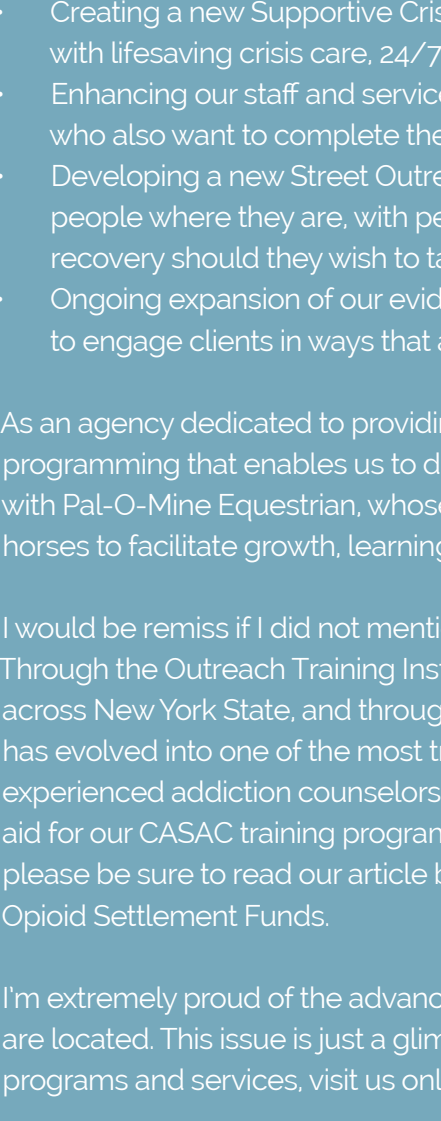




# The Outreach Vision Fall 2023

## Recovery Month

### Message from our President



DEBBIE PANTIN  
President & CEO

While September is national Recovery month, every day at Outreach is dedicated to helping people with substance use issues set a path towards their recovery. We provide a continuum of care for all individuals in search of high-quality evidence-based substance abuse treatment, and Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) training programs. Youth and adults in recovery now have a multitude of options to access recovery-oriented services to help them to build healthy lives and lifestyle habits.

Over 40 years ago Outreach began as an assessment and referral center in Queens. Since then, our mission has evolved to meet the needs of all the communities we serve in New York City, Long Island, and beyond. In 1984, when we saw that youth were experimenting and using drugs at alarming rates, we opened New York State's first residential treatment program for adolescents as young as 12 with substance use disorders. According to the National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, "Early drug abuse correlates with substance abuse problems later in life, and the most significant increases in destructive behavior appear to take place among older teens and young adults."

At Outreach, we offer a holistic approach to supporting individuals in recovery. We are continually enhancing and expanding our services and programs to reach people across the lifespan, including special populations such as veterans and justice involved individuals, and from the earliest ages to give them a greater opportunity for success.

Thanks to the generosity and support of our friends and colleagues like you, we are currently engaged in several exciting new initiatives that will further enhance our services, including:

- Opening our first residence for young adults, ages 19-25, in Brentwood, Long Island, later this year, offering this underserved population a vital continuum of care.
- Creating a new Supportive Crisis Stabilization Center on Long Island in 2024 that will provide the community with lifesaving crisis care, 24/7/365.
- Enhancing our staff and services at Long Island's only Recovery High School program for teens in recovery who also want to complete their secondary education.
- Developing a new Street Outreach program in 2024 that will reach the most vulnerable and underserved people where they are, with peer services, harm reduction interventions, and a pathway to treatment and recovery should they wish to take it.
- Ongoing expansion of our evidence-based practices, including equine and music therapies, to name a few, to engage clients in ways that are accessible and meaningful to them.

As an agency dedicated to providing the highest quality of care, we will continue to identify and adapt unique programming that enables us to diversify our approach to recovery - as evidenced by our latest collaboration with Pal-O-Mine Equestrian, whose mission is to provide a comprehensive therapeutic equine program using horses to facilitate growth, learning and healing.

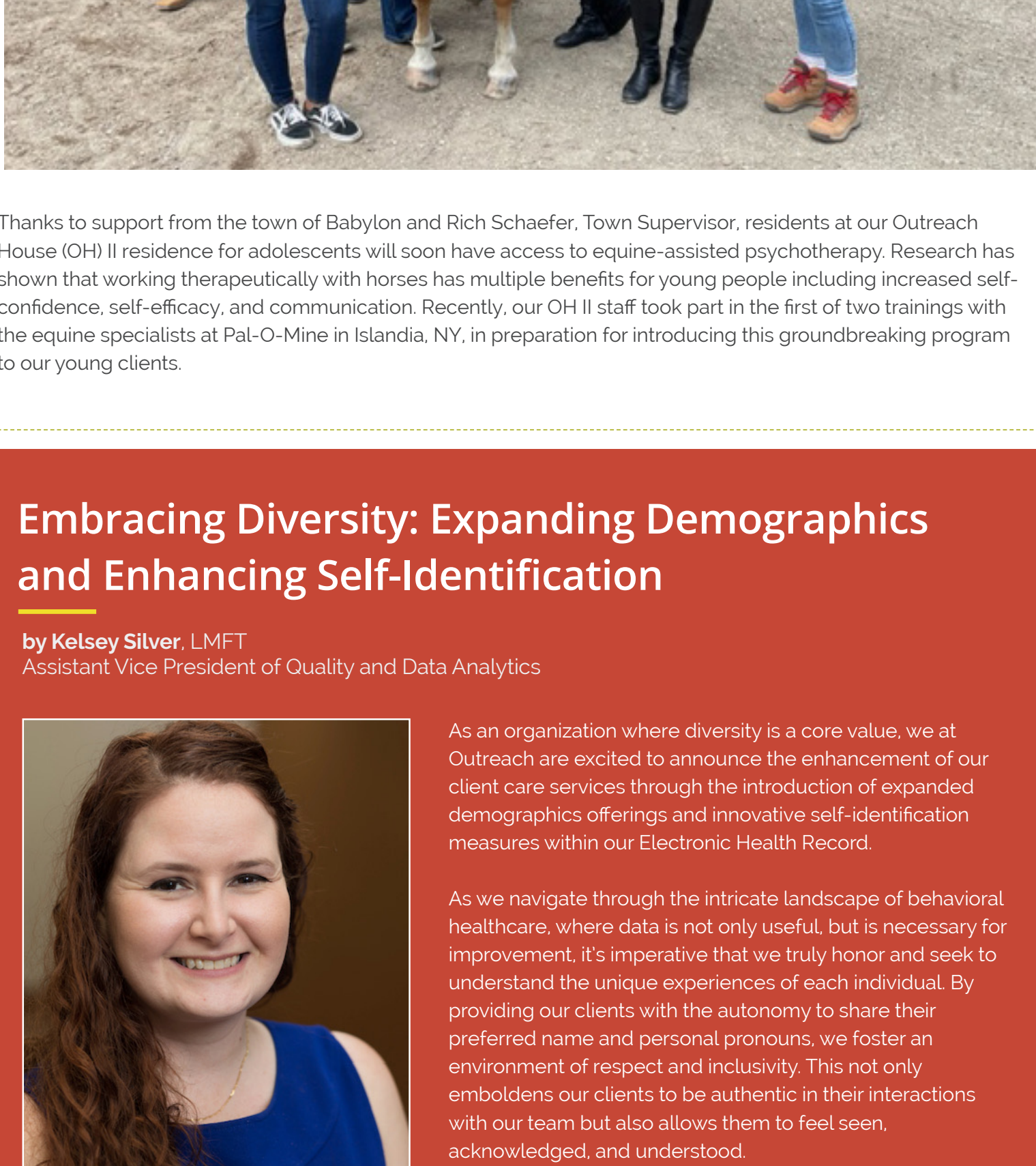
I would be remiss if I did not mention that not only do we treat addiction, but we also train addiction counselors. Through the Outreach Training Institute (OTI), the State's largest CASAC training provider, our impact can be seen across New York State, and throughout the country. From OTI's beginnings as a community educator, the institute has evolved into one of the most trusted and experienced training centers for aspiring professionals and experienced addiction counselors alike. OTI awards a limited number of scholarships and income-based financial aid for our CASAC training programs. If you are interested in becoming a CASAC and live in Suffolk County, please be sure to read our article below about scholarships available through support from the Suffolk County Opioid Settlement Funds.

I'm extremely proud of the advances that we have made and impacts in the communities in which our programs are located. This issue is just a glimpse into what recovery looks like here at Outreach. To learn more about our programs and services, visit us online at [www.OPINYORG](http://www.OPINYORG) or call us toll free at **1-833-OPINYORG (1-833-674-6967)**.



President/CEO  
Outreach Development Corporation

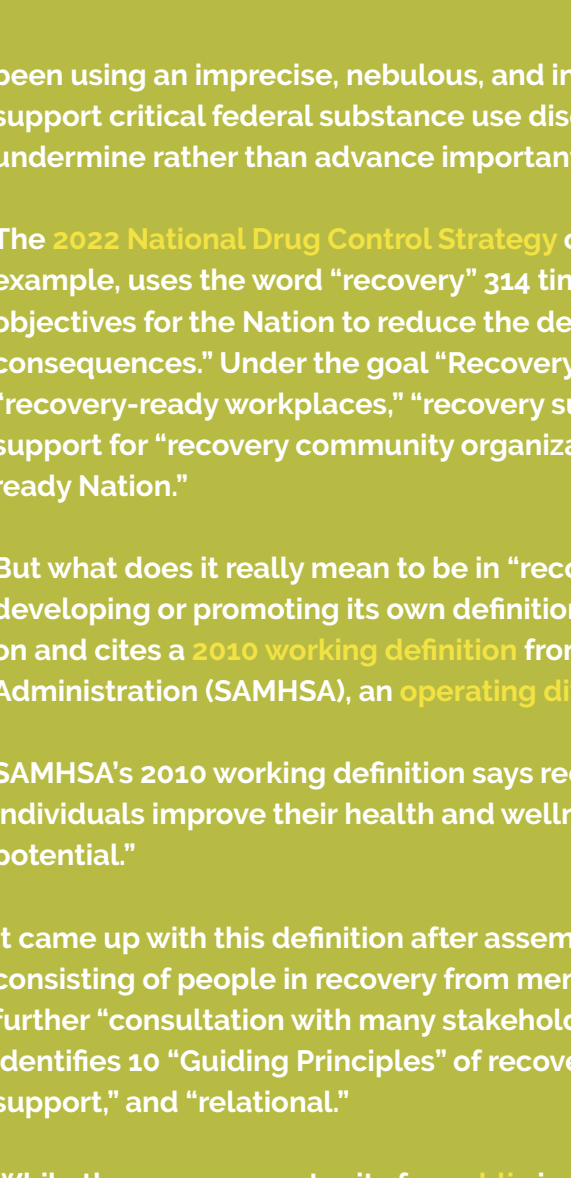
### Sweet Pal-O-Mine



Thanks to support from the town of Babylon and Rich Schaefer, Town Supervisor, residents at our Outreach House (OH) II residence for adolescents will soon have access to equine-assisted psychotherapy. Research has shown that working therapeutically with horses has multiple benefits for young people including increased self-confidence, self-efficacy, and communication. Recently, our OH II staff took part in the first of two trainings with the equine specialists at Pal-O-Mine in Islandia, NY, in preparation for introducing this groundbreaking program to our young clients.

## Embracing Diversity: Expanding Demographics and Enhancing Self-Identification

by Kelsey Silver, LMFT  
Assistant Vice President of Quality and Data Analytics



As an organization where diversity is a core value, we at Outreach are excited to announce the enhancement of our client care services through the introduction of expanded demographics offerings and innovative self-identification measures within our Electronic Health Record.

As we navigate through the intricate landscape of behavioral healthcare, where data is not only useful, but is necessary for improvement, it's imperative that we truly honor and seek to understand the unique experiences of each individual. By providing our clients with the autonomy to share their preferred name and personal pronouns, we foster an environment of respect and inclusivity. This not only emboldens our clients to be authentic in their interactions with our team but also allows them to feel seen, acknowledged, and understood.

Our new demographic offerings paint a more comprehensive picture of our diverse clientele. This goes beyond age, gender, and ethnicity, by digging deeper into the myriad of backgrounds, experiences, and identities that our clients bring with them. Recognizing this vast tapestry of identities aids us in tailoring our care and treatments, ensuring each client's needs are met with precision and empathy.

Additionally, from an analytical perspective, this expansive data opens up opportunities for more insightful research. With a richer pool of information, our ability to discern patterns, tailor interventions, and predict outcomes is significantly enhanced. This, in turn, informs our methodologies, making our treatment approaches more holistic and effective.

But beyond the data, this initiative speaks to the heart of the Outreach mission. By continuously striving to evolve and adapt, we reinforce our commitment to providing exceptional care for our clients. In a world that's ever-changing, it's our responsibility to be at the forefront of understanding and compassion.

We believe that through these measures, we're not only optimizing the analytical strength of our agency but more importantly, paving the way for a more personalized and dignified client care experience. As we move forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to serve, understand, and uplift every individual that walks through our doors.

## OpEd What does it mean to be 'in recovery'? We need a better federal definition

By Mitchell Berger

"When I use a word," one of 19th century British author and mathematician Lewis Carroll's characters once said, "it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less."

Though he was a formidable philosopher and logician, Carroll likely would be stymied by the circular logic that justifies the definition of "recovery" currently used to support critical federal substance use disorder programs and activities. For more than a decade, the federal government has

been using an imprecise, nebulous, and informally developed "working definition" of "recovery" to support critical federal substance use disorder programs. Ultimately, that imprecise definition may undermine rather than advance important national substance use disorder treatment and policy goals.

The 2022 National Drug Control Strategy of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), for example, uses the word "recovery" 314 times as it explains seven "specific strategic goals and objectives for the Nation to reduce the demand for and availability of illicit drugs and their consequences." Under the goal, "Recovery efforts are increased in the United States," ONDCP calls for "recovery-ready workplaces," "recovery support services," "recovery coaching," "recovery housing," and support for "recovery community organizations," all essential components of "building a recovery-ready Nation."

But what does it really mean to be in "recovery" from a substance use disorder? Rather than developing or promoting its own definition, the 150-page National Drug Control Strategy instead relies on and cites a 2010 working definition from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an operating division within the Department of Health & Human Services.

SAMHSA's 2010 working definition says recovery means: "a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential."

It came up with this definition after assembling unidentified "leaders in the behavioral health field, consisting of people in recovery from mental health and substance use problems" and engaging in further "consultation with many stakeholders," who were also unnamed. The 2010 SAMHSA document identifies 10 "Guiding Principles" of recovery including "hope," "person-driven," "holistic," "peer support," and "relational."

While there was opportunity for public input in 2011, the working definition does not appear either at the time or since to have been subject to any external, formal peer review or public comment period. The brief document cites in support of its guiding principles no papers or scientific studies. This document seems, in short, a shaky foundation on which to build programs or support a key part of a national strategy intended to reflect coordination across 19 federal departments and agencies as part of a \$421 billion national drug control budget.

SAMHSA itself now has created an entire Office of Recovery that will "evaluate and initiate policy, programs and services with a recovery focus and ensure the voices of individuals in recovery are represented." That new Office of Recovery's website in turn also cites in its resources the SAMHSA 2010 working definition for recovery.

This imprecise language that pervades the nation's most important and well-publicized behavioral health strategies is anathema to another of the Drug Strategy's important goals — that of supporting "evidence-based" policies, approaches, and solutions (variations of which are used 86 times in the Strategy).

"You are in recovery if you say you are" and you are welcome," according to one author quoted in the National Drug Control Strategy's discussion of this goal, which further references the "23 million Americans in recovery," or about 7 percent of the current U.S. population.

That perhaps is the central failure of recovery under the working definition. It is so open-ended and informal that it seemingly can mean anything to anyone and is open to everyone — and this, in the end, dilutes its meaningfulness and utility. This also makes it more likely that grants and other programs will suffer from this same lack of precision with respect to outcomes and outcome measures.

A recent executive summary from a 2022 SAMHSA meeting on recovery relied on policy makers a new, more precise definition. Put simply, the 2010 Working Definition relies on by federal policymakers more than a decade later would benefit from an update — this time as part of a more formal process that reflects and is fully supported and informed by established peer-reviewed science, ethical and policy considerations.

We need a transparent and public process to develop an improved federal definition of recovery. Because the federal definition of recovery can impact funding, program outcomes and policies, such as ONDCP's strategy, it's important for that definition to be up-to-date and evidence-based. We should know who is involved in formulating this strategy and how any draft definition is revised to reflect their input.

In developing an updated recovery definition, the federal government would ideally consider current scientific literature on recovery and the recovery process. The updated definition would cite and reference peer-reviewed and other reports. It would reflect international norms.

An updated definition also would reflect public input and participation from SAMHSA's peer agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (including the National Institutes on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Mental Health, and Drug Abuse), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as well as ONDCP, the Department of Justice and others with interest and programs in this area. The process of developing a revised definition would be led and driven by federal staff in collaboration with the public, not outsourced to contractors or consultants. Public input into the definition both from individuals and organizations representing older adults, youth, racial and ethnic minorities, law enforcement, tribal populations, health care providers, veterans and others would be specifically solicited.

An updated recovery definition would not only allow for comment through listening sessions or meetings but also be published in the Federal Register with a public docket on Regulations.gov so we would know who commented and what they said. (Anonymous comments still may be made when submitting comments to a public docket for those who do not want to share their personal information.) The updated definition or an explanation of the definition would be published in a peer-reviewed journal, where it would ideally be subject to the journal's standard process of independent peer review.

Lack of precision with the term "recovery" in the substance use world in some ways mirrors similar methodological problems with the term "serious mental illness," which also is subject to variation that impacts federal programs. Developing a revised and more precise and scientific definition of recovery in a transparent manner would improve the nation's substance use disorder programs. It also would ultimately help those with substance use disorders and their friends, family, and health providers.

There is every reason to support those recovering from current and past substance use disorders. But we need a more precise, scientific, and shared understanding of just what recovery really means.

Mitchell Berger has worked in public and behavioral health at the federal and local levels. The opinions expressed are solely his and should not be imputed to any other individual nor to any public or private entities. This article was originally published in STAT on July 11, 2023.

## Young Poets in Recovery:

### Poems by adolescent residents at Outreach House II

#### Love.

The thing that we desire the most,  
When there's a fire burning in your heart,  
And you need warm arms to be wrapped around,  
You'll search for love.  
But what if we don't have to search for love?  
What if it comes to us?  
Grasps us and doesn't let go.  
Or what if love isn't real?  
What if the fire in my heart went out ages ago?  
No one will know.  
But love.

The little moments we all have,  
we don't speak  
We don't see each other,  
but we are all connected.  
We never meet,  
but we are together.  
This unspoken connection...

#### Mom

She has hazel eyes,  
and a heart so big.  
When I see her she makes me grin,  
From singing and dancing,  
to taking me to rehab.  
I'll never let go of what we have,  
I appreciate everything you do,  
but I'll only name a few...  
Taking care of me when I'm sick,  
and driving me to dance.  
Oh how could I forget...  
telling me you love me at every chance.  
You are beautiful, you are loving, and I hope we never part.  
Though your hands are very cold,  
I know you have the warmest heart.

#### Purple Chairs

I sit in this chair every day  
I hate this purple stupid chair  
I want to kick the chair sometimes  
Sometimes I don't even want to sit in it  
Every group someone says you could be taking up a seat that someone else needs  
Why would someone want to sit in this purple chair all day  
I used to just sit in this chair  
"If you don't want the help tell us"  
I didn't want the help  
I didn't tell anyone  
Every day sitting in this chair taught me I do want the help  
More than I'd like to admit  
Eight months sitting in this purple chair  
The chair hasn't changed  
But I have

#### Real Me

Do you really know me,  
if the smile is all you see?  
And do you really feel me,  
if you think I'm happy just to be?  
Have you ever looked at me  
if you have never seen a tear?  
Have you ever really listened  
if you don't know what I fear?  
Have you ever stood beside me  
if you think that I don't fall?  
Have you ever walked with me  
if you've never watched me crawl?  
You think that I'm the person that I allow the world to see.  
Come hold my empty hand a while,  
and meet the real me.

## Outreach's 29th Annual Long Island Luncheon marks three decades of success!

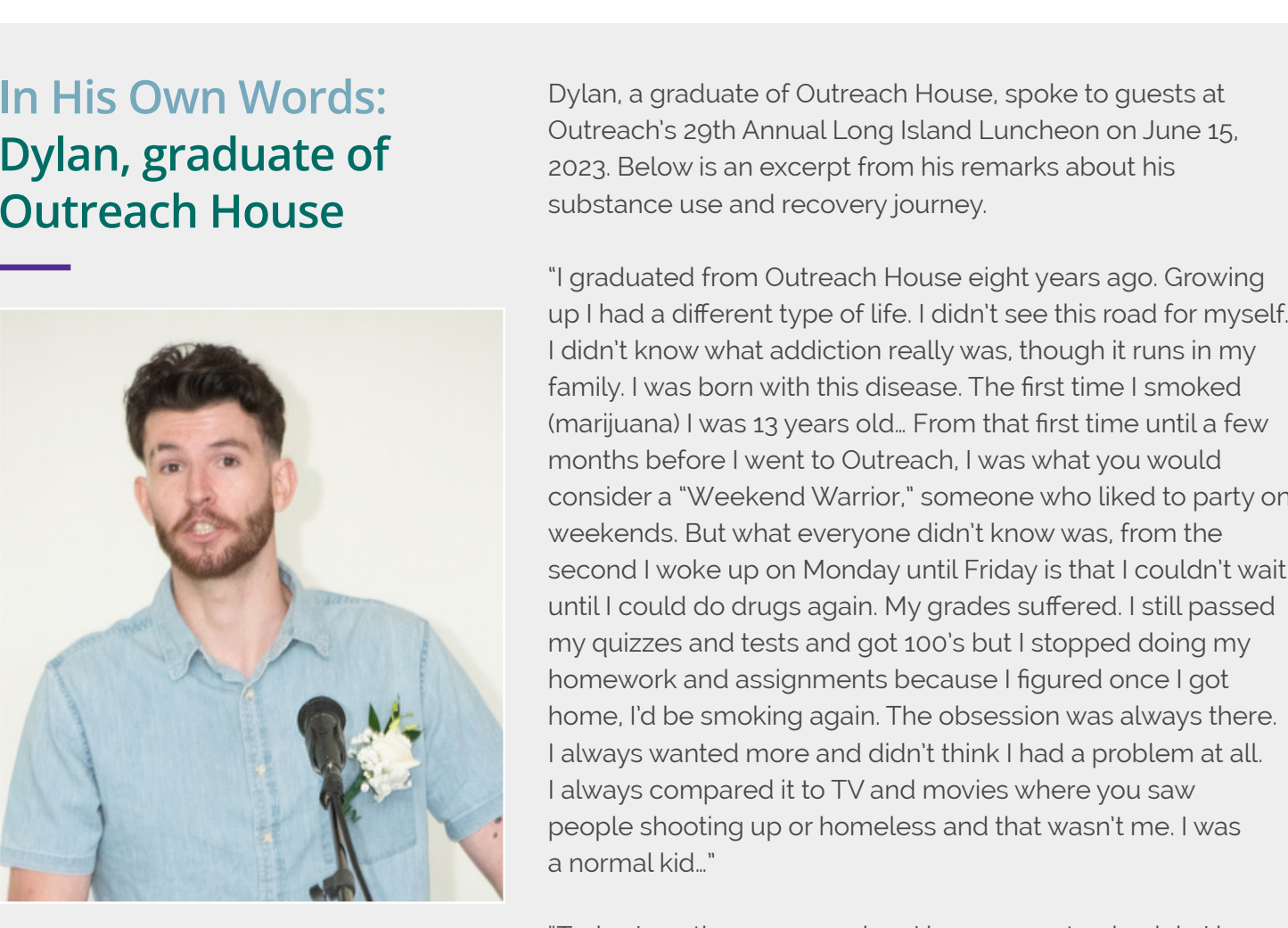


Photo credit: Blue Pictorial @2023  
From left to right: 2023 Long Island Luncheon Honorees Christine Ireland-DeLeo, NYS Senator Mario R. Matarra, Outreach President & CEO Debbie Pantin, Honoree Michael Ward, and Luncheon Emcee Janice Lieberman.

Thanks to the generosity of our friends and sponsors, Outreach's 29th Annual Long Island Luncheon on June 15th at the Stonebridge County Club in Smithtown was another success. Over \$200,000 was raised to help Outreach continue to build stronger and brighter futures for Long Islanders struggling with substance use.

Emceed by journalist and consumer advocate Janice Lieberman, host of the Real Deal on News 12, this year's event celebrated three honorees all of whom are deeply committed to the health and well-being of Long Island and helping Outreach build healthy lives: Christine Ireland-DiLeo, Vice President and Relationship Manager, TD Bank; Senator Mario R. Matarra, New York State Senator, 2nd District and Business Agent, Plumbers Local #200; and Michael Ward, Senior Vice President, Vanderbilt Financial Group, who received the 2023 John Brower, Jr. Memorial Award. The event also featured powerful remarks from Dylan, an Outreach House graduate, who shared his inspiring recovery journey.

### In His Own Words:

#### Dylan, graduate of Outreach House

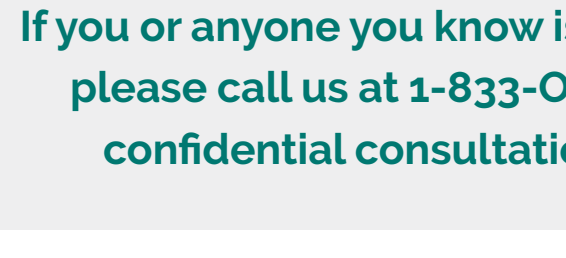


Photo credit: Blue Pictorial @2023

Dylan, a graduate of Outreach House, spoke to guests at Outreach's 29th Annual Long Island Luncheon on June 15, 2023. Below is an excerpt from his remarks about his substance use and recovery journey.

"I graduated from Outreach House eight years ago. Growing up I had a different type of life. I didn't see this road for myself. I didn't know what addiction really was, though it runs in my family. I was born with this disease. The first time I smoked (marijuana) I was 13 years old. From that first time until a few months before I went to Outreach, I was what you would consider a "Weekend Warrior," someone who liked to party on weekends. But what everyone didn't know was, from the second I woke up on Monday until Friday is that I couldn't wait until I could do drugs again. My grades suffered. I still passed my quizzes and tests and got 100's but I stopped doing my homework and assignments because I figured once I got home, I'd be smoking again. The obsession was always there. I always wanted more and didn't think I had a problem at all. I always compared it to TV and movies where you saw people shooting up or homeless and that wasn't me. I was a normal kid..."

"Today I am three years sober. I have a great union job. I have the love and trust of my family back, and a loving girlfriend. Before I was sober, I didn't know how to be accountable, how to express myself or what integrity meant. I never even heard that word before I got to Outreach."

"My road to recovery was not a straight one. As I told you I went to Outreach eight years ago, but I am just now three years sober. What Outreach did was plant the seed of my recovery. It helped me know that there was something out there for me. I knew where to go when I needed help. They never gave up on me, and helped shape me into the man I am today."

If you or anyone you know is in need of help with substance use issues, please call us at **1-833-OPINYORG (1-833-674-6967)** for a free and confidential consultation with one of our addiction specialists.



# Recovery Month: Shedding the Shame and Fostering Hope

By Megan Ryan, LMCH  
Site Director, Bellport Outpatient Program

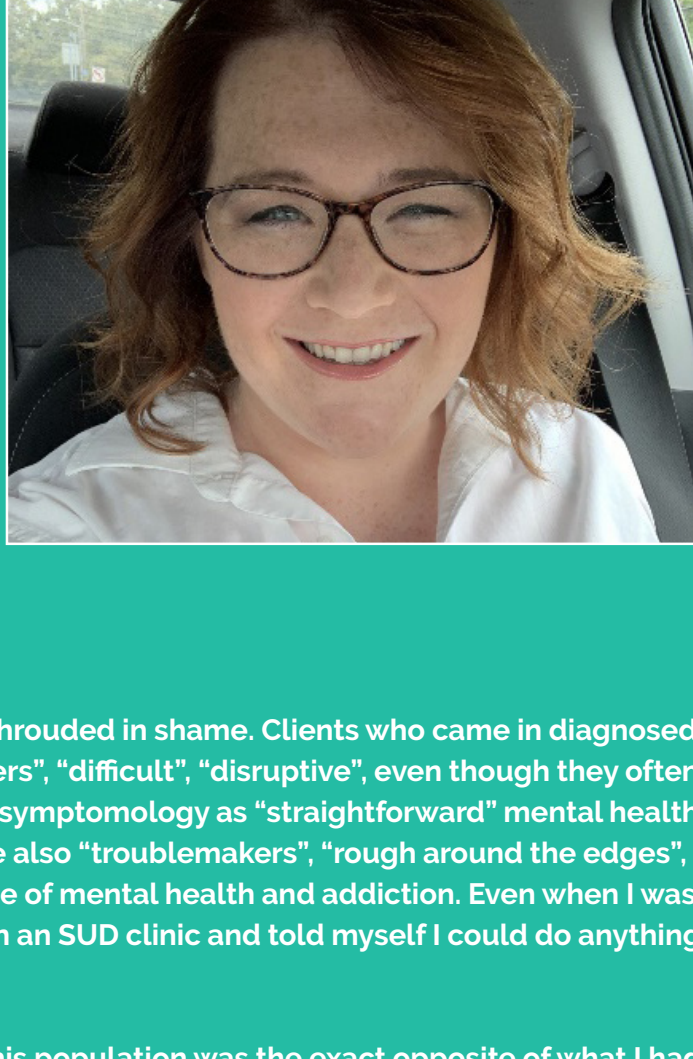
National Recovery Month was started in 1989 by SAMHSA to celebrate the advancements in the field of both substance use and mental health treatment as well as to thank the dedicated providers and communities surrounding those who are in recovery. However, I think that celebrating recovery takes on a whole new meaning when you are deep in the work that we do here at Outreach.

For years, individuals associated with addiction were shrouded in shame. Clients who came in diagnosed with substance use disorders were often "troublemakers", "difficult", "disruptive", even though they often came into waiting rooms with the same behaviors and symptomatology as "straightforward" mental health clients. And for those that worked in the field? We were also "troublemakers", "rough around the edges", and largely dismissed when speaking to our knowledge of mental health and addiction. Even when I was coming into the field, I was nervous to take a position in an SUD clinic and told myself I could do anything for a year, get my license and move on.

But what I found after a very short time working with this population was the exact opposite of what I had made assumptions about. People who were in treatment and those striving towards recovery were smart, exceptional and inspiring human beings. They were individuals clawing their way out of the grips of addiction, the criminal justice system, broken family systems and systemic injustices on top of being stigmatized and shamed for their very existence. The fact that even some of these individuals kept showing up gave me a new sense of hope for this world and this work has shaped who I am today.

To truly celebrate recovery, we should recognize that every small win, whether it's a client completing successfully or returning after disengaging or even just being honest with us about them needing support is a huge victory and deserves a celebration. We foster hope every time we sit with a client because it means there's a chance for change. For myself and my team, I know that we celebrate recovery every time a client walks through the door, willing to be a healthier version of themselves.

*Megan Ryan is the Director of Outreach's Outpatient Clinic in Bellport New York which provides the community with access to adult and adolescent outpatient services and a women's day rehabilitation program.*



## Harm Reduction: Saving Lives and a Doorway to Recovery

The National Institute of Health defines harm reduction as an evidence-based, often life-saving approach that directly engages people who use drugs to prevent overdose, disease transmission, and other harms. Harm reduction acknowledges an individual's drug use is experienced on a continuum that ranges from beneficial to harmless to lethal. Harm reduction embraces the principles of health equity and social justice because it recognizes that substance use is frequently a response to personally experienced trauma growing from oppression and inequality.

"Harm reduction is about trying to keep people alive," says John Venza, Outreach's Vice President for Residential Services and Business Development. "Getting people into treatment for substance use disorders is vital, but we need to keep people alive, so they are able to decide if they want to go into treatment," says Venza.

Increasing fatalities by overdose have created a national and statewide public health crisis. According to provisional data released by the Center for Disease Control's National Center for Health Statistics, in 2021, there were nearly 108,000 drug overdose deaths in the United States, an increase of nearly 15% from 2020. In New York State, the rate of deaths involving any opioids tripled since 2010.

This ongoing epidemic is due in part to an ever-evolving drug supply, and the increased toxicity of those drugs. Synthetic opioids, primarily fentanyl and now xylazine, are among the leading drivers of overdose deaths. The NYS Department of Health reports that in 2021, the state experienced a staggering 5,000 overdose deaths involving opioids, over 10,000 emergency department visits due to opioid overdoses, and more than 19,000 instances of naloxone (also known as Narcan) being administered by emergency medical services.

To address this escalating crisis, Outreach is training addiction professionals in harm reduction strategies while also providing people who use drugs with access to lifesaving harm reduction tools and services.

### Training Providers in Harm Reduction

The Outreach Training Institute (OTI) is one of the largest and most well-established Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) education and training programs in New York and is licensed by the state's Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS). As part of its comprehensive training program, OTI offers a three-hour core Harm Reduction Training predicated on the National Harm Reduction Coalition's central principles. This training examines issues which harm reduction approaches raise for substance use treatment providers who have less experience in providing these services, definitions, practice examples, proposed client interventions, and practical implementation guidance. Additionally, the training incorporates a spectrum of strategies that includes safer use, managed use, abstinence from substances, meeting people who use drugs "where they're at," and the conditions of use along with the use itself.

### Providing Access to Lifesaving Harm Reduction Interventions

According to OASAS, Fentanyl is 50-100 times more potent than heroin and morphine. Pharmaceutical manufactured fentanyl is used medically; however, fentanyl-related overdose deaths have been attributed to illicitly manufactured fentanyl and by-products have become increasingly common in the unregulated drug supply. It has been found mixed with other substances, which increases the risk of overdose and overdose death. One of the more dangerous substances mixed with fentanyl is xylazine, a non-opioid sedative commonly used in veterinary medicine. Known in the drug trade as "tranq dope," xylazine slows blood flow and impacts breathing, heart rate and blood pressure, and can cause flesh wounds that can lead to amputation. In 2022, the Drug Enforcement Administration detected the xylazine in nearly a quarter of the confiscated fentanyl samples in 48 states.

Test strips allow individual users and healthcare providers to detect fentanyl and xylazine in mixed into drugs. While strips cannot determine the quantity, purity, or type of fentanyl or xylazine in a sample, they can detect whether the presence of these harmful additives is found. Test strips have been shown to have significant utility as a harm reduction tool for people who use drugs. Outreach distributes these life-saving strips for free to individuals at all our clinics and on our mobile van, which is stationed weekly outside the Suffolk County Department of Parole and other high traffic locations across Long Island.

Outreach also freely distributes and offers training on how to use Naloxone, commonly known as Narcan. This medication, approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), is designed to reverse opioid overdoses rapidly, as well as block the effects of other opioids, such as heroin, fentanyl, morphine, and oxycodone. Currently there is no medication available to reverse the effects of xylazine.

### Integrated Opioid Treatment Program

In February 2023, Outreach opened a new Integrated Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) within its Outreach Recovery Center in Brentwood, New York. Open six days a week, the OTP helps fill a vital need for treatment options for people on Long Island and from the surrounding New York metropolitan area.

"The escalating problem of addiction has necessitated the need for expansion on our part," said Debra Pantin. "We opened this new integrated clinic that offers methadone along with other methods of substance abuse treatment like counseling, vocational assistance, case management, education, psychiatric evaluations, and family support, to help those in the community who are suffering, both those who are addicted and their families."

### Meeting People Where They Are Through New Street Outreach Program

In June, Outreach was awarded a \$325,000 grant from the New York State Opioid Settlement Funds to create a mobile outreach unit. This new harm reduction service will launch in early 2024 and connect with Long Island's most vulnerable and underserved individuals. Staffed with three addiction professionals, our new outreach van will travel to areas known to be frequented by unhoused, addicted teens and adults offering them food, transportation, and treatment services. "Our goal is not to force people into treatment, but to let them know that help is there for them," says Debra Pantin. "Through this mobile program, we will provide services and hope to those most in need, by offering them access to treatment and recovery services onsite in real time and the opportunity to successfully re-enter into everyday life."

The Outreach mobile unit will consist of a wheelchair-accessible van that will be staffed by a Program Director, a Peer Specialist, and a Peer Care Coordinator. Peers who have lived experience with substance use or in recovery will play a vital role, as they are highly committed and trained on how to share their experiences as a means of connecting and helping others who are struggling with addiction. Also vital to the success of this program will be the agency's close collaboration with other community-based organizations and services on Long Island including the Long Island Coalition for the Homeless' (LICH) Street Outreach Team and Hands Across Long Island and their Mobile Shower Program, as well as with the island's greater network of providers and community partners, including local law enforcement, EMS, hospitals, and allied homeless, health, and human service providers.

## Join us for the 42nd Annual Metropolitan Luncheon

### SAVE THE DATE

#### OUTREACH 42nd Annual Metropolitan Luncheon

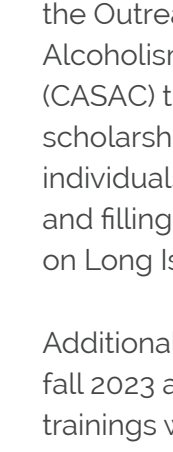
"BUILDING CARING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER"

Thursday  
November 30, 2023  
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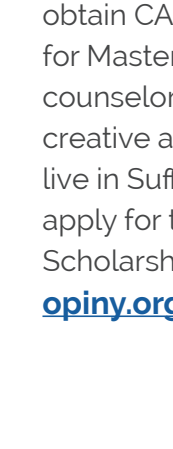
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**Michael E. Hellstrom, Jr.**  
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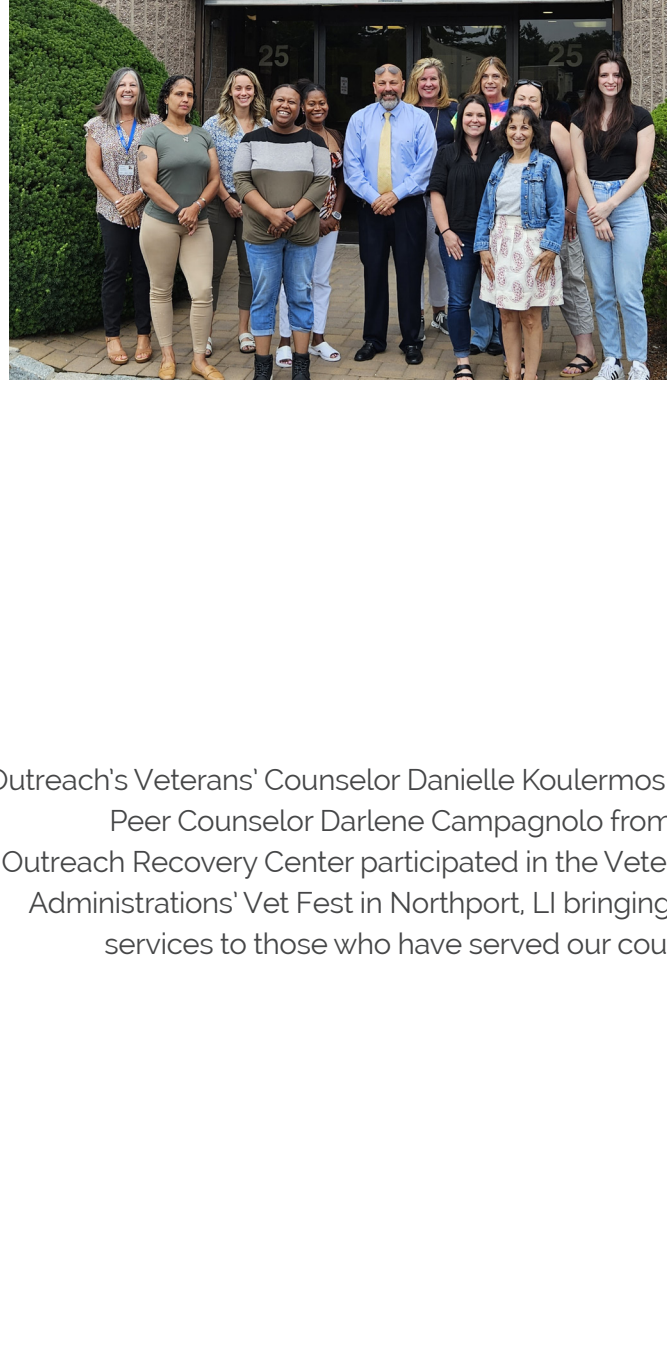


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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, OPERATIONS  
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## HR News: Taking our Employees Wellness Seriously



Outreach Fitness Challenge first place team winners: Team REACT-N-MOTION. Left to right: Katia Andrade, Victor Hodges, and Carla Carylton.

At Outreach, we're committed to Building Healthy Lives, including for our staff. According to the Center for Disease Control, healthy employees have a better quality of life, lower risk of disease, illness, and injury, as well as increased work productivity and a greater likelihood of giving back to their communities.

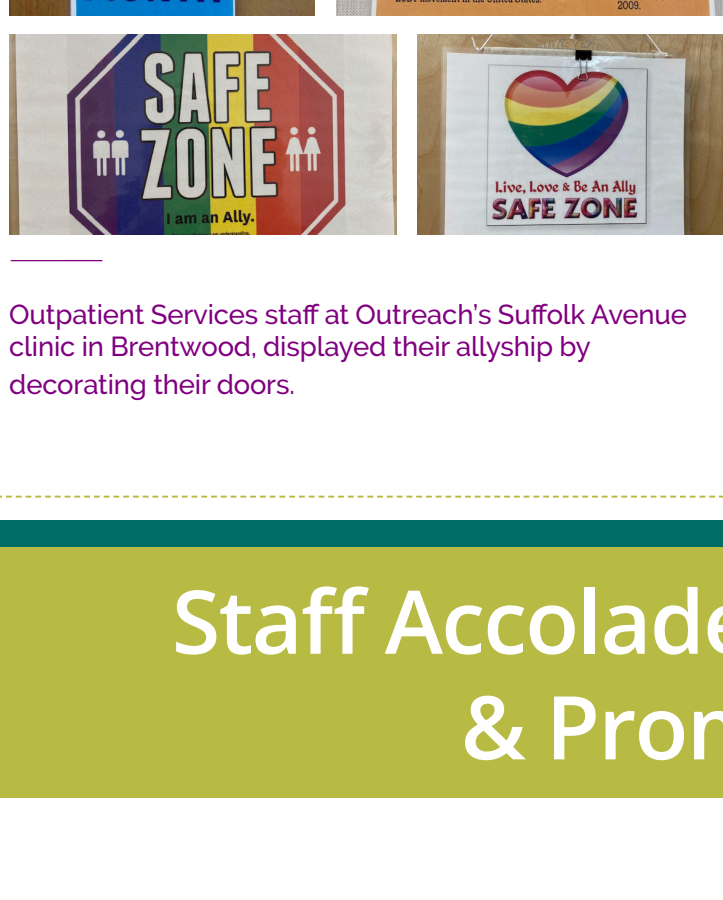
"Having a healthy staff is central to our success as an agency. It's important to us that our employees have work-life balance and improved overall health, so they feel their best at work and with our clients," says Lydia O'Neil, Outreach's Human Resources Director. "To make sure that our staff feels well cared for and have opportunities to address their own health, we've initiated a series of new wellness activities this year."

Outreach's Employee Wellness Program kicked off this spring with the Cigna Fitness Challenge, where over the course of six weeks, individual staff members and teams from our different sites and programs took part a variety of fitness activities and competed for prizes. Sixty-eight (68) staff members participated, and three individuals and one site won the top prizes, that included a new Apple Watch for the top prize winner! This fall, staff are invited to take part in a variety of activities, including an all-employee Zumba class, the agency's annual community-wide John Brower, Jr. Agency's for Heroin Walk at Jones Beach, and in an aromatherapy workshop.

"Our employees are dedicated and work hard to support our clients during their recovery. We want staff to feel encouraged to take good care of themselves while they take care of others and know that they are supported by leadership. By investing in our staff's wellness, we hope to reduce work-related stress, increase productivity, and retain our incredible team," says Cristal Montague, Chief Strategy Officer.

## ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

### CASAC Training Scholarships Still Available for Suffolk County Residents

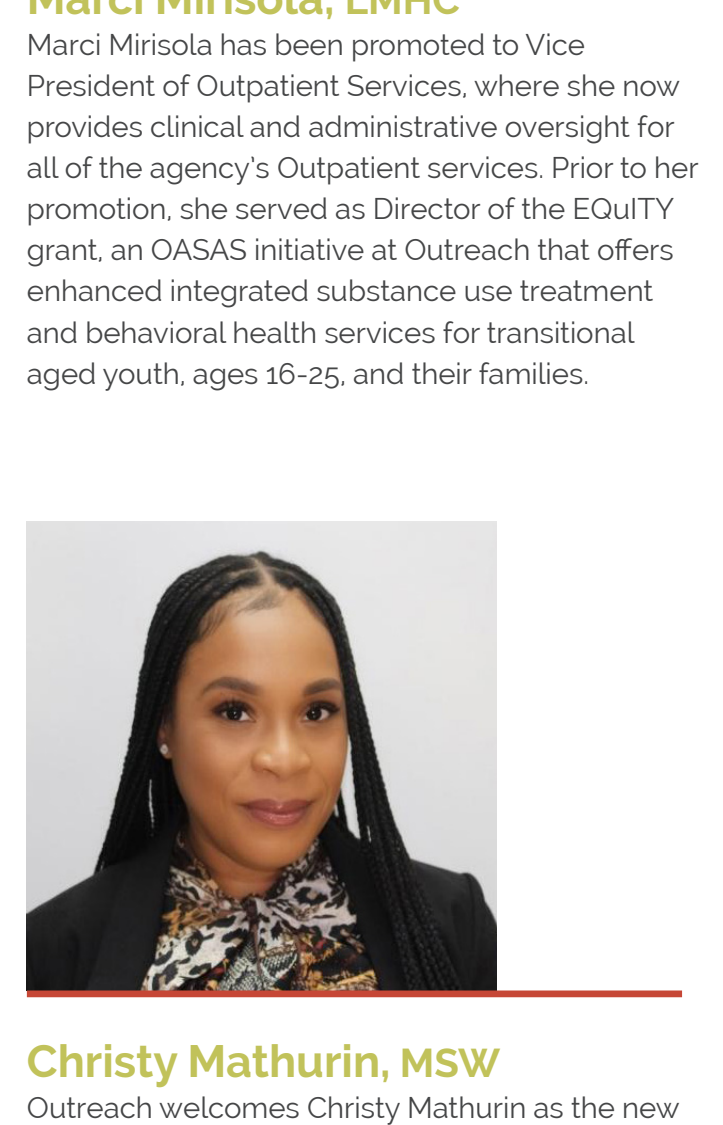
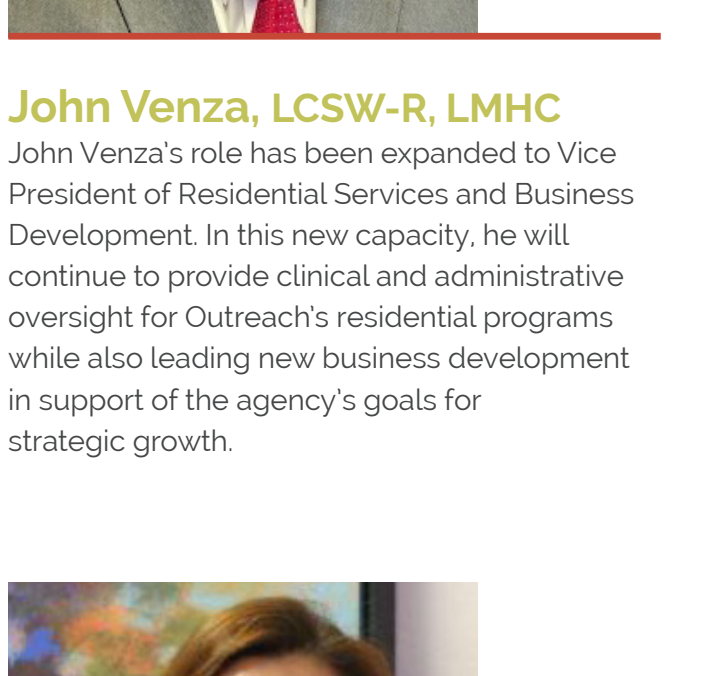


Thanks to a generous grant from the Suffolk County Opioid Settlement Funds, Outreach is able to offer Suffolk County residents' scholarships to the Outreach Training Institute's Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) training program. Already, 60 OTI scholarships have been awarded and those individuals are on their way to earning their CASAC and filling an urgent need for addiction counselors on Long Island.

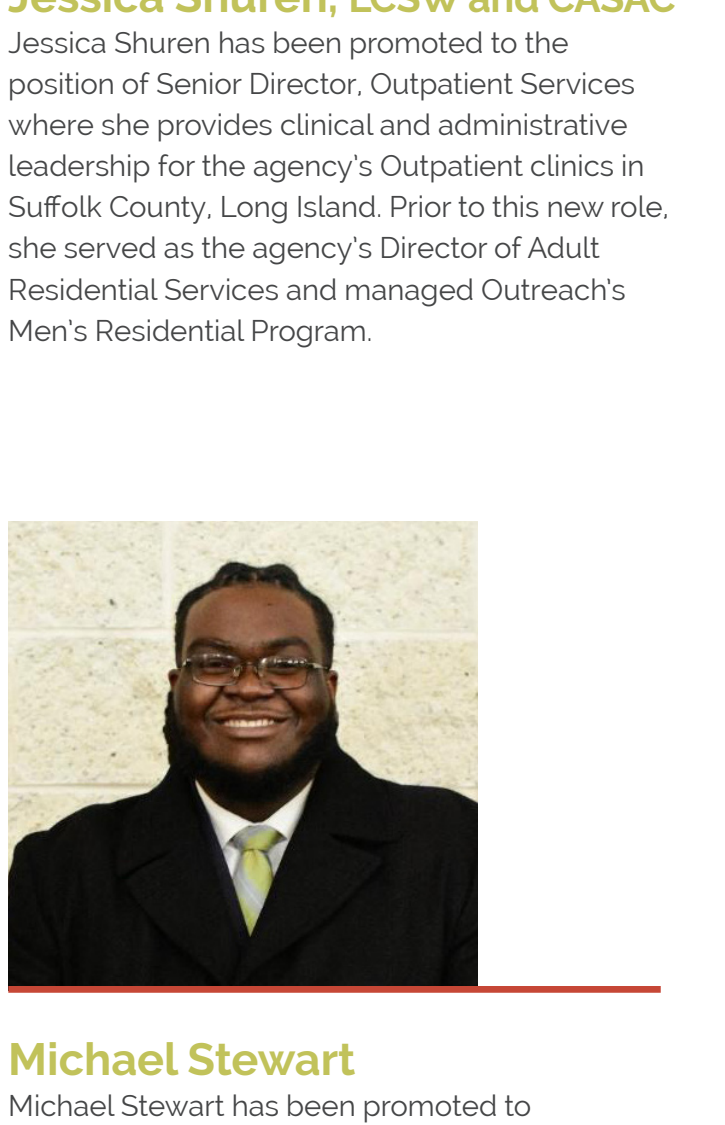
Additional scholarships are still available for OTI's fall 2023 and winter 2024 training cohorts. Two trainings will be funded: a 350-hour program to obtain CASAC certification and a 135-hour program for Master's level social workers, mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, creative arts therapists and psychoanalysts who live in Suffolk County. To learn more about how to apply for the Suffolk County Workforce Scholarships, please visit: [opiny.org/financial-aid-and-scholarships](https://opiny.org/financial-aid-and-scholarships)

### ¡Bienvenido! Powitanie! Welcome to Outreach!

To ensure that more people can access Outreach's website ([www.opiny.org](https://www.opiny.org)), it can now be translated into Spanish and Polish. All you need to do is click the flag (located on the top right-hand corner of any webpage) of the country you would like website to be translated into. We hope you'll visit soon! Mamry nadzieje, że wkrótce nas odwiedzisz! ¡Esperamos que lo visites pronto!



Outreach's Veterans' Counselor Danielle Koulermos and Peer Counselor Darlene Campagnolo from the Outreach Recovery Center participated in the Veterans Administrations' Vet Fest in Northport, LI bringing our services to those who have served our country.



Staff from Outreach House I holding up their adolescent clients' artwork in honor of Pride month.



Outpatient Services staff at Outreach's Suffolk Avenue clinic in Brentwood, displayed their allyship by decorating their doors.



Staff from Outreach House I holding up their adolescent clients' artwork in honor of Pride month.

## Staff Accolades, Transitions & Promotions



**Krista Whitman, LCSW-R, CASAC**  
Krista Whitman has been promoted to Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer following her service as Vice President of Outpatient Services. In her new role, she oversees Outreach's programs and operations.



**John Venza, LCSW-R, LMCH**  
John Venza's role has been expanded to Vice President of Residential Services and Business Development. In this new capacity, he will continue to provide clinical and administrative oversight for Outreach's residential programs while also leading new business development in support of the agency's goals for strategic growth.



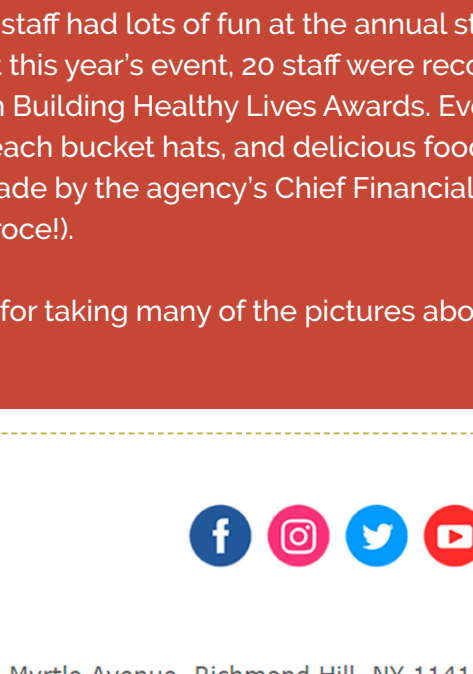
**Marci Mirisola, LMCH**  
Marci Mirisola has been promoted to Vice President of Outpatient Services, where she now provides clinical and administrative oversight for all of the agency's Outpatient services. Prior to her promotion, she served as Director of the EQuiTy grant, an OASAS initiative at Outreach that offers enhanced integrated substance use treatment and behavioral health services for transitional aged youth, ages 16-25, and their families.



**Jessica Shuren, LCSW and CASAC**  
Jessica Shuren has been promoted to the position of Senior Director, Outpatient Services where she provides clinical and administrative leadership for the agency's Outpatient clinics in Suffolk County, Long Island. Prior to this new role, she served as the agency's Director of Adult Residential Services and managed Outreach's Men's Residential Program.



**Christy Mathurin, MSW**  
Outreach welcomes Christy Mathurin as the new Director of the Greenpoint (Brooklyn) Outpatient Services. She joins the agency after serving in director-level positions in several prominent NYC based social service agencies including, Catholic Charities and the Osbourne Associates, among others.



**Michael Stewart**  
Michael Stewart has been promoted to Communications Manager, the first person to ever serve in this capacity at Outreach. In his new position he manages the agency's digital platforms and website and much of its graphic design work. Prior to this promotion, he served as an Administrative Assistant at Outreach's React Outpatient Services Program in Nassau County, Long Island.

REMEMBER  
HEAL  
HOPE

Office of Addiction  
Services and Supports  
OASAS. Every Step of the Way.

SAVE THE DATE!

THIRD ANNUAL STATEWIDE OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY  
WEDNESDAY, SEPT 13, 2023 | 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM, EST

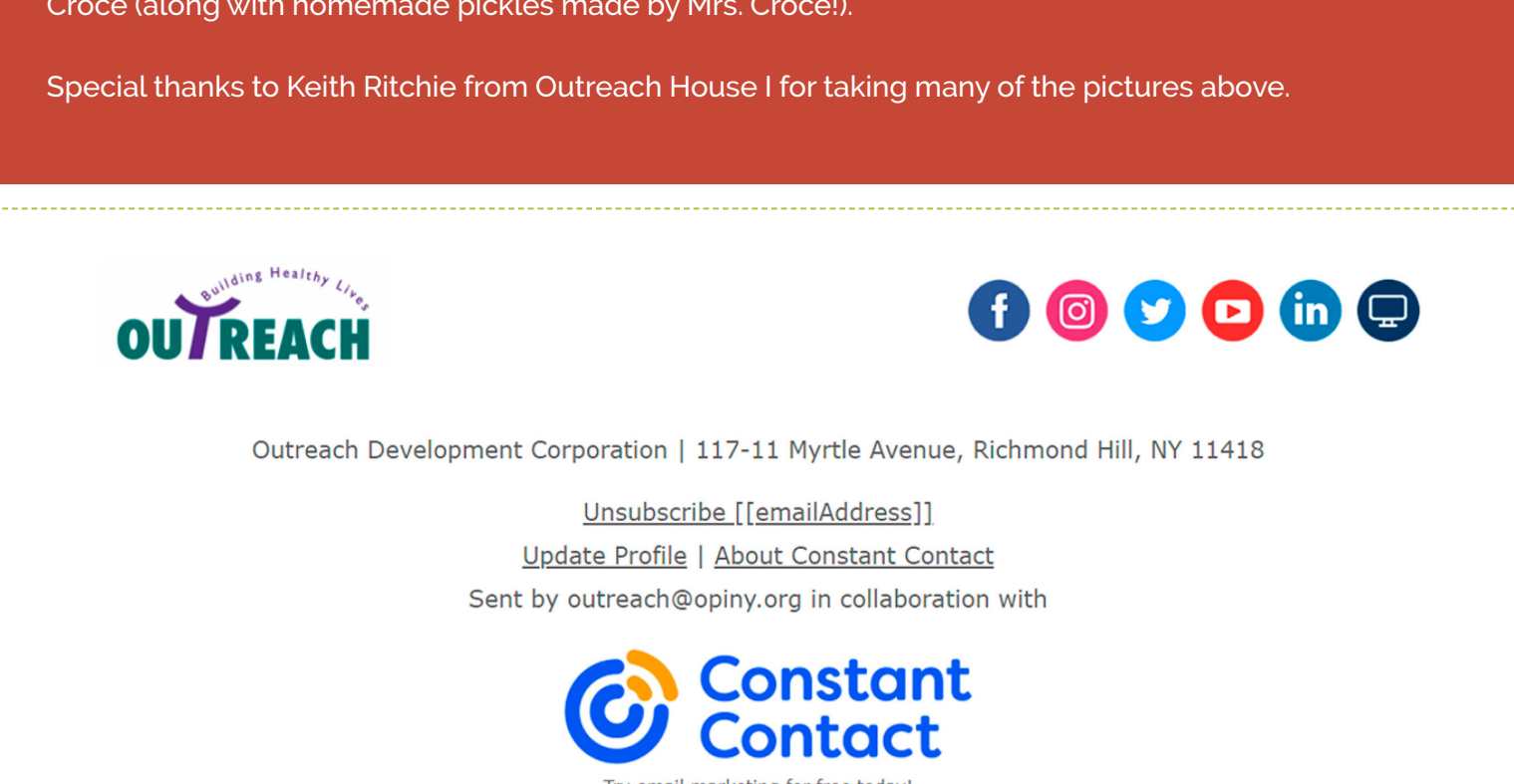
REGISTER for the Sept. 13 Event  
JOIN US in Raising Awareness

The third annual statewide Overdose Awareness Day honors the lives of individuals lost to overdose and recognizes people, providers and programs working to reduce stigma and overdose in New York State.

OVERDOSE  
AWARENESS DAY  
NEW YORK STATE

NEW YORK  
Department  
of Health

## Annual Staff Picnic



Despite record-breaking heat and humidity, Outreach staff had lots of fun at the annual staff picnic held at Outreach House (OH) II in Brentwood this August. At this year's event, 20 staff were recognized by their peers for going above and beyond and presented with Building Healthy Lives Awards. Everyone enjoyed all the fun games like the dunk tank, gelato cart, Outreach bucket hats, and delicious foods prepared by OH II kitchen staff and pulled pork and smoked ribs made by the agency's Chief Financial Officer Tony Croce (along with homemade pickles made by Mrs. Croce).

Special thanks to Keith Ritchie from Outreach House I for taking many of the pictures above.



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