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Despicable Dick and His Route to Redemption

*Care Alliance Partners with the Cleveland International Film Festival on a Film about
Picking up the Pieces in the Aftermath from Addiction*

Cleveland, Ohio – We’ve all met someone like Dick: someone to whom a lie comes as naturally as the truth, someone whose dependence on instant gratification betrays loyalty to any other person, someone who, despite enormous personal flaws, wants to be a better person.

Dick Kuchera is the arguably despicable man at the center of “Despicable Dick and Righteous Richard,” which will debut at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 29 at the Cleveland International Film Festival. Local nonprofit health center Care Alliance will partner with the Cleveland International Film Festival to present the documentary, which tells the story of a man who has maintained sobriety for decades but is only beginning to make amends for the pain he caused to friends and family while struggling with alcoholism.

As the leading provider of health care services to Cleveland’s homeless population, Care Alliance serves people with mental illness and chemical dependency each day. Substance abuse counseling and supportive services are essential extensions of the medical and dental services they provide to combat chronic poverty and homelessness.

“We are seasoned veterans of helping broken people,” said Donna Kelly, Care Alliance outreach nurse manager, who will lead a post-film discussion at Erie Island Coffee on East Fourth Street immediately after the screening. “Some of our patients can be hard to deal with because they’ve spent their entire lives reacting to toxic environments. One of those defense mechanisms is substance abuse, and its effects can be crushing. To help the homeless, you have to be sympathetic to even the most unsympathetic people out there, because you can’t imagine what they’ve been through.”

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Ms. Kelly has found unusual ways to reach people through her work. In 2007, she began a book club in a homeless shelter. Books established common ground upon which Ms. Kelly could build relationships with men and women whose struggles had degraded their self esteem to the point of apathy. From these roots, the Homeless Book Club has continued to attract new participants who, in finding a safe space to discuss literature and sometimes their own life stories, regain their sense of self and take steps toward finding their footing again in life.

Care Alliance is a nonprofit, federally funded health center dedicated to serving the needs of homeless, public housing and uninsured residents of Cuyahoga County. In 2011, two-thirds of Care Alliance's 9,600 patients were homeless. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Homelessness Resources Center, more than one in three homeless people have chronic substance abuse issues. Yet lack of funding for substance abuse treatment and mental health services in Cleveland continue to thwart the safety net's efforts to address chronic homelessness.

It is through participation in the film festival that Care Alliance hopes to raise awareness about the challenges its patients face and the desperate need for these services in Cleveland. The discussion following the film will engage filmgoers, Care Alliance supporters, book club participants and safety net partners in conversation about the film and how Dick Kuchera's issues relate to our individual challenges and our challenges as a community.

For more information about Care Alliance, and to purchase tickets at a \$2 discount for the Thursday screening of "Despicable Dick and Righteous Richard," visit www.carealliance.org and click on the Cleveland International Film Festival Icon. An unrated trailer for the film is also available at www.despicabledick.com.

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