The Other 20 Million: The Story of the Stigma

Heroes in Recovery is a grassroots movement ignited by Foundations Recovery Network and the widespread community of those who are in recovery from addiction and co-occurring disorders. While around 23 million people each year need help for addiction, only three million actually receive treatment. This is often due to the overwhelming stigma that exists around acknowledging substance abuse and mental health issues. The goal of Heroes in Recovery is to reach the other 20 million people through inspirational stories of those who have been there, uplifting events that celebrate recovery, and a supportive online community where practical information and encouragement are shared freely. At its core, Heroes is about breaking down barriers to treatment and encouraging those who are staying sober.

The Momentum of the Movement

Heroes in Recovery began in the summer of 2011, and the website launched in autumn of that year. By the end of 2012, more than 300 people hailing from diverse backgrounds and a variety of locations across the United States had shared their stories. Today, Heroes in Recovery has grown into an engaged sober community that empowers people to get involved, give back and live healthy, active lives. Through events across the country, we seek to inspire a sense of community wherever we can. We also have a select group of people who have been designated as “lead advocates” for the cause. These individuals take on the responsibility of writing down others’ stories, blogging on the Heroes site, promoting events and sharing the message of Heroes, whether in their local communities or around the nation.

Social change starts with vision and action. It begins with a message passed from one person to another, until a conviction becomes a cause.
**Changing the World, One Story at a Time**

The lie of addiction is that you are alone in your disease. The truth is that there are millions of people who continue to wage a heroic battle against substance abuse and co-occurring mental health issues each day. By holding our own gatherings and sponsoring other movements, Heroes in Recovery is creating community one event at a time. From 6K runs to sober celebrations and unique educational events, we partner with like-minded organizations that highlight sobriety and align with our mission. The Heroes movement began with strong momentum, but it’s only as healthy as the community that supports it. That’s why we continue to encourage those in recovery to share their stories at HeroesinRecovery.com so that others who are struggling with addiction can realize that there is life on the other side of drugs and alcohol. We look forward to a future of inspiring others to get help, encouraging those who are getting treatment, and celebrating with those who are winning the fight to stay clean and sober. We believe it takes a heroic effort to maintain recovery day in and day out, and we want to prove that courage and hope are contagious.

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**Heroes 6K Races**

It started with a simple motto: “Join the Movement. Run the Race. Break the Stigma.” During National Recovery Month in 2011, Heroes in Recovery hosted a 6K run in Leiper’s Fork, Tennessee, as a way to inspire a sense of community in the Nashville area. The race sold out with 250 participants and nearly 100 volunteers turning out to enjoy the sober fun. The idea soon took off. Since that inaugural event, we have held races in cities across the United States. Florida, California, Georgia, Colorado and Tennessee all host annual Heroes 6K races, with the number of races and participants continuing to grow each year. We are also hosting similar events, such as surf competitions, to support the cause of recovery.

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**About Foundations Recovery Network**

Foundations Recovery Network is recognized as the premier leader in integrated treatment for co-occurring addiction and mental health concerns. Our award-winning model combines evidence-based addiction treatment with innovative therapies for emotional and mental health to address co-occurring disorders effectively. Results demonstrate that FRN patients are more than twice as likely to maintain sobriety one year post-treatment compared to those who attend traditional programs.