



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Deann Jepson
(816) 235-6984 (wk)/(816) 509-9177 (cell)
jepsond@umkc.edu

Earl Cobbins, Sr. – An extraordinary personal journey supports others through Saturday's *Walk for Recovery*

Kansas City, MO, September 7, 2011 – The Earl Cobbins, Sr. of today is a successful, busy Kansas City area businessman. He not only oversees an auto dealership and repair shop, but also runs a Sober 1 House of Hope. However, there is much more to his story.

Looking back, Earl has come a long way to get to where he is today. Cobbins points to 1999-2000 as the lowest point in his life. During this time, while battling substance abuse and mental illness, he lost a 6 figure job; became homeless; and, most importantly, lost everyone close to him, including his wife through divorce.

Fortunately, Earl sought help and received treatment through Swope Health Services. Swope connected him to a psychiatrist who Earl credits today as helping him make a major turn in his life. He also discovered strength to manage his addiction and mental illness with professional counseling and medication. In addition, Swope was able to assist Earl with applying for housing through the Shelter Plus Care program.

Earl says he knew he was on the road to recovery when he stepped foot into his new home, instead of struggling every night to survive on the street. It was a major relief, and these positive steps gradually opened up communication with his family again. It took three years in supported housing for Earl to get back on his feet both physically and mentally. He secured stable employment once again, and then became reunited with his family. His rise to becoming a successful businessman again began to grow.

Earl has demonstrated exemplary courage and commitment to overcoming the challenges in his life, and as his life stabilized, Earl felt the need to give back to the community, focusing his attention and resources on individuals struggling with substance abuse. Earl knew housing was the most critical component in his recovery, so he formed a not-for-profit organization called Sober 1 House of Hope. Sober 1 provides supported housing to more than 22 men in recovery and operates an aftercare program with 75 participants. In the six years of its operation, Sober 1 has helped over 300 men in recovery. These homes provide structure and education for men dealing with such financial issues and healthy boundary setting with family and friends.

First Call
(816) 361-1455
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ATTC National Office
(816) 235-6982
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(816) 737-881-1400
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(573) 635-6669
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To complete the circle of care and support, Earl also provides job training and employment opportunities at his car dealership and repair shop to the men of Sober 1. Earl recognizes that stable housing and meaningful employment are the foundation of longer term sobriety, and is an important component to Recovery Oriented Systems of Care outcomes.



In 2010, Earl Cobbins, Sr. was recognized for his efforts and awarded the Mental Health Champion Award by the Missouri Department of Mental Health. Earl was one of three award recipients chosen by his community in recognition for overcoming his personal challenges to make life better for others and their communities.

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Come join Earl Cobbins this Saturday, September 10th, along with hundreds of other walkers who will be kicking off morning activities at the 2nd Annual Mike Johnson Memorial Walk for Recovery on Saturday, September 10, 2011 beginning at 8:00 a.m. to help raise awareness of substance abuse and mental health disorders prevention and treatment.

The Walk will begin at Washington Park (Pershing and Grand Blvd.) in Kansas City, Missouri and wind past the Kansas City Power and Light district, the new Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, and around the Liberty Memorial. The Walk is free. With a \$20 donation, participants will receive an event t-shirt, lunch, and goodie bag. Please let us know you're attending by registering at www.kcrecoverywalk.org.

Immediately following the Walk, participants will enjoy a festival with live music featuring the Ernest James Zydeco band, food, and family activities in recognition of September's *National Recovery Month*, a national initiative sponsored annually by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's](#) (SAMHSA) [Center for Substance Abuse Treatment](#) (CSAT).

The Walk, co-sponsored by [First Call](#) and the [Addiction Technology Transfer Center](#) (ATTC), which recently became a part of [UMKC Institute for Human Development \(IHD\)](#), was named in honor of Mike Johnson, a long-time Kansas City resident, who lost his battle to addiction. The Walk celebrates his life and emphasizes that substance use and mental health disorders can affect anyone, including those who live in Kansas City. It is essential for the Kansas City community to remain dedicated to the recovery process by advocating for resources which confront these treatable disorders, while supporting individuals in long-term recovery, such as Earl Cobbins, and their families. For more information, visit and please register now at www.kcrecoverywalk.org.

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