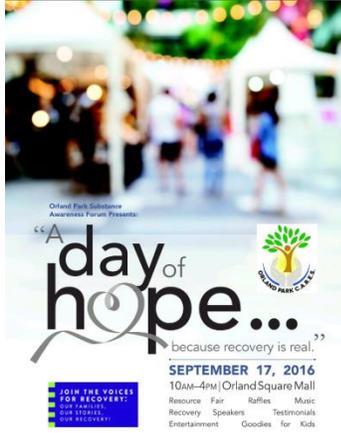


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Orland Park Substance Awareness Forum Hosts "A Day of Hope"



The Orland Park Substance Awareness Forum (OPSAF) will host "A Day of Hope ... because recovery is real" resource fair at Orland Square Mall on Saturday, September 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event will include hourly raffles, music, recovery speakers, testimonials, entertainment and give aways.

Created by Orland Park Mayor Dan McLaughlin in 2014, OPSAF is a multi-disciplinary group of agencies that works together to establish community wide resources for those dealing with substance abuse and addiction.

"Like communities across the country, the Orland Park area was seeing an increase in the use of addictive drugs, especially heroin," McLaughlin explained. "We called on agencies

throughout the region to come together and this group has gone above and beyond to share their areas of expertise and create programs and events tailored for anyone who is facing addiction issues."

The month of September is Substance Awareness Recovery Month nationwide, designated by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. At the September 6th Orland Park Village Board Meeting, McLaughlin proclaimed September as recovery month in the Village of Orland Park encouraging everyone "to promote comprehensive substance awareness, prevention, treatment and recovery efforts."

Pastor Ron Ovitt of Empower Ministry is coordinating the Day of Hope for the group. A recovery coach and author of "Emotional Relearning," Ovitt has a full schedule planned for the resource fair.

"We will have speakers, live music, people giving testimonials, things for the kids --- something for everyone," Ovitt said. "We invite everyone to visit the upper level near Carson's at Orland Square on September 17 to see the many resources available for those facing addition or celebrating recovery. Recovery is not a disease --- it's the cure."

The schedule opens at 10 a.m. with local recording artist Maron and the New Hope Band. Ovitt will be the event's first speaker. The Salvation Army Choir performs at 11 a.m. followed by a speaker. At 11:30 a.m. a youth band from King Music Studio will perform followed by Presence Health Speaker Anthony Fieder. Orland Park's Century Junior High Choir will perform at 12 p.m.

Rachel Ridge, also a member of OPSAF, will speak at 12 p.m. The community relations coordinator at Rosecrance, Ridge is a licensed clinical social worker and certified alcohol and drug counselor. Ridge will be followed by a testimony from Maron with a House of Music band performing at 1:30 p.m. A second House of Music band performs at 2 p.m. with both shows followed by a speaker from Guildhaus. At 3 p.m., Jim Magera will provide the musical entertainment and share his testimony.

Further information about the Orland Park Substance Awareness Forum is available at www.opcares.net.