

Celebration Recovery

by Michael Schwartz, M.D.

Irwin was a cousin who struggled for years with a chronic mental illness. After being correctly diagnosed with Tourette's Disorder, Irwin finally received definitive treatment which significantly alleviated his symptoms. However, he was never able to achieve his goals - to live and work in his community and to have opportunities for a more complete and fulfilling life.

The Irwin Foundation is a designed to validate Irwin's dream that recovery is possible and to commemorate his courage and determination to create a better future for those recovering from mental illness.

- ★ The Recovery Vision promotes hope, respect, resiliency, and self-determination.
- ★ Recovery is overcoming the stigma and limitations often associated with mental illness.
- ★ As individuals recover, friends, family, interests, and work once again enrich their lives.

As founders of Celebration Recovery, The Irwin Foundation is dedicated to promoting the Recovery Vision for all those with mental illness.

Celebration Recovery receives funding from public and private sources.

Celebration Recovery Events –

**Please visit our website
www.irwinfoundation.org
to see details about our
upcoming and prior events.**

How to Host a Celebration Recovery Event –

Celebration Recovery is a true community event with support from many local organizations. The process of planning for each event is an important part of the event itself. Planning builds coalitions in communities and expands networking for more informed understanding of mental illness.

Consumers, family members, friends, providers, and community organizations take an active role in contributing to the planning, organization, and the program format of each event. Celebration Recovery offers an opportunity to honor and recognize the achievements and talents of consumers and the efforts of those who have helped to inspire the Recovery Vision.



**For more information, visit our
web site: www.irwinfoundation.org**

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Why is Celebration Recovery Important?

The Irwin Foundation

What is Celebration Recovery?

Celebration Recovery offers a unique opportunity to celebrate the good news that individuals with mental illness can and do recover.

Sponsored by The Irwin Foundation, Celebration Recovery is a festive educational and advocacy event. Celebration Recovery brings together people who are in recovery, family, friends, service providers, and the broader, caring community. The result is a gala celebration - an afternoon or evening of music, dancing, food, inspirational talks, and fellowship. There are games, talent shows, exhibits, and consumer led activities for all.



Expect Recovery!

"...For me, it's all about recovery and moving forward. I used to think of myself as mentally ill or schizophrenic or manic-depressive and that was how I lived my life - like I WAS my illness. As I began to recover and learn that I had potential for much more, I began to think of myself as a person with an illness in my brain..."

Diana Kern

- ★ Recovery is now recognized as a reality for persons with mental illness. Individuals are able to regain the opportunity to have a more fulfilling life as their symptoms lessen and their illness no longer assumes a defining role in their life.
- ★ The message of hope, optimism, personal choice and responsibility, empowerment, and independence replaces the stigma and negative stereotypes associated with mental illness. "Shame " and "fear of exposure " are among the reasons why over 50 percent of those with mental illness often "give up" and do not seek treatment and services.
- ★ Celebration Recovery helps improve public awareness so that those with mental illness can benefit from encouragement, support, and treatment to help achieve their potential for a more satisfying and productive life.

The 2003 Report of the federally sponsored **President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health** has called for a major transformation in the mental health delivery system to overcome the obstacles to recovery and to continue to spread the word that people should EXPECT to recover. Celebration Recovery provides a major role in helping to achieve the goals of this Recovery Vision.

Who we are...

The Irwin Foundation is a nonprofit organization that promotes recovery-focused community and educational programs and recognizes all those participating in the Recovery Vision - the individuals in recovery as well as all those who strive to ensure that everyone has a chance to recover from mental illness.

Since 2001, The Irwin Foundation has celebrated recovery in venues from coast to coast, including: Dallas; Austin; Cleveland and Akron, Ohio; Chicago; Orange County and San Jose, California; Pittsburgh; Bridgeport and New London, Connecticut; and Boston.

Our "celebrations" have been held in parks, convention centers, hotels, catering halls, and in the vestibule of the Massachusetts State House. They have included consumers, families, friends, peer support groups, service providers, public officials, members of the local business community, and mental health organizations across the country. They have highlighted the "voices of recovery" to provide hope and inspiration for all those with mental illness.

"Recovery is a triumph of the human spirit over illness and suffering. This triumph deserves to be celebrated."

- Michael Schwartz, M.D.