Health and Recovery Rally

Each year during the month of September, National Recovery Month is celebrated. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the founders of National Recovery Month, believe it “promotes the societal benefits of treatment for substance use and mental disorders, celebrates people in recovery, lauds the contributions of treatment providers, and promotes the message that recovery in all its forms is possible.” This year ECCPASA celebrated with our first-ever Health and Recovery Rally in Buffalo.

The rally was held on Saturday, September 10th, at True Bethel Baptist Church. It focused not only on recovery, but also touched on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). A continental breakfast was served while the audience listened to several speakers who were either in recovery or experts on addiction, recovery and/or FASD.

The event was kicked off with a few words from ECCPASA’s Program Director, Robin Mann, as well as Erica J. Boyce who is an educator for our Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders program. Next, Ms. Cynthia “CeCe” Cray shared her heart-felt personal story about her struggles with addiction. Ms. Cray is currently in recovery, and several years ago gave birth to a baby girl with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. She spoke of her journey to recovery, along with the heartache and guilt she faces over giving birth to her special-needs daughter who has since passed. CeCe says she still struggles each day and is constantly reminded of how her past decisions affect not only herself, but also others around her. She thanked several people who have helped her along the way, including her teenage son who was always there to love and support her. At the end of her story there was not a dry eye in the room!

Dr. Luther Robinson, Director of Dysmorphology and Clinical Genetics as well as the FASD Special Diagnostic Program at Women and Children’s Hospital also spoke about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. He has treated thousands of children with such problems and recounted personal stories of how working with babies and children with FASD has touched him. Clergy members, Elder Pierce and Elder Horace Harper, from True Bethel’s Restore Ministry enthusiastically shared some words of encouragement with the audience. They offered support to those who are in recovery and reached out to those who may still be struggling.

For more information on addictions and/or help seeking recovery, contact the Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse at 716.831.2298.
Letter from the Executive Director

Andrea J. Wanat, MA, CPP

In October I received an article that was published in the New York Times about the death of Dr. Morris E. Chafetz. Dr. Chafetz was the first director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAA), and played an important role in changing public perception of alcoholism from being a social or moral “weakness” to the more current disease concept. However, his role as lead spokesman for the problems of alcoholism and its treatment came purely by accident.

In 1954, he finished psychiatric training at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital. From there, he accepted the only job available: starting up an alcohol treatment center that the state had just created. Dr. Chafetz reluctantly took the job since no one else was interested. “I did not think much of alcoholic people,” he told the journal Alcohol Health and Research World in 1995. “I did not like them; I just was not the least bit interested in them.”

His opinion quickly changed. “It only took me a few months of listening to these patients to recognize my prejudices and the prejudices of others.” When he was offered the job as NIAA Director in 1970, Dr. Chafetz was determined to change the public’s perception about alcoholism. “Having experienced the extent of my own prejudices and my own ignorance of the issue, I was bound and determined to turn the country around and to treat alcoholics as ill human beings who needed treatment, not as bad people who should be ignored and neglected,” Dr. Chafetz told Alcohol Health and Research World. “I remember saying in one of my first speeches that alcoholism was America’s most treatable untreated illness, and I still feel that way,” he said.

Some 40 years later, we continue to struggle with the same social stigma surrounding alcoholism and substance abuse dependency. Unfortunately our hard work in the field is still very much necessary, maybe now more than ever before. With all of the current changes in health care, the field has to stay strong and united, and carry on the work Dr. Chafetz began years ago.

We still have work to do, and together we can make a difference! Have a safe and happy holiday season! See you next year!

Andrea
ECCPASA has recently added two new board members to our team - Mr. Andrew J. Freedman, Esq. and Mr. Douglas Shiring!

Mr. Freedman is a Partner at Hodgson Russ Attorneys, LLP. He specializes in Education Law and has extensive experience counseling school districts and boards of education. Mr. Freedman also teaches education law courses at the University at Buffalo Law School, Canisius College School of Education Administration, and Buffalo State College Education Administration Program. He looks forward to using his expertise to help our agency’s fundraising and public policy committees.

Mr. Shiring is the Regional Special Investigations Unit Manager at GEICO. He will be assisting the council as a member of our public policy committee. In his spare time he coaches Amherst Youth Hockey and enjoys spending time with his family.

We are delighted to have both new members on “board” and welcome their abundance of energy, enthusiasm and experience!
The Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse held its fourth Annual Meeting on October 20th at Templeton Landing on Buffalo’s waterfront. The keynote speaker this year was Robert Pezzolesi, Founder and CEO of New York Center for Alcohol Policy Solutions/New York Alcohol Policy Alliance. We were graced with the presence of our long-time board members as well as many prevention, treatment and recovery professionals with whom we continue to work with closely.

The speaker provided a great overview of the implementation of evidence-based alcohol policy. He spoke about such topics as Social Host laws and alcohol taxes, as well as fees and pricing and how they affect alcohol sales and use. He also spoke about dram shop laws and alcohol outlet density.

Mr. Pezzolesi provided us with some interesting insight on how the marketing of alcohol affects a community as well as individual use.

As per tradition, ECCPASA handed out several awards to outstanding staff members and partners in the prevention field. ECCPASA staff members, Darlene Zwilka and Mark Fenz, were recognized for their twenty-five years of dedication to the agency, while James Frank was acknowledged for his twenty years of service! Lisa Johnson, Coordinator of the Lancaster-Depew Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, accepted the Community Partnership Award on behalf of the coalition. They were honored for their outstanding work in the implementation of many strategies to curb and prevent substance abuse/use in the Lancaster-Depew area. The Board Recognition and Service Award was presented to Roger L. Ross, Esq., for his many years of dedication to our agency as both board president and as his current position as chair of our personnel and nominating committees. Cathy Kaiser of Kaiser Design Studio and our agency’s go-to person for all of our graphic needs received the William C. MacVicar Memorial Award for her dedication to our agency as well as the prevention field, and her ability to put the thoughts of our group into true works of art.

ECCPASA wishes to thank everyone who came out to celebrate with us once again this year and we are looking forward to doing it again next year!
Eating dinner and underage drinking don’t have anything in common... or do they? More than a decade of research by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University has consistently found that the more often kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs. Because of this research, CASA designated the last Monday of every September as “Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children.”

ECCPASA celebrated this year’s Family Day on Monday, September 26th, with various activities around Erie County. Over 1,000 Family Day brochures explaining the importance of eating dinner as a family, including suggested activities, were disseminated throughout the county. Sally Yageric, Community Educator for Programs for Parents at ECCPASA, worked with the SafeHomes Parent Network in planning school-based activities such as having students create placemats to be used at home for Family Day dinner. In addition, both the Amherst Town Board and the Erie County Legislature signed a proclamation officially proclaiming September 26th as Family Day!

Once again, ECCPASA held a Family Day event for families who are, or who have been, enrolled in our Strengthening Families Program. Approximately 13 families consisting of 50 caregivers and children attended. Families enjoyed a delicious Italian dinner and dessert, and participated in activities such as creating picture frames and cookbooks to take home with them! They also learned games to increase communication and make dinners more fun at home, and viewed a presentation describing the association between eating dinner as a family and the decreased risk of youth substance use.

For more information regarding Family Day, contact Erica J. Boyce at 831.2298 or visit http://casafamilyday.org/familyday.
ECCPASA and the Erie County Sheriff’s Office recently collaborated to bring the PACT360 training to Buffalo. PACT360 - Police and Communities Together - is a series of community education programs from The Partnership at Drugfree.org. These programs are meant for law enforcement and community educators to work together to provide “prevention education to the community.” They are designed to deal with existing drug issues and to respond rapidly to emerging drug threats. The goal is to improve the quality of life of the community.

There are three different sections to PACT360. They can be presented all at once, separately, or as individual topics based upon community needs.

The first section of PACT360 is called METH360, and it focuses on meth prevention and education. The next section is Parents360, also known as, PARENTS: YOU MATTER! Drugs/Alcohol, Your Teen and YOU. This section “is designed to help parents understand, prevent, and address drug and alcohol issues” as it relates to their kids. The final section of the program is called WRECKED or Youth360 and this section is designed for teenagers. It is a “substance abuse prevention education program that teaches teens about the realities and consequences of substance use.”

For more information or to schedule a training please contact Sally at sally@eccpasa.org or at 831.2298.

Sammy Violante, Inspirational Speaker, Shares Words of Wisdom with ECCPASA’s Strengthening Families

“Life’s too short to wait too long”—Sammy V

An inspiration of hope best describes Sammy Violante. His story of overcoming adversity, specifically obsessive-compulsive disorder or OCD, held the attention of parents from ECCPASA’s Strengthening Families Program on October 25, 2011. His remarkable journey began with the onset of symptoms in his 40’s. His OCD hindered not only his personal life, but also his career and success in the financial world. Despite many attempts at medication and ultimately becoming a prisoner in his own home, Sammy finally found the strength within himself (and with the emotional support of his father) to venture into a new world of healing. Sammy, with the help of physicians at a behavior clinic, learned the skills to manage his OCD. Though he experienced a number of setbacks, he finally found what worked for him - using his “weakness” as his strength.

Sammy shared several “take aways” or “life lessons” with the audience. He is a spiritual person, and instead of looking at his adversity negatively, he saw it as a blessing, and as a new opportunity to share his life lessons with others. He now volunteers with hundreds of high-risk teens each month and gives free presentations to peers who struggle with addiction or mental health issues.

For more information on how to get Sammy to speak at your next event contact ECCPASA at 831.2298.
Under contract with the Erie County Department of Mental Health. Funded by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, school districts and municipalities throughout Erie County, individuals, corporations and community service organizations. Member agency of the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County.

**ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE, INC.**

Mission Statement: Consistent with its National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence heritage, the Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse will provide leadership to fight the stigma associated with chemical dependency through public and policy education, liaison with the professional and recovering communities and objective information, referral and linkage for those in need. We will provide state-of-the-art prevention and intervention programs to families, schools, faith-based institutions, health and social service agencies, the criminal justice system and interested communities that meet their needs and sustain the chemical dependency focus of the agency.

**Support ECCPASA**

As we continue to serve the community, please become an official “supporter” of our mission!

Your tax deductible contribution can be made at any time of the year:

- $10.00
- $25.00
- $50.00
- $75.00
- $100.00
- Other $___________________

Name:________________________________________

Address:________________________________________

Phone:________________________________________

Email:________________________________________

Thank you for supporting the ECCPASA community efforts!

Please mail your tax deductible contribution to: ECCPASA, 1625 Hertel Ave., Buffalo, N.Y. 14216

Or current resident.

**ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

1625 Hertel Avenue
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