round!

Let's continue to build on the last 25 years of the recovery movement, where we have paved the way for recovery to enter into the mainstream of the larger national community. Working together over the last three decades has made possible what many struggle to find to be a truth every day; that treatment works, and recovery is possible. Be a part of sustaining the legacy!

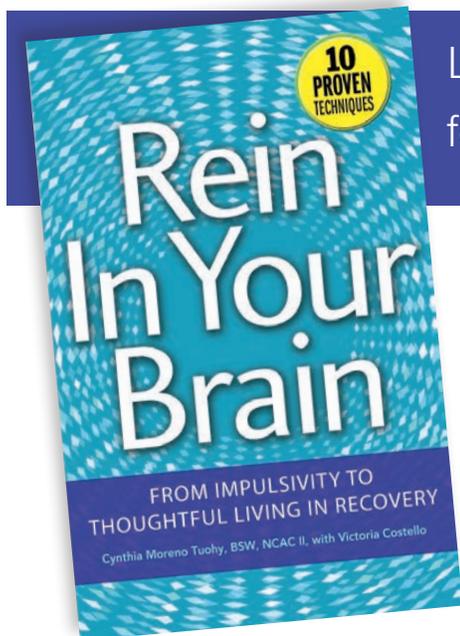
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- September Declared as National Treatment Month. (1989, March/April). *The Counselor*.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2014). *Recovery Month 2013 Final Report Overview*.



Autumn Kramer is the Director of Operation for NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals. She directs NAADAC operational systems, processes and policies to ensure smooth support and adaptation by the organization. Kramer also works to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of all NAADAC Support Services. Her current projects include the implementation, adaptation and transition of NAADAC's database, website, customer care systems and e-correspondence systems.

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