

# QUARTERLY report



Volume 19, No. 4 | 2017



## DDAP Kicks Off RECOVERY MONTH in the State Capitol Rotunda!

By William Stauffer, Executive Director, PRO•A and Marianna Horowitz, Program Coordinator, PRO•A

Our Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs led the way on the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual recovery month by organizing the Keystone State's celebration of National Recovery Month. They organized their first ever State Kick-Off event to celebrate recovery on September 6. This was the lead event for a month long, state-wide celebration that included more than 60 events occurring throughout the state. Many local recovery events and celebrations from across the state mobilized for the event.



Gary Hendler and Emily Hostetter

The event celebrated the start of the month and celebrated recovery by having individuals from across the commonwealth share their powerful stories of recovery in the rotunda at the State Capitol Building. Additionally, beginning with the kick-off event, the Department also launched a campaign for individuals to share their "recovery success stories" and put faces to recovery. Through this campaign, recovery stories gathered promote the power of recovery to transform our communities.

*"We invite people to send us their stories of recovery to share with others; we want to celebrate all those living in long-term recovery, and encourage those considering or receiving treatment to think about the bright future ahead in a life free of substance misuse."*

*Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, Secretary Jennifer Smith*

Continued on page 3

## PRO•A



## Awarded National Grant to *Strengthen* the Statewide Recovery Network

By Stephanie Hastings, BA, Recovery Services Community Coordinator, PRO•A

On September 13, 2017, Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance (PRO•A) was very pleased to announce being awarded a three-year, \$450,000 grant to strengthen addiction recovery efforts throughout the state of Pennsylvania. PRO•A was just one of ten national recipients and the only organization based in Pennsylvania selected for the Recovery Community Services Program, State Network Grant (RCSP-SN), by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). We are honored to be awarded this grant and to be able to continue building, educating, and strengthening recovery communities statewide.

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PRO.A is now on  
FACEBOOK –"like" us at  
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OrganizationAlliance](http://www.facebook.com/PaRecoveryOrganizationAlliance)



WORKING  
TOGETHER  
TO MAKE  
"RECOVERY  
VOICES COUNT"  
IN PENNSYLVANIA



# QUARTERLY report

Volume 19, No. 4 | 2017

900 South Arlington Avenue, Suite 254A  
Harrisburg, PA 17109 . 1014

1.800.858.6040 Toll Free • 717.545.8929 • 717.545.9163 Fax  
proa.asst@pro-a.org • www.pro-a.org

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Newsletters are mailed in February, May, August & November.

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# Overdose Awareness Day... IN THEIR SHOES

By Kendra DiLascio and Carmen Cappelozzi

Our communities have been impacted in many ways from the opioid epidemic. On August 31, 2017, Sage's Army joined in a collaborative effort between several agencies and entities across Westmoreland County to hold their 2nd annual Overdose Awareness Day event.

The event occurred in conjunction with worldwide remembrances of loved ones lost to the disease of addiction. The community came together to promote unity, support, remembrance, and hope through community resource information, speakers that shared their experience, strength and hope, and the In Their Shoes Project.

The purpose behind this year's Overdose Awareness Day was to provide information to the public about community and treatment resources and how these resources can be accessed. This year's event featured live music and speakers who shared personal stories of their own recovery as well as stories about their lost loved ones to the disease of addiction.

The In Their Shoes Project was also displayed at the event. For several months prior, pairs of shoes were collected from community members for display during the Overdose Awareness Day event.

174 pairs of shoes were collected and displayed to symbolize the 174 lives lost to overdose in Westmoreland County during 2016. The purpose of this display was to demonstrate a visual impact of the individuals we have lost in our community and to create a personal and emotional connection to the statistical data compiled by the Westmoreland County Coroner's Office.

What the shoes tell is not only that they were here, but that they were a person. They're more than a statistic, more than a number; they had personal items. They were loved and had families. They lived full lives and they were real people. Included with several pairs of shoes were information about the loved one that was lost and were displayed alongside the pair of shoes.



left to right: Kendra DiLascio, Brian Furman, and Carmen Cappelozzi





## DDAP Kicks Off RECOVERY MONTH in the State Capitol Rotunda!

*Continued from page 1*

*Standing together for recovery on the steps of the rotunda in the state capitol building*

As noted by Secretary Jennifer Smith: This campaign is ongoing, individuals may submit their stories at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PArecover>.

The organizers worked collaboratively to provide education and outreach about the importance of getting everyone involved to fight back against the opioid epidemic. It remains critical that we highlight a positive aspect of substance use disorder – that recovery is possible, and many people recover to live positive, fulfilling lives.

“National Recovery Month is the time to promote the message: **treatment works and recovery is possible,**” Secretary Smith said. “Many of those affected live in long-term recovery, and often want to share the good news with those who may be struggling to make it to recovery.”

The September 6<sup>th</sup> event included recovery speakers, elected officials, and policymakers. The event demonstrated how recovery works, and how we are all united in the work we are doing to spread recovery across communities throughout Pennsylvania. The event authenticated that there is power in recovery, that treatment works, individuals and families do recover, and that we are stronger when we all work together to strengthen recovery efforts and bring healing to our communities. [#PArecovers](#)

We look forward to next year, and will work to celebrate recovery each and every day. Please join us, share your story, your strength, and your talents with others—each and every day—as you are able!

## PRO•A

Awarded National Grant to **Strengthen**  
the Statewide Recovery Network



*Continued from page 1*

As of September 30, 2017, PRO•A completed our 3rd and final year of our first awarded RCSP-SN Grant. We are very excited with the progress that was made during the 2014-2017 RCSP-SN Grant. To name a few of our accomplishments during this time, we strengthened the Regional Recovery Groups statewide network through working with 44 statewide Recovery Community Organizations (RCO's), covering 25 counties and spanning the 6 regions of the state. We trained over 1,450 individuals through our Recovery Institute Training Series and have trained over 120 new leaders through our Leadership Training Series. We created the Our Lives Matter Quilt Project to return a voice to those who have lost their battle with substance use conditions. To date, the quilt has been on display at 10 different events, covering 7 counties and spanning 4 regions of the state. We have created an online jobs bank, a web-based clearinghouse for trauma informed substance use disorder peer support services, and multiple fact sheets to include the Recovery Fact Sheet which incorporates information on the value of peer-services. We have worked with organizations across the state providing technical assistance which aided in identifying community needs and resources, opportunities for collaborative action, building volunteer bases, identifying the organizations core objectives and role within the community, mainlining traffic thru web and social media pages and identifying long and short-term goals. As well, we have initiated a monthly statewide call with Recovery Community Organizations (RCO's), family groups, partners and prospective partners to share information and develop resources within communities and create a learning experience. We also brought together Certified Recovery Specialists (CRS's) and CRS Supervisors in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Certification Board (PCB) as part of an effort to identify core competencies for peer supervisors – and we are beginning work on a family peer credential with them.

We are excited to continue our work through the 2017-2020 RCSP-SN Grant. The grant will allow PRO•A to continue to serve the state of Pennsylvania by expanding and strengthening the existing statewide Recovery Community Service Program: integrating the recovery voice into our state substance use disorder health systems, enhancing partnerships that support access to substance use disorder recovery peer support services, fostering pro-recovery/service development, and strengthening peer certification and workforce development across behavioral and other health and social systems.

” This grant couldn't come at a more critical time as we face the growing opioid crisis and the need to expand recovery opportunities across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” said William Stauffer, LSW, Executive Director of PRO•A. “It will help us move towards more comprehensive, recovery focused care to save lives and heal our communities. **We thank SAMHSA for this vital support.**”

Please participate... contact us today!



Has an event ever occurred in your life that totally and completely changed your perspective, your direction, or your destiny? Maybe it was a tiny thing, maybe it was big, but you know in your gut it was meant to be. Analytical psychologist, Carl Jung, created a word for this. He called it “synchronicity.” Most of us in recovery are very aware of these seemingly innocent coincidences that changed our trajectory. Is it odd or is it God? See Bill Wilson’s letter to Carl Jung describing this concept at [http://silkworth.net/aahistory/billw\\_carljung012361.html](http://silkworth.net/aahistory/billw_carljung012361.html). Synchronicity Recovery Foundation was born out of a series of such random events that can only be explained by a Higher Power aligning a group of people who sincerely want to help others find fun, creative, and out of the ordinary ways to sustain long-term recovery from substance dependency.

## Synchronicity: Is It odd or is it God?

*Laura Waits, Founder of Synchronicity Recovery Foundation Ltd.*

Sync Recovery believes a solid recovery program includes four core principles. They are Spirituality, Health & Wellness, Counseling, and Community Involvement. These are broad concepts that offer a lot of room for individuality and can be infused with recreation that is fun and exciting. At the forefront of Sync Recovery event planning are these key principles. Activities include hiking, skiing, open mic nights, theatre, volunteer projects and more. Events that Synchronicity Recovery Foundation are involved with are:

- A BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT THAT WILL BE HELD JANUARY 21, 2018 AT PALISADES HIGH SCHOOL IN UPPER BUCKS COUNTY.
- AS A COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT WE WILL BE FORMING A TEAM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLAR PLUNGE EVENT IN EASTON ON FEBRUARY 17, 2018 TO BENEFIT SPECIAL OLYMPICS.
- RALLY IN THE VALLEY PA WHICH WILL BE HELD ON MAY 19, 2018 AT CEDAR CREST COLLEGE.

New to recovery or an old timer, it is important for us to continue making connections and engage in our community. As we make these connections synchronicity is at work.

*Believe in truth. Believe that feelings can change. Believe that you can be moving along in life when suddenly you find yourself somewhere else. Somewhere you would rather be. Somewhere you were meant to be. Somewhere you were guided to be. Believe in making the most of what the universe presents.*

*Sheila Burke*

Stay tuned to Sync Recovery’s Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/syncrecovery/> or email [syncrecovery@gmail.com](mailto:syncrecovery@gmail.com) for more information and to share your ideas for fun and inspiring ways to bring our recovery community together. We are not a glum lot, and Synchronicity Recovery Foundation is bound and determined to help make sobriety an authentic and amazing adventure by holding meaningful events and building sincere relationships with our peers.

# save the date

19 may 2018

11am - 4pm



# Rally in the Valley

2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL COMMUNITY DAY

Strength in the Recovery Community

Unite with us  
to demonstrate how  
recovery strengthens  
our communities  
and provides hope  
for those still struggling  
with mental health  
and addiction.



CEDAR CREST  
COLLEGE

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[RallyInTheValleyPA.com](http://RallyInTheValleyPA.com)  [RallyInTheValleyPA](https://www.facebook.com/RallyInTheValleyPA)

a sync recovery event

## The Right Choice For Every Stage of Addiction Recovery

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## YOUR OPINION MATTERS!

We want to know your thoughts about the Quarterly Report.  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X6MLPKF>

together.



## WOULD YOU PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TO PRO•A?

We are working tirelessly to reduce discrimination, improve access to services and assist recovery efforts in communities across Pennsylvania.

Please help us make recovery a reality to a person, family or community near you. PRO•A is a 501(C) (3) not profit organization with the Mission: To mobilize, educate and advocate to eliminate the stigma and discrimination toward those affected by alcohol and other substance use conditions; to ensure hope, health and justice for individuals, families and those in recovery.

## THANK YOU!

Please send a tax-deductible donation to:

**PRO•A**  
900 SOUTH ARLINGTON AVE. SUITE 254A  
HARRISBURG, PA 17109

Or online: <http://pro-a.org/donate/>

# JFT Hosts Roundtable Discussion

By Tara Novosat

On November 8, 2017, Just For Today Recovery and Veteran Support Services (JFT) hosted a round-table discussion on the opioid epidemic. The event was organized by Senator Mike Regan and attended by Attorney General Josh Shapiro, Rep. Greg Rothman of the 87th District, Rep. Sheryl Delozier of the 88th District, Rep. Steve Bloom of the 199th District, Senior Agent-in-Charge William Kelly, Cumberland County District Attorney Dave Freed, and Cumberland County Coroner Charles Hall. As well, JFT Representatives Steve Barndt, Executive Director and Steve Rexford, Advisory Board Member were also in attendance.

A wide range of topics were discussed, from improved funding and availability of treatment to mandatory sentencing for the illegal distribution of Fentanyl. Attorney General Shapiro stated that from a data perspective law enforcement is making progress fighting the epidemic, but the human toll continues to rise. County Coroner Hall provided some very sobering statistics to the discussion. In 2016, 66 people died as a result of an overdose, while the year-to-date number for 2017 has reached 74 deaths. Narcan saves in the state totaled 76 in 2016, while so far in 2017 that number has exceeded triple digits to 120 lives saved. Keep in mind, those numbers would have likely been part of the death toll had it not been for the dedicated first-responders who administered the shots. Those same first-responders are often not paid for that life-saving injection because they are not reimbursed for their services unless they take patients in for emergency care.

While attendees discussed various barriers, legalities and legislation, much of the focus was on preemptive actions like the services provided by JFT. As was confidently stated by JFT Executive Director, Steve Barndt, "We are part of the treatment process." In conjunction with several other organizations, JFT works with participants to facilitate the early recovery process, utilizing trained Certified Recovery Specialists to coordinate and oversee all aspects of the Vivitrol Recovery Program Process. Advisory Board Member, Steve Rexford perfectly described the program by saying "Vivitrol is not a silver bullet, but it is the best shot we got."

In addition to the Mobile Vivitrol Program, JFT provides safe, structured, and compassionate housing for those seeking recovery, provides addiction education and advocacy for all forms of addiction and operates a coffee shop open daily to provide a safe, welcoming place for people to go. All of these services are available to the entire recovery community of Central Pennsylvania, and is currently 100% staffed by volunteers.

Valuable information and ideas were exchanged during the round-table, but there is still a long road ahead. The "three prong attack" of federal, state and county agencies all working together to fight the opioid epidemic is gaining momentum. By collaborating with grass roots organizations like JFT, these agencies are working together towards the common goal of slowing the epidemic's death toll in Central Pennsylvania.

## Student & Family Enrichment Program

By Amber Didden, Director of Admissions & Family Programming

Established in 1962, Pennsylvania Adult and Teen Challenge (PAATC) has a rich history of helping individuals and families who are struggling with addiction. Traditionally a long-term program lasting 12 to 14 months, PAATC has recently added new levels of care including a medical detox program and a 30-day short-term inpatient program that focuses on evidence based therapy and community based treatment. Each of these levels of care place a strong emphasis on family involvement.

Addiction is not an individual issue; it is a family affliction. Recognizing this, PAATC established the Student and Family Enrichment (SAFE) program in 2015. This program was intended to draw the students of our long-term program into relationships and healing with their families, as well as to educate their loved ones so that they too can find freedom from the effects of addiction. The SAFE program offers a monthly Family Day which includes a free brunch and a rotation of 14 trainings. The topics include Addiction 101, Breaking the Cycle, Enabling, and more. Families who attend these trainings are welcomed with support from staff and other families, and gain valuable insights into how they can thrive—even when the circumstances of addiction seem overwhelming. Today, the SAFE program involves families at every phase of programming including our detox and short-term treatment programs.

Family involvement begins as soon as possible and continues through every phase of the process. When a patient enters our program, they are encouraged to sign a release of information for their family members. This release enables the care team and a designated Family Liaison to reach out to the patient's family, share updates, offer encouragement, and invite them to Family Day. Helping families understand the need for their own recovery process, and providing the necessary resources, has proven to be a key to success and has truly helped PAATC bring wholeness to the hopeless.

By Patricia G. Baranowski, MA, CADAC, Recovery Resiliency Coordinator, PRO•A

# Recovery Works Summit 2017

Recovery Works Summit 2017, the second conference of its kind in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, was proven to be as exciting and successful as the first Summit which occurred in 2016. The 2017 conference, held at the Harrisburg Hershey Sheraton Hotel on September 13<sup>th</sup>, expanded on the initial themes, overarching goals and objectives identified through the first Recovery Works Summit.

This historic event brought hundreds of individuals with lived recovery experience, providers, policy makers, leaders and advocates together. It was a day of collaborating and sharing knowledge, experiences and hope. It reached far beyond the goals we had for this conference.

## **Collective voices addressed the value of inclusion of individuals with lived recovery experience, and the vital role that they can play in our service systems if included.**

Dozens of speakers shared both their personal and professional stories, uniting individuals for the common cause. Throughout the conference, speakers and presenters reiterated the core issues identified in the initial conference: building upon the common ground between the Mental Health and Substance Abuse communities, decreasing and eliminating the disparities in inclusion of individuals with lived recovery experience in the workplace, and continuing to address the vital role that individuals with lived recovery experience play in the recovery process for those individuals who suffer from Mental Health and Substance Abuse issues. In addition, speakers from the both policy and legal perspectives were addressed by professionals in those fields, reinforcing the ideals of the conference. Keynote speakers included State Representative, Gene DiGirolamo; Dauphin County Director of Drug and Alcohol, Cheryl Dondero; and Joan Erney, CEO of Community Behavioral Health. Dozens of additional speakers shared both their personal and professional stories, uniting individuals for the common cause.



*left to right: Dauphin County Director of Drug and Alcohol, Cheryl Dondero; Joan Erney, CEO of Community Behavioral Health; William Stauffer, Executive Director of PRO•A, and Lynn Keltz, Executive Director of PMHCA*



*left to right: Pat Madigan and Patricia Baranowski review information collected from meetings they held throughout the state*



*Dr. Kenneth Dickinson, MS, RPh. speaking on how we got here and where are we going*

## **The central theme of the conference was recovery and resiliency with a focus on moving forward.**

Each session speaker and presentation reaffirmed the theme of recovery and resiliency with a focus on “Moving Forward” towards solutions in areas of disparities. The disparities found in areas of funding and inclusion of individuals with lived recovery experience into the workforce, alleviating legal barriers that impede those in recovery from entering the workforce, and identifying ways of increasing awareness of the magnitude of positive impact of incorporating those with lived recovery experience into treatment venues.

One vital avenue of meeting these goals includes, not only advocating on an individual basis, but more importantly, realizing our potential when we work together to meet these goals. As Helen Keller stated, “Alone, we can do little; together, we can do so much”. The Recovery Works Summit was one conduit to gather individuals together to meet our goals. In total, 262 individuals attended the conference, with 97 organization representatives, 38 exhibitors and 126 individuals who identified as being in recovery.

Throughout the Summit, individuals shared their personal and professional stories of hope and reinforced the importance of speaking out against the stigma and disparities that continue to undermine the goals of those in recovery. Speakers identified specific disparities which included, funding deficiencies, lack of awareness and recognition relating to inclusion of Peer Specialists in the treatment plan of persons in care, and the need for a systematically recovery-informed and inclusive behavioral health system to meet the needs of individuals needing treatment.

### **This provided the opportunity to bring together the Mental Health and Substance Abuse communities to share resources and network.**

Bill Stauffer, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance, thanked SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for the Recovery and Resilience Grant that allowed the Recovery Works Summit to take place. Noting that possibly the greatest untapped resource is the group of individuals in recovery, Bill thanked all attendees for their advocacy and attendance. Mr. Stauffer encouraged individuals at the conference to network and collaborate; to build upon the energy in the room from this conference, and figure out a way to take it back to our communities. We have the opportunity to work together, and this summit shows what kind of resources we can have in our communities.



*Panel Discussion on “How did we get here and where are we going?”*

### **Together, we must continue to work towards recovery for all those in the Mental Health and the Substance Abuse communities.**

Henry Ford stated, “Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together... is success.” We have begun; and we have made progress; now we must continue working together towards success. The Recovery Works Summit 2017 was an extension of the initial Summit held in 2016, which was the beginning of bringing together individuals in the Mental Health and Substance Abuse communities. Combining our efforts so that we can work together towards parity and triumph over these illnesses, and reinforcing recovery for the millions of Americans who are in recovery. Continuing with recovery and resilience, there has been consistent reiteration that the fundamental ideas of utilizing strength-based resources and shared learning, collaborating to decrease disparities, and networking with other individuals and groups with lived recovery experience is necessary to ensure the recovery movement continues with the vibrant momentum that was its inception.

There is a need for continued and collaborative ways of connecting individuals in both communities.

There is a need to increase opportunities for individuals with lived recovery experience to acquire a means to self-fulfillment, which includes employment and support. Who better to succeed in reaching these goals than the individuals who have their own inspiring journeys to empower others to succeed. As one of the attendees shared on the comments section of the evaluation, **“Our stories have power!”**



*PRO•A Staff, Marianna Horowitz and Stephanie Hastings*

# #PArecovers: M

My recovery process has given me so many experiences and opportunities to celebrate and elevate recovery. Through my recovery, I have been able to erase what the ending of my story may have been and add a few blank pages. As well, I regularly have opportunities to assist others in doing the same, both in my community and across our state. This year, I was honored to have been asked to speak at the State Kick Off Event for national recovery month, held on September 6.

For many years, we have collectively worked to give a voice to substance and alcohol use conditions. Now, the voice has grown so loud and the devastation so wide-spread that what was once deniable is now an undeniable truth. This is our time to put a face to the solution to substance and alcohol use conditions; this is our chance to put a face to recovery. It is through sharing our stories to show that recovery is possible, and it works—that we give communities, people of influence, and one another hope and a common goal to work towards.

## Here is my story.

Caring, lovable, compassionate, giving, hard-working, passionate, a good parent, happy, content, and lively. None of these words are usually associated with a person who has substance or alcohol use conditions. But, I am all of these and more. I am a person in recovery. While my substance use defined my path for many years, today, I embrace my recovery and allow my recovery to define me.

Through my recovery, I have become nearer to the woman I have always wanted to be and redefined who I am. My aspirations are to pursue what I love with vigor, live a life with passion, to make my slice of the world a better place, and to inspire others to do the same. What began in long-term treatment as a journey to save my life, over time, transformed into something that became about so much more than myself. It became a desire to save someone else and to make someone else's world a better place.

Through recovery, I have become an advocate for my community through volunteering. I have become an advocate for recovery by speaking about my journey whenever I am called upon to do so. I am a successful parent, family member, partner, friend, college student, and professional. Maybe most importantly, today, I love myself. It is through this self-love that I have been able to learn to love others, believe in myself and give of myself; because, I learned that I have something to give.

Recovery is not always easy, it's learning how to adopt a new lifestyle, how to think differently, and how to act differently. It's learning to walk through fear, pain, love, and even success, without self-destructing. It's learning that you can be more than what were when you were using substances and learning to believe it. It's a lifelong process of growth and goals to be ever-improving.

Recovery is not without pain, fear, or insecurities, and I am not impervious to mistakes. However, each painful situation I have experienced has taught me that pain does not have to be life threatening. Each time I have walked through fears and insecurities, I have been successful and set a new goal to achieve. Each mistake has shown me a new area where I can improve.

Today I am not the best I can be - but I am better, and this is only because, through recovery, I have perseverance to not allow "better" to be the enemy of "the best."

*Thank you, Marianna Horowitz, Program Coordinator, PRO•A*

If you are interested in sharing your story of hope you can do so at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PArecovers>

<https://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/get-involved/share-your-story.html>

<http://www.iamnotanonymous.org/get-involved/>

<http://www.theroomsproject.org/>



# y Story



Hello everyone, my name is Meshell James and I am one of the coordinators at A Clean slate. I was working as a housekeeper at a nursing home in New Jersey when I heard about a Recovery Center opening in Bangor, PA. At the time, I had 12 years clean and sober. I was told to send in a resume; I hadn't written one in over 20 years. The positions that I held for the past 13 did not require a resume as they revolved around cleaning duties.

The first feeling regarding this new opportunity was fear. How was I supposed to write a resume about recovery experience? I hadn't put pen to paper in over 5 years. I didn't know what they would be looking for in the resume. With the assistance from women in my network, I was finally able to complete a resume. After submitting the resume, I followed up with an email to the employer. After two weeks of intense waiting, I received an interview. One week after the interview I received an email telling me that I was chosen to run A Clean Slate. I couldn't believe it!

My first day was filled with wrecked nerves, confusion, anxiety, and fear. I am so grateful for my Mentor and friend Jana Morris (founder/Director of Recovery Revolution). She took the time and guided me through the responsibilities and duties of a Coordinator. I have learned so much from her and her staff.

I have found solace in my work as a coordinator. I have found that Spiritual Purpose for living that so many others are still searching for. The type of intrinsic value that I receive at A Clean Slate, you can't put a price on. When I lay my head down at night, I know that I helped at least one person. I have acquired many intangible skills at this Recovery Center. I can laugh. I can cry. I have been emotionally unbalanced and didn't use. I can take constructive criticism today and it's alright. I know that I am not being targeted. I know today that my presence is valued and that people want me to excel and prosper. For the individual that is still struggling to find their place in this world, in recovery, give yourself a break. It isn't in your time it's in your Higher Power's time.

*Meshell James,  
Coordinator, A Clean Slate Recovery Resource Center*



“Our stories have power!”



# Substance Abuse Helpline

## 1-844-897-8927

Issues with substance abuse?  
Call Westmoreland County's  
Substance Abuse Helpline  
for direction, answers and hope.



In partnership with the Westmoreland  
County Drug Overdose Task Force

[WestmorelandCA.org](http://WestmorelandCA.org)

[GetInWestmoreland.info](http://GetInWestmoreland.info)

## CRS credential update

*By Mary Jo Mather, Executive Director*

Effective April 1, 2017, the CRS credential has a new requirement of lived experience for all applicants. All those currently holding a current and valid CRS are not affected by this new requirement.

New CRS candidates must sign an attestation of 18 months in a continuous manner of personal, lived recovery experience.

Further, new CRS candidates must also provide written responses to four questions about their personal lived experience.

The questions are contained within the CRS application.

Questions about the new requirement can be directed to PCB at [info@pacertboard.org](mailto:info@pacertboard.org).

PCB is also pleased to announce that work will begin soon on an SUD family peer recovery specialist credential that will be similar in nature to the CRS, but for family members.

PRO•A is working with the PCB on this initiative.

More information will be forthcoming.

The new family peer credential should be available in early 2018.

### PCB

Uniting voices for recovery is an immense and essential task. One that promotes connectivity among people, community, and society as a whole. This connectivity is vital in the healing process. Rise for Recovery is an advocacy group that has grown out of the need for support and recognition that those facing the disease of addiction do indeed recover, that there are many pathways to recovery, and to show that many individuals who have struggled in the past have found a solution that has led to a happy, healthy, drug and alcohol free life.

The stigma around recovery from drug and alcohol addiction is so enormous that many do not seek help, or share their stories of success. Rise for Recovery works hard to provide hope to those who are still untreated. We educate the public on the disease of addiction, ensuring that it is treatable; promote awareness that those in recovery are responsible and productive members of society; facilitate partnerships and resources that support recovery, as well as overall quality of life; recognize and strengthen the different pathways of recovery; and advocate for a community that both recognizes and supports ongoing recovery efforts.

Rise for Recovery has lived this mission by organizing drug and alcohol free movie nights that promote connectedness within the community, summer picnics, open to all, that showcase stories of individuals who are in long-term recovery, and CRS trainings available to those with lived experience as a means to bridge barriers to employment. We have hosted a candlelight vigil to celebrate the memories of those lost to addiction, an Arts in Recovery Night to display the talents of those in recovery, and our members actively share their personal testimonies at community events.

We have recently partnered with Penn State Altoona for a public showing of the Anonymous People, with a speaker from Penn State's collegiate recovery organization and members of Rise for Recovery to continue, to share hope and reduce the stigma surrounding addiction. We meet the second Saturday of every month from 10:00 -11:30 am at Blair County Drug and Alcohol Partnerships. Rise for Recovery is breaking the silence, **WE DO RECOVER.**





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## Message Carriers of Pennsylvania

*By Robin Horston-Spencer, Executive Director*

Message Carriers of Pennsylvania has supported Western Pennsylvania communities in or seeking recovery through epidemics like the current Opioid crisis and on issues like addressing access to effective help. Throughout our history, we have worked diligently along with other healthcare providers and volunteers to bring awareness to the disease of addiction and the impact it has on families and our communities. We continually promote the benefits of recovery by addressing stigma and discrimination that impede one's opportunity to obtain necessary recovery support services, which help people achieve and sustain long-term recovery.

These initiatives are made evident through a variety of recovery support services, such as our Afterhours Recovery Helpline (412) 463-7006. Callers can receive a listening ear, and get help to navigate service systems of need—such as detox, treatment and recovery houses.

During September's National Recovery Month, we participated in several recovery awareness events. Additionally, we held our 3rd Annual Recovery Lights Up the Night bike ride. This event promoted health and wellness as another pathway of recovery. The turnout was great and we want to thank our partners who made it such a success: Jade Wellness, Alley Co-Op, Bike Pgh., and 412Flock.

October 26<sup>th</sup>, we held "An Evening of Celebrating Recovery" with Keynote Speaker, Dr. Karl Williams, Allegheny County Coroner's Office, and Master of Ceremony and Courtney Abegunde, Message Carriers' Board Chair. William Christopher Helton, received the "Cisco Award" for outstanding volunteer. Carol Ramsey, Adrienne Smith, and Debbie Malizio all shared about their personal volunteer experiences with Message Carriers and the benefits of being a part of this Recovery Community Organization (RCO). They encouraged the audience to join our advocacy efforts to increase a collective voice on issues that impede accessibility to recovery supportive services. Their message was resounding "Nothing About Us Without Us"! Last, but not least, Message Carriers Board Members did a wonderful job with promoting the event along with snagging some great items for our Silent Auction; such as a signed autograph football from Jerome "The Bus" Bettis!

Save the Date: On December 12<sup>th</sup>, 11-1pm we will host our 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Tree of Life Celebration at Petra International Ministries, Pittsburgh, PA 15235. This year's recipient is Sherree Goldstein, Owner of Square Café. The "Passing of the Torch" will be delivered by the former US Attorney, David Hickton.

*Upcoming News: Message Carriers is preparing for an Open House to introduce our new office space and services. We received a capacity building grant from Staunton Farm Foundation. More information will be forth coming upon completion of the grant.*

## THE ADVOCACY GROUP FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY (TAG)

*By Mike Krafick, President, The Advocacy Group for Addiction Recovery*

The Advocacy Group for Addiction Recovery (TAG) is your opportunity to help change the stigma around the disease of addiction. We aim to educate the community about addiction, successful treatment strategies and recovery. TAG is an advocate for the importance of treatment funding to our legislatures, and works to find and secure safe and sober housing for those in recovery. We celebrate recovery by coordinating sober activities throughout the year.

On September 16, 2017, The Advocacy Group for Addiction Recovery (TAG) hosted their 10th Annual Recovery Walk to celebrate National Drug and Alcohol Recovery Month. Approximately 100 people came out to celebrate recovery and show that recovery is possible by putting a face on recovery. People in recovery, their families and friends, as well as professionals from the local drug and alcohol treatment providers came together to celebrate the recovery community. TAG partnered with several agencies to make the day a success including the Armstrong-Indiana-Clarion Drug and Alcohol Commission who provided Naloxone to anyone that wanted to get a free 2 dose kit with Overdose Prevention training.



Although the Recovery Walk is what TAG is most known for, we host several events throughout the year including Holiday Parties to give people in recovery and their families a safe and sober place to celebrate with one another. We are currently planning our Annual Holiday Party that will be held at the Unity Opportunity Center in Kittanning, PA, on Saturday December 16th at 6:00 p.m.

For those that would like to learn more about The Advocacy Group for Addiction Recovery (TAG), visit our Facebook page—[www.facebook.com/theadvocacygroup](http://www.facebook.com/theadvocacygroup). Monthly meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the Unity Opportunity Center in Kittanning, PA.

# The Community Liver Alliance Educates, Advocates and Serves Your Liver Community

*By Suzanna Masartis, Executive Director, Community Liver Alliance*

Drug overdose and deaths in Pennsylvania have increased rapidly since 2011. In 2015, the statewide drug overdose death rate was 26 per 100,000 people, a marked increase from 2014 and a significantly higher rate than the national CDC drug overdose death rate (14.7 per 100,000 people in 2014). In 2016, over 4600 Pennsylvanians died from overdose. With the increase in the abuse of heroin and the sharing of needles, thousands of new cases of infectious hepatitis have emerged. In Pennsylvania (PA), during 2010 to 2015, there were 8,076 newly reported HIV cases. Between 2009 and 2013, reported rates of acute Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) increased by 100%. Every day in the Commonwealth, more than 20 young adults contract hepatitis C and more than 13 people die of overdose. In the past, policy makers have focused on interdiction and incarceration as methods to reduce drug use, but studies have shown that the overall effect of increased drug incarcerations is minimal. As drug-related harms rise despite incarceration efforts, a public health approach to address the opiate use disorder, overdose, and hepatitis epidemics is a necessary, evidence-based strategy to make significant changes to the consequences of injection drug use.

The Community Liver Alliance, in collaboration with the PA Department of Health, embarked on a comprehensive strategy in 2015 to raise awareness to the epidemics and support increased hepatitis screenings and linkages to care - In 10 seminars across PA, training over 850 participants and certifying over 500 people to use HIV/HCV rapid antibody tests. With this intervention, the CLA and PA DOH increased the number of positive HCV test from 10,000 in 2014, to 15,000 in 2015, and 23,300 in 2016.

Our HCV Coalition has 3 pillars: to screen, educate and link to care. Through the Coalition's efforts the Community Liver Alliance has done 5500 free HCV screenings across the state of Pennsylvania and Ohio and has an 11% positive rate. Collaborating with key community based organizations and other allies, the Community Liver Alliance also educated the public about liver health and disease prevention.

Our Kick Liver Disease Campaign educates the public and students about the functions of the liver, how to keep it healthy and wise lifestyle choices that include nutrition, physical activity, safe tattooing and piercing and how to properly take over the counter medication.

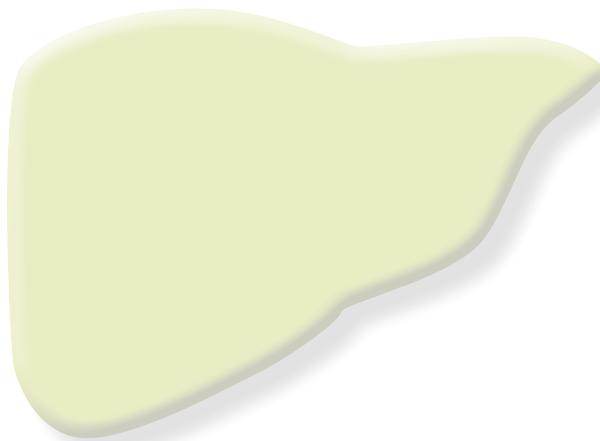
We were instrumental in passing the HCV Screening Bill in Pennsylvania whereas Primary Care Physicians are required to offer a one-time HCV screening to all Baby boomers (people born between 1945-1965), following the CDC's recommendations.

The Community Liver Alliance is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports patients/caregivers, health professionals and the community through programs developed to address various liver diseases and liver wellness information.

We created a comprehensive advocacy program surrounding HCV screening, prevention and awareness. We are creating a Fatty Liver/NASH Coalition to promote liver health through screening, prevention, community outreach and education, created a patient assistance program, support the local youth transplant camp and fund local research.

The Community Liver Alliance builds bridges connecting patients to health care providers and services; creates and conducts screenings, educational workshops and seminars; coordinates support groups; works with local media and community groups to increase awareness of liver wellness and liver disease; and meets with local, state, and federal policy makers to initiate positive change.

One of our strengths lies in our ability to bring together key partners to meet the needs of those we serve. These partnerships and collaborations create a culture of expertise in all aspects of liver-related issues including transplantation. We are doing it all close to home; all the funds raised support our initiatives and are invested into the communities we serve. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.communityliveralliance.org/>.



# Westmoreland County's Coalition on Substance Use (WCCSU)

By Mimi Thomas-Brooker

Westmoreland County's Coalition on Substance Use is fostering a community-based response to the substance use epidemic in our County and the wider southwestern PA region. Director Tim Phillips, on the job for just over a year, is working to make the organization, formerly known as the Drug Overdose Task Force, the recognized leader in our area.

When Westmoreland County's Board of Commissioners sought a new leader in response to increasing overdose deaths, they sought an individual who combined professional credibility and the proven ability to build relationships. Phillips fit the bill, with his background in treatment and prevention programming, along with visibility locally and on the statewide stage.

Upon taking the helm in late 2016, Phillips accepted as his primary mission in providing technical assistance to individuals and community groups in need of direction or community connections to achieve their goals. Since that time, the Coalition's efforts have been largely focused in three areas: Westmoreland's Re-entry working group, the Drug Treatment Court, and in advocating for the expansion of recovery supports.

Borrowing a page from North Carolina's Project Lazarus' Fred Brason, Phillips says that "this issue is too immense to waste time with those who aren't ready to listen." Instead, the Coalition cultivates champions to effect change from all segments of the community. While overdose deaths continue to mount in Westmoreland, for reasons that run the gamut, from the rise of the availability of fentanyl and stigma affecting harm reduction efforts, in the face of statistics, he poses the rhetorical question, "Can you imagine what our death rate would be if we weren't doing what we're doing?"

Westmoreland County's Re-entry working group has created a pocket reference tool for those leaving county prison to assist them in transitioning back into the community. Information on local housing, transportation, and basic needs such as food assistance, education and employment are given to everyone discharged from the prison.

An integral member of the Westmoreland County Treatment Court Team, the Coalition Director works with judges, probation officers, treatment providers, and related staff as an independent recovery advocate for court participants. Research shows that forging partnerships among Drug Courts, public agencies, and community-based agencies generates local support for the programs and enhances effectiveness. Phillips functions as an unbiased advisor to the Court, and when needed provides firm, straight-forward advice to participants.



Westmoreland County Drug Treatment Court Probation Officer Bill Shifko with Coalition Director Tim Phillips at the September 2017 Recovery Art Show

Director Phillips is a Recovery Coach and has stated the desire to see recovery coaches and certified recovery specialists (CRS's) integrated more effectively in the county in a cross-systems manner. Currently a limited number of CRS's operate with a local treatment provider, but the availability could easily grow to ten-fold, offering a variety of services across the county, if funding was adequately appropriated.



Tim Phillips with Delmont Borough Police Chief Klobucar and Det. Tony Marcocci



Tim Phillips at Westmoreland County Drug Treatment Court graduation



# Young People In Recovery

## Pennsylvania Leadership Summit October 28<sup>th</sup> 2017



State Senator and Senate  
Appropriations Committee Chair,  
Pat Browne

By William Stauffer, Executive Director, PRO•A

Young People in Recovery (YPR) hosts the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Pennsylvania Leadership Summit.

YPR Pennsylvania is dedicated to teaching people how to be change agents in this state. Therefore, they organized a state-wide leadership summit, held on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at Treatment Trends Inc. in Allentown, PA. PRO•A was proud to assist YPR in organizing this event. We look forward to collaborating with them again—as leadership development to support our statewide recovery movement is a shared mission objective.

The summit was free to attend and offered information on leadership development, legislative and policy education, recovery schools, recovery messaging, and advocacy. Information presented offered both historical context and information on current issues. Speakers included The Young People in Recovery COE, advocates for policy and recovery, legislators and PRO•A executive director, William Stauffer.

### Leadership Development

Young People in Recovery CEO, Justin Luke Riley, who flew in from Colorado to speak on mobilizing leaders for the future and about how YPR is developing young leaders. Katharine Celentano of the Drug Policy Alliance in New York presented information on harm reduction and community organizing.



Young People in Recovery CEO,  
Justin Luke Riley

### Legislative and Policy Education

Policy advocate Alyssa Schatz educated attendees on the legislative process and how to educate elected officials about recovery and policy matters of concern to the recovery community. The State Senator and Senate Appropriations Committee Chair, Pat Browne, spoke about how to influence public policy. He also spoke about the role he has had in supporting drug and alcohol policy, including Act 50 of 2010 which created the PA Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, and supporting recovery high schools in Pennsylvania.

### Recovery Messaging

Recovery messaging information was presented by Recovery Advocate and writer for the Huffington Post, Brooke Feldman, and State Rep. Mike Schlossberg. Brooke talked about recovery messaging and the importance of using person first, non-stigmatizing language when sharing about recovery. State Rep. Mike Schlossberg, a member of the House Health and Human Services Committee, talked about the best ways to get messages across to elected officials. He also spoke about how his own experiences sharing about mental health recovery have been met with support.



Brooke Feldman

State Representative  
and member  
of the House  
Health and Human  
Services Committee,  
Mike Schlossberg



### Advocacy

Jimmy Hartzell, of the Life of Purpose, provided information about recovery high schools, collegiate recovery programs and how to support them through policy advocacy. Bill Stauffer spoke about the legislative and advocacy history of landmark initiatives impacting our community and how oftentimes advocacy is about “long game” effort and not single actions.

Look for “save the date” information in upcoming PRO•A newsletters. For more information, please contact John Fabiseski, Chapter lead for YPR – Wyoming County Chapter at [wyoymingcountypa@youngpeopleinrecovery.org](mailto:wyoymingcountypa@youngpeopleinrecovery.org)



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Elizabeth Vargas

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*Additional Keynote Speakers include — Dr. Marlene Carson, Founder of Rahab's Hideaway, Sur-thriver of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking, and Rabbi Mark Borovitz, Author and Addiction Expert to Inspire and Bring Hope*

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