

## **PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SARASOTA COUNTY TO LIGHT UP THE NIGHT REMEMBERING THOSE LOST TO AND SUFFERING FROM SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

NOPE National Candle Light Vigil aimed at bringing awareness to the issue of substance abuse and to memorialize those lost to drug and alcohol related deaths.

The Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse (SCoSA) in partnership with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, North Port Police Department, FAADA (Families Against Addictive Drug Abuse), Coastal Behavioral Healthcare, the Sarasota County School District, the North Port ASAP (Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention) will host the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual NOPE (Narcotic Overdose Prevention & Education) Task Force National Candle Light Vigil on Thursday, October 29, 2009 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm in North Port High School's Performing Arts Center located at 6400 West Price Blvd. The event is free and open to the public.

Sarasota County led the state of Florida in overdose deaths due to pharmaceutical drugs in 2007. "By hosting this event we aim to demonstrate that Sarasota County is serious about reducing the damaging impact of substance abuse to our community," stated Curt Lavarello, Executive Director for the Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse. "We cannot sit idle as we lose our loved ones in record numbers; the time to act has passed," continued Lavarello.

Vigil organizers are expecting between 200-300 people including elected officials in attendance and will feature testimonials from those who have lost loved ones.

For more information, call SCoSA at 941-377-7736 or visit the website at [www.SCoSA.org](http://www.SCoSA.org).

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