

LIRA

Long Island Recovery Association
PO Box 262 Franklin Square NY 11010-0262
LIRA-NYS.org

Winter 2009-2010

RECOVERY ROCKS LONG ISLAND

As LIRA prepared to mark 10 years of service to the LI recovery community, we felt the need to take time out to celebrate the thousands of men and women, who having received the help they needed, are now in recovery and leading productive lives as hard working husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, tax payers and good neighbors.

As a result LIRA joined with many local partners to host our Rock N Recovery celebration on October 10th at the Deer Park Community Center. Close to 200 men and women enjoyed a delicious home cooked buffet, danced for hours to music that rocked the room and applauded Deborah Arch-Bennett, the recipient of the First Annual Recovery Community Scholarship Award.

Many thanks to our committee and supporters whose names you will find on our Scroll of Honor insert. The money raised for the evening paid for the event, the scholarship award, and helps support our ongoing advocacy activities. We are looking forward to a bigger and better event next year.



LIRA Event Committee members with award recipient Debra Arch-Bennett (center)

LIRA would like to acknowledge the following individuals/agencies whose commitment of time

and energy helped make this event a huge success Barbara Abrams & Jaci Best (Suffolk County Division of Community Mental Hygiene) Patricia Fulton (Nassau County Dept of Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and Developmental Disability Services) Eugenia Karahalias (Unleash Your Full Potential Now) Ed Olsen (Town of Babylon Dept Alcohol & Drugs) Jeff Reynolds & Roseanne Slattery (LICADD) Anthony & Grazia Rizzuto, Dick and Nancy Becket Lawless and Leo Hurley (Seafield) Mary Silberstein (Pederson Krag) Claudia Ragni (Kenneth Peters Center) Millie Andino (CK Post) Mary Callan, Gene Foley, Bruce Till, Richard & Doreen Buckman and Patricia Feehan (IMA SAAM)

FEDERAL PARITY BILL A REALITY

In October 2008 President Bush signed the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. This Law builds on the 1996 passage of a bill sponsored by these same legislators that prevented lower annual and lifetime limits for mental health treatment.

LIRA worked diligently on this front for many years and we are thrilled to see more obstacles removed and another cornerstone of progress in place for those seeking recovery from addictive illnesses. Each year > 54 million Americans need help for a mental health/addiction issue and we are pleased that more treatment access will become available. The law took effect October 9, 2009 and insurers must have been in compliance by Jan 2010.

LIRA MARKS 10th ANNIVERSARY

January 2010 makes 10 years of service for LIRA to the recovery community on Long Island. Our ongoing advocacy efforts are made possible by member donations and community contributions. Please consider making a 100% tax deductible donation to help us continue our work

LIRA IN ACTION 2008-2009

During the fall of 2008 LIRA held our annual National Recovery Month event at Nassau Community College. The Recovery Movement, "Into the Light" featured presentations focused on recovery related developments in NY State and on the national level. The program highlighted major areas of interest to our friends including pending recovery related legislation, community organizing and social networking. Thanks to our well informed presenters Deirdre & Thom Forbes (FAVOR-West), Beth Brockland (LICAN), Pat Taylor (FAVOR) and Melissa Shore (The Second Rd)

The 2nd Brooklyn Bridge Recovery Walk (2009) sponsored by A&E television was a big success that drew 10, 000 people and featured a performance by Motown legend Smokey Robinson and personal appearances by Gov. David Paterson and A&E interventionists



LIRA members at the Brooklyn Bridge lending support to LICADD friends with OASAS Commissioner, Karen Carpenter-Palumbo.

With the creation of the OASAS Recovery Services Bureau came a stirring of interest across New York as upstate met downstate and the Recovery Implementation team was formed to guide the movement of recovery services. LIRA members were among the initial invitees who met and outlined key initiatives.

LIRA & OASAS coordinated the first ever Recovery Focus Groups to solicit input from

members of the recovery community and their families regarding essential needs. Data was also accumulated from focus groups in other regions of the state and will be used to inform recovery community decision makers.

The 1st ever statewide Recovery Conference was held in Albany in September 2008. Over 400 people attended to celebrate the miracle of recovery and to further outline areas of need.

The first NY State OASAS Recovery Center Grants were awarded. In a competitive process, LIRA came up just a little short according to feedback from OASAS. The grant reviewers indicated we had a very strong proposal for the single downstate award. We respect the work and reputation of the many fine treatment programs in NY and we maintain that recovery centers should not be operated by treatment entities rather by genuine grassroots recovery community organizations

LIRA veered from our annual tradition of educational programming in recognition of National Recovery Month and joined with many local partners to launch the 1st ever Rock N Recovery Dance & celebration. 200 people turned out to dance, dine and socialize on a sober stage in Deer Park. LIRA created the 1st Annual Recovery Community Scholarship Award and presented a certificate and check for \$500 to Deborah Arch-Bennett, who is seeking to become an addiction counselor. We thank all of our supporters who made this event a huge success. (Donor list enclosed)

The ongoing efforts of LIRA, LICAN and the Quality Consortium led to the invitational meeting of the Sober Living Network of Long Island. More than 40 invitees attended with 15 distinct entities applying for membership. Our housing team is continuing to conduct on site home inspections, as the next step in the process to approval and full membership status

The OASAS Residential Needs Workgroup continues to meet with LIRA playing a key role in delineating the specific needs of Long Island's recovery community in the area of alcohol and drug free housing options.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

A major victory on the insurance front came when the Paul Wellstone/Pete Domenici Mental Health & Addiction Equity Act became law. The law will require that all insurance policies that provide addiction treatment coverage do so in a way that is similar to other covered medical conditions, eliminating the discriminatory practice of higher deductibles, increased co-pays, and greater out of pocket costs to folks in need of addiction treatment. Over the summer LIRA members met with the new Senate Healthcare Committee Chairman Thomas Duane. In a spirited meeting Senator Duane and his staff promised to work closely with us to create and advance legislation in the coming session. It has been quite awhile since we have had a true friend of recovery in a position to help exact significant change and we are excited about the prospects.

In Feb. 2010 LIRA members attended a rally in Albany with our friends from FOR-NY and then we met with legislators to discuss our issues.

We believe that treatment authorization decisions should be in the hands of the addiction treatment professionals and not insurance companies. To that end we support legislation similar to our neighbors in Pa. where ACT 106 permits authorizations and referrals for treatment by healthcare professionals.

We support the establishment of an involuntary addiction treatment law similar to Kentucky's Matthew "Casey" Wethington Act.

LI Senator Brian Foley introduced Denise's Law which mandates detox for young people.

We applaud Suffolk County for the recent 10 point plan to combat opiate addiction among our young people.

LIRA seeks repeal of the Uniform Policy Provision Laws (UPPL) that allows insurers to not pay for necessary medical care for injuries sustained while "under the influence". This creates major conflicts because hospitals

and medical professionals may not address a potential alcohol problem due to concerns about not being paid for services rendered.

We support the creation of an inpatient addiction treatment mandate in New York.

LIRA business members met with the Attorney General's office to address discriminatory treatment authorization practices.

LIRA MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Claudia Ragni was honored at the Annual Veritas Villa Dinner dance.

Jeff Reynolds and Gene Foley were elected to the LIRA Board of Directors

Congratulations to our dear friend Bruce Till on his 3rd annual retirement.

Mary Callan responded to a community need and has been volunteering at Our Lady of Miraculous Medal in Wyandanch as they continue to recover from a devastating fire.

Debra Arch-Bennett the first ever recipient of the LIRA Recovery Community Award.

Congratulations to these outstanding Long Island citizens and true friends of recovery.

LIRA Tidbits

Thank you and best wishes to LICAN organizer Beth Brockland, who will be moving on to lead a Manhattan based IAF affiliate organization.

In Jan 2010 LIRA and Seaford hosted a 5 Day OASAS Recovery Coach Training which produced a pool of well schooled recovery coaches that can assist people in early recovery to navigate roadblocks and help these new folks to strengthen their recovery roots.

LIRA is the Long Island voice for the Recovery Community and we are represented on many community boards, task forces, advisory boards, commissions and panels on Long Island and at the state level.

LIRA proudly acknowledges the dedication and commitment of these founding LIRA members, each of whom has served as a LIRA board member, and have stayed the course for 10 full years in service to Long Island's Recovery Community.

Congratulations & Thank You!

***Richard Buckman--Mary Callan--James Devine--Leo Hurley
Bert Johnson--Claudia Ragni--Peter Schweitzer--Bruce Till
Departed founding members: Stu Astor and Mary Quinn***