



TOP GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS & HOSPITALITY CEOS JOIN FORCES TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT DRUG & ALCOHOL ADDICTION

Drug Chief, Hotel Leaders Take 'Shatterproof Challenge,' Rappel Down Side of D.C. Building

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C., September 25, 2015 – Top government officials and hospitality industry executives came together today to draw attention to the national epidemic of drug and alcohol addiction with more than 100 individuals rappelling down a 12-story hotel in downtown Washington. This “Shatterproof Challenge” aims to help end the stigma and suffering of those affected by addiction and raise funds to prevent and treat the disease.

[Shatterproof](#), a national organization committed to protecting our loved ones from addiction to illicit and prescription drugs and alcohol, hosted the rappelling event today at Lafayette Tower. Leaders of the hospitality world, including this event’s co-host, the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA), marked the hospitality industry’s unity around Shatterproof founder, Gary Mendell, a former hotelier, whose son Brian lost his life to addiction in 2011.

Every day, 50 Americans – young and old – are lost to drug addiction. In the past 10 years, the rate of overdose deaths from opioid abuse has quadrupled. More than 22 million Americans suffer from addiction and remains the nation’s fourth most prevalent disease. In all, at least 100 million Americans suffer directly or indirectly from this disease – nearly one in three people in this country.

Notable attendees included:

- Dr. Wilson Compton, Deputy Director of NIDA,
- Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT),
- Congressman Ami Bera (D-CA),
- Congressman Paul Tonko (D-NY),
- Congressman Don Beyer (D-VA)
- Dr. Cecelia Spitznas, Senior Science Policy Advisor, Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), Executive Office of the President,
- Katherine Lugar, President & CEO, American Hotel & Lodging Association

“It was a very significant day in D.C. for this many influencers in the government and corporate spheres to join together to unite and empower our country around addiction,” said Gary Mendell, founder and CEO of Shatterproof. “I am so grateful that these individuals showed their commitment to our mission of increasing awareness and funding for the prevention, treatment, and recovery of this disease.”

“Addiction has a devastating impact on families and communities and we must do all we can to help combat this disease and support all those who are affected,” said AH&LA president and CEO Katherine Lugar. “It’s been so gratifying to see the hospitality industry rally around Gary and Shatterproof. Since he launched the organization in 2013, countless leaders in the hotel industry have supported him in big and small ways and we will continue, to build on his great work to address addiction head on. Together, our voice will be unbreakable.



Shatterproof is hosting more than 20 of these events in 2015 in cities across the United States; the first time in history that there has been such a coordinated program to end the shame and stigma associated with this disease. We are rappelling as a part of a national movement to honor our loved ones in recovery and remember those we have lost.

The Shatterproof Challenge D.C. event was made possible by our generous sponsor including HEI Hotels & Resorts, Goodwin Procter, Wells Fargo, American Hotel & Lodging Association, among others. A complete list of sponsors and of event details may be found at www.rappeldc.org.

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About Shatterproof

[Shatterproof](#) a national organization committed to protecting our loved ones from addiction to illicit and prescription drugs, and alcohol, and ending the stigma and suffering of those affected by this disease. In the U.S. alone, addiction to alcohol and other drugs claims more than 135,000 lives every year — 370 people every day, 15 every hour. In 2012, Gary Mendell, former hotel executive and a member of the Clinton Health Matters Initiative, founded Shatterproof to educate, empower and equip families, educators, health care providers, legislators and others to proactively address addiction among children and young adults. Mendell and his team are building a national organization to bridge serious gaps in funding and resources for the disease of addiction. His son, Brian Mendell, lost his battle with addiction at the age of 25 in 2011.

For more information about the Shatterproof Challenge, including a detailed list of sponsors, please visit www.rappeldc.org

About AH&LA

Serving the hospitality industry for more than a century, the [American Hotel & Lodging Association](#) (AH&LA) is the sole national association representing all segments of the 1.8 million-employee U.S. lodging industry, including hotel owners, REITs, chains, franchisees, management companies, independent properties, state hotel associations, and industry suppliers. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., AH&LA provides focused advocacy, communications support, and educational resources for an industry generating \$155.5 billion in annual sales from 4.9 million guestrooms.