As one of the founding partners of the September as National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, now Recovery Month, NCADD and the NCADD National Network of Affiliates host numerous recovery and awareness events. For the past several years, NCADD has worked with A&E and its Recovery Project in planning and sponsoring a National Recovery Rally, the first two years in New York City and in 2010, 2011 in Philadelphia and 2012 in Detroit, in conjunction with NCADD Affiliates from the area. In 2009, the NYC Recovery Rally attracted a crowd of 10,000 and the 2010 and 2011 Rallies, sponsored by NCADD Affiliate, the Council of Southeast Pennsylvania/PRO-ACT, drew a crowd of more than 15,000!

When those who suffer from alcoholism and drug dependence first start to get sober, many of them feel that their lives are over--"I'll never have fun again," "My life will be so boring" are thoughts that cross the minds of plenty of newcomers to sobriety as they take their first tentative steps in recovery.

How wrong they are.

Living a life in long-term recovery is filled with activities, events, and plenty of fun. It doesn't take long before the newly sober discover that those in recovery "aren't a glum lot." Having survived a near-fatal brush with alcohol or drugs, people in recovery often insist on enjoying life.

As AA's basic text notes, *"Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of our past. But why shouldn't we laugh? We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others."*

Social connections are essential in recovery, and throughout the recovery community there are dances, picnics, and gatherings of all sorts where individuals and family members and their friends can relax in a sober social atmosphere and enjoy each other's company.

In addition, many who are in recovery feel a responsibility to carry the message of Hope, Help and Healing and speak out and share their experiences with the media, civic groups, community leaders, policy makers and the general public in the communities where they live (see "Advocacy With Anonymity").

On May 8, 1976, in Washington, DC, NCADD hosted **Operation Understanding: NCADD's Challenge to Stigma**, as the first large scale, historic public celebration of recovery which received extensive worldwide press, radio and TV coverage! Fifty-three public figures, leaders in their field, stood up and spoke openly about their recovery in an effort to reduce stigma and increase public understanding and support for alcoholism as a treatable disease. A partial list of participants included:

- Astronaut Buzz Aldrin--second man to walk on the moon
- U.S. Senator Harold E. Hughes
- U. S. Congressman Wilbur D. Mills
- Actor, Dick Van Dyke--star of TV, movies and stage
- Actor, Garry Moore--star of TV's "To Tell the Truth"
- Actress Mercedes McCambridge
- Baseball star Don Newcombe--Brooklyn Dodgers
- Baseball star Ryne Duren--New York Yankees
- Marty Mann--NCADD Founder
- R. Brinkley Smithers--President, The Christopher D. Smithers Foundation
- William G. Borchert--Producer, "My Name Is Bill W" movie
- John Mooney, MD--Founder/Director, Willingway Hospital
- Adolph J. Sullivan--Standard Oil Corporation
- Thomas P. Pike--Chairman, Fluor Corporation and NCADD Board Chair
- Actor Dana Andrews--star of TV, movies and stage
- Actor Johnny Grant--star of KTLA-TV

One reporter was quoted as saying, **"Operation Understanding was probably the most dramatic mass attack on alcoholism we have ever seen in this country."** *Newsweek* later called "Operation Understanding one of the most important news stories of the '70s!

Believe In Recovery**!**