

JOURNAL COMMUNITY



FIGHTING ADDICTION

FAVOR seeks to give
voice to those in recovery

The members of FAVOR intend to put a face on addiction recovery – and a voice, too.

If they get their way, long gone will be the days of silent suffering, and the faces of those who are used to sneaking in the basement doors of churches for 12-Step meetings will become well known.

FAVOR, or Faces and Voices of Recovery, is Greenville's newest addiction recovery program.

Two weeks ago, FAVOR packed the Gunther Theatre at the Peace Center for a preview of the film "The Anonymous People." Recovering addicts lined the aisles, cheering the film's message of activism within the recovery community and without.

The world of recovery has changed and is coming out of the closet, they say.

"We conduct ourselves in accordance with the 12 Traditions in regard to anonymity," said Jane Pressly, interim executive director of FAVOR Greenville. "We can and do say we are in long-term recovery; we don't reveal anyone else. That's up to them."

And there are a lot of "them" in this country; 23.5 million people in active recovery, by one estimate, Pressly said. "I went to a math major and we worked out what that number would be for Greenville – it's 29,000 people."

Put another way, 29,000 voters plus their families, who intend to put their weight behind issues that affect them.

There are another 36,700 people in Greenville County who are currently in active addiction.

FAVOR was founded in Greenville in 2004 after people in recovery locally

FAVOR continued on PAGE 20



Green Travel Tips

- Stay at hotels that are eco-friendly (visit www.greenhotels.com for options)
- Use a digital camera instead of a disposable camera
- When renting a car, choose a hybrid or the smallest car
- Walk or rent a bicycle while sightseeing
- Use mobile phone applications to search for directions, restaurants and tourist attractions instead of purchasing guidebooks or maps
- Reuse plastic bags or pack your own cloth or string bag to carry any purchases



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FAVOR continued from PAGE 19

heard of a new group that advocated activism on recovery issues. It was mainly located in the North and Midwest, as was the original 12-Step recovery program that started the whole concept of sobriety as a way of life.

“We intend to be a gateway for people getting out of treatment,” Pressly said. “They now have a place to go to get

information and help in learning to live clean and sober lives.”

The organization recently completed a \$1.5 million fund drive and purchased their “welcome to recovery” center at 355 Woodruff Road.

Pressly is many years away from active addiction. Many of the active FAVOR members are recovering people. Others are the people who suffer and watch as their loved ones drift away or die due to addiction.

Steve Grant is one of those people. Addiction cost him both his sons. He isn’t a FAVOR member, but his Chris and Kelly’s HOPE Foundation is dedicated to working with people not yet in recovery in the hope they can prevent some of the 100 deaths a day from drug overdoses in this country.

The state has a need for young people measured in thousands and not nearly enough low-cost public beds available.

“We don’t do nearly enough to help young people in South Carolina,” Grant said.

FAVOR is currently pushing to start a high school recovery charter school, Pressly said. “It would be a safe place for young people to be sober; a place where peer pressure doesn’t push kids to drink and drug.”

Surrounding states all have addiction-safe college dorms and high schools for young people in recovery. South Carolina has none.

Stewart Spinks is a major contributor to FAVOR. His family’s issues with addiction stretch across decades and generations.

Some chemical changes in the brain only exist in addictive people, Spinks said, and the addict doesn’t ask for those genetic predispositions.

“I think it is important for people to understand that addiction isn’t a moral lapse, but a real disease with symptoms and physiological signs,” he said.

People in recovery are equally trapped by society’s preconceived notions about drug and alcohol abuse, FAVOR members say.

One of the most popular misconceptions is carnage on the highways due to teen drinking, they say. To be sure, drunk driving costs society billions of dollars each year. However, drunk driving isn’t the only alcohol-related killer.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving recently reviewed 2010 data from the FBI, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Centers for



PHOTO BY TESHIA MCKINLEY PHOTOGRAPHY 2011

Disease Control and Prevention on deaths related to underage alcohol use.

According to an April report in USA Today, MADD estimated 32 percent of these deaths were traffic fatalities; 30 percent were homicides, 14 percent suicides, 9 percent alcohol poisonings and 15 percent other causes. The common factor is 100 percent of those young people are dead, and alcohol played a role.

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FAVOR FACES AND VOICES OF RECOVERY GREENVILLE

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in active recovery, in the US, by one estimate. That number for Greenville would be **29,000 PEOPLE**

Another **36,700 PEOPLE**
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\$1.5 MILLION
raised by FAVOR from a fund drive to purchase their “welcome to recover” center on Woodruff Road.

