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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Winners of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Celebrate Recovery Challenge Announced**

MONTGOMERY – ADMH is pleased to announce that Wallace State Community College's Human Services Department, the Heads-up Campus Prevention Program and Mental Healthcare of Cullman were chosen as the joint winners of the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Celebrate Recovery Challenge. Their *Mental Health & Addiction Recovery Matters* events were chosen by mental health stakeholders and the general public as the event that best embodied the purpose of Recovery Month by increasing awareness and decreasing stigma.

Eight events were entered in the Challenge, which drew more than 5,400 votes. Dr. Beverly Bell-Shambley, associate commissioner for the Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, said, "We are proud of statewide recognition initiatives celebrating recovery. Congratulations to Wallace State Community College's Human Services Program, the Heads-Up Campus Prevention Program and Mental Healthcare of Cullman – the 2013 Celebrate Recovery Challenge winners. We also want to thank those who hosted events and entered, as well as everyone who voted, for making this Celebrate Recovery Challenge a success."

Approximately 350 participants attended the groups' two recovery events. WSCC's Human Services Department kicked off recovery festivities with a luncheon and a student-led NA group. After the meal, a student facilitated the NA group, and shared his struggle with addiction and personal story of recovery.

In addition, all three organizations sponsored a booth at the WSCC Healthy Living Street Festival on campus. Mental Healthcare of Cullman provided a hallucination simulation of schizophrenia to educate attendees about what a person diagnosed with schizophrenia may experience on a daily basis. Fatal Vision Impairment Goggles were also distributed to simulate impairment and to prevent the use of alcohol and other drugs. Students distributed green mental health awareness ribbons, decorated the booth, designed "Mental Health Matters" T-shirts and solicited door prizes. Questions about treatment, recovery and referrals were also addressed.

Organizations that hosted Recovery Month events were encouraged to enter by submitting a description of their event and pictures. Submissions were accepted October 1-11. Voting took place October 15-20 at ADMH's website. The winning organizations will be highlighted on the ADMH website for the next year. They will also receive a Certificate of Recognition from Governor Robert Bentley and have a picture taken with the governor.

The Celebrate Recovery Challenge was hosted by ADMH as a component of Alabama's celebration of National Recovery Month, held annually during the month of September. Sponsored by SAMHSA, Recovery Month seeks to promote the societal benefits of prevention, treatment, and recovery from mental illnesses and substance use disorders. Raising awareness is a crucial component of Recovery Month, and organizations throughout Alabama have traditionally hosted events statewide to celebrate the observance and help promote its message.

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*For more information about the Celebrate Recovery Challenge and the winning submission, visit ADMH's website at [www.mh.alabama.gov/CelebrateRecoveryChallengeInfo.aspx](http://www.mh.alabama.gov/CelebrateRecoveryChallengeInfo.aspx).*