



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY GOES PURPLE FOR RECOVERY MONTH

UNIONTOWN, PA - Fayette County citizens might notice a colorful change to downtown Uniontown's skyline this month.

As part of a joint initiative between the Fayette County Commissioners and Axiom Family Counseling Services Inc. of Uniontown, the Fayette County Courthouse's historic clock tower on East Main Street in Uniontown has turned purple in honor of National Recovery Month. Sponsored by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), National Recovery Month is an annual observance held every September, aimed at educating Americans that support and treatment can enable those with mental and substance use disorders to live healthy and rewarding lives.

Axiom Drug and Alcohol Supervisor Brian Reese, who previously worked for the Fayette County Drug and Alcohol Commission, said September is something he's always looked forward to during his 26 years in the industry. "During this time, Axiom would like to emphasize that recovery is possible. We recognize all of those that have battled and recovered, and all of those still struggling today," Reese said. "Purple combines the calm stability of blue and the fierce energy of red. It symbolizes the acceptance of the battle and the power to recover. Recovery is courage, dignity and integrity on a daily basis."

Reese, a Fayette County resident, said Axiom traditionally works with local drug and alcohol organizations to host various events during Recovery Month, such as awareness walks and balloon releases. "In years past, we've always done things directly involving our clients. Unfortunately, because of the Coronavirus, we had to change our approach this year," he said. "There's excellent treatment available in Fayette County, and recovery is happening. Our goal is for people to see the clock tower shining bright purple at night and take it as a beacon of hope."

In addition to turning the faces of the tower's four clocks purple, Axiom officials will visit the courthouse at 10 a.m. Sept. 14, to place purple banners and ribbons on its grounds. At that time, Fayette County Commissioners Dave Lohr, Chairman; Vince Vicites and Scott Dunn will present the visitors with a National Recovery Month proclamation on the courthouse steps, doubling down on their commitment to helping citizens recover from addiction and other health issues.

Commissioner Vicites said he's excited to take the lead on turning the courthouse purple, signifying Fayette County's continued and unwavering support for National Recovery Month. "Fayette County has one of the strongest recovery programs in Southwestern Pennsylvania, and we must continue to raise awareness of this effort," Vicites said. "Organizations like Axiom, the Drug and Alcohol Commission and so many more are fighting day in and day out to ensure all our citizens have the best chance possible to lead happy, healthy and productive lives. We should support them in all endeavors."

Commissioner Dunn said his goal has always been to make Fayette County a better place to live, play, work and raise a family - and having a drug-free community and environment is important to achieving that goal for many reasons. "First, it's a severe health risk to the individual addicted. Second, it tears families apart. Many local families now find themselves having the unexpected task of supporting their grandchildren or other family members," Dunn said. "Some of these families are not in the financial position to absorb these added expenses. Third, it improves the wellbeing of families, friends, coworkers, employers and communities."

Dunn said he hopes citizens see the purple display and take away the message that “addiction affects everybody, either directly or indirectly. Many of the societal ills, including crime, blight and poverty, can be directly tied to addiction” he said. “We need to continue our efforts in the areas of education and recovery to help improve our communities and develop healthier lifestyles.”

Commissioner Lohr said, in order to keep Fayette County growing, we must “intentionally focus on encouraging healthy, drug-free citizens. Recovery Month is all about helping achieve that goal,” Lohr said. “Our partnership with Axiom will help to remind our residents that substance use treatment and mental health services can help them to live healthy and rewarding lives. I’m proud that Fayette County is helping to celebrate recovery.”

Axiom Director Julie Krizner said the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant increases in drug and alcohol use over the last six months. “I think, especially now more than ever, there are a lot of hard things hitting people in quarantine, so they’re turning to some negative coping mechanisms,” Krizner said. “We want to acknowledge that if someone is having issues; developing an addiction; maybe even relapsed or stumbled, you can keep fighting on. Help is available, and recovery is possible.” Krizner said approximately 87 percent of people who seek help from Axiom remain active in treatment.

For more information or to seek assistance, visit www.axiomfamilycounseling.com.

To learn more about National Recovery Month and how you can get involved, visit www.recoverymonth.gov.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.info.

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