

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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Friends of Loudoun Mental Health – Hike With Hope – You Can Do It!

Rain or shine Friends of Loudoun Mental Health will hike on October 27, 2007 from 1-3 pm starting at Fox Ridge Park in Leesburg, Virginia. The hike will be five miles moving west along the W & OD bike trail. Don't worry about lunch or drinks because Red Hot & Blue will provide awesome eats and WalMart has generously donated beverages. Pat Pearson, a board member of Friends, will bring apples for everyone.

This is Hike with Hope's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was originated by Jeff Dunson and the Youth Group from Ebenezer United Methodist Church in Neersville, Virginia. Jeff inspired the Sunday school young people to get involved in the community and decided to connect with Friends. Jeff's belief in Friends' mission and the people it serves has had a major impact on the continuation of this event. "Charity begins at home in your own community", he says. The people they assist are our neighbors here in Loudoun. I have been humbled by the giving nature of Friends. "

This year the number of people participating in Hike with Hope is expected to increase, thanks to the involvement of a number of youth school and church groups.

We have 18 hikers with a mental health disease who need sponsors. Please sponsor our hikers by contacting Amber Ernst at [arernst@loudounfriends.org](mailto:arernst@loudounfriends.org) or call 703-443-1380 or 202-351-8612. If you plan to bring a group on October 27, please register in advance.

Friends is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization in a public-private partnership with Loudoun County Mental Health Services. The major programs supported by Hike with Hope and *A Place to Call Home* and *Helping Hand* – both aimed at supplementing expenses for people who are in recovery and ready to live independent lives.