



# The Outreach Vision Spring 2024

## *Mental Health/Wellness Month*

### A Message from our President



**DEBBIE PANTIN**  
President & CEO

We live in a rapidly changing world that can be very complex to navigate. About half of all Americans can remember a time when we were not constantly connected online and it was easier to tune out the noise of the world, while the younger half of our country's population can't imagine life without the internet.

Modern life can have a significant impact on our mental health, whether we are old or young, and for better and for worse. The disturbing imagery in the media we are exposed to daily can be deeply unsettling. At the same time, our current technology allows us to mobilize and provide collective support more efficiently in times of natural disaster or injustice.

Ironically, while our online devices make us more connected than ever, loneliness is an increasingly serious public health concern. We are now able to have conversations with friends and family on the other side of the world in real time. However, constant connection also means that we can see online if we were not invited to a friend's party down the street. Recent survey data show that more than half of U.S. adults (58%) and four out of 10 young people report being lonely.

Finding a sense of calm, healthy connectedness and focusing on one's well-being when you are struggling with mental health issues is daunting in our fast-paced society. It can be especially challenging to know where to start.

May is designated as national Mental Health Month and at Outreach we are raising awareness of the important role mental health plays in our lives. We are encouraging members of the community to take action toward protecting their mental health and overall well-being:

- **LEARN** how modern life affects our mental health and utilize behavioral health services that can help you navigate our rapidly changing world.
- **ACT** by building a coping toolbox to manage stress, difficult emotions, and challenging situations.
- **ADVOCATE** to improve mental health for yourself, the ones you love, and your community.

If you think you may be experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition and are unsure of where to start, our NYS Office of Mental Health-licensed Richmond Hill Wellness Clinic and Certified Community Based Behavioral Health Clinic is here to help. At the clinic, we offer in-person care and hybrid telehealth with appointments available within 48 hours. If you have questions or would like to schedule an appointment, you can contact us at our 24/7 toll-free number **1-833- OPINYORG (1-833-674-6947)** or call the clinic directly during normal business hours at **718-849-6300**.

Be kind and patient with yourself or your loved one who may be struggling – addressing mental health issues can take time. Change doesn't happen overnight. Focus on small changes as you move through the stressors of modern life and develop long-term strategies to support yourself — and others — on an ongoing basis. Please remember, if you or a loved one needs help, Outreach is here to support you.

Thank you for reading our special Mental Health month issue of the Visions newsletter. I send you wishes for good health and mental wellness this month and all year round.



*President/CEO*  
*Outreach Development Corporation*

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## Enhancing the Client Engagement Experience to Better Outcomes

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

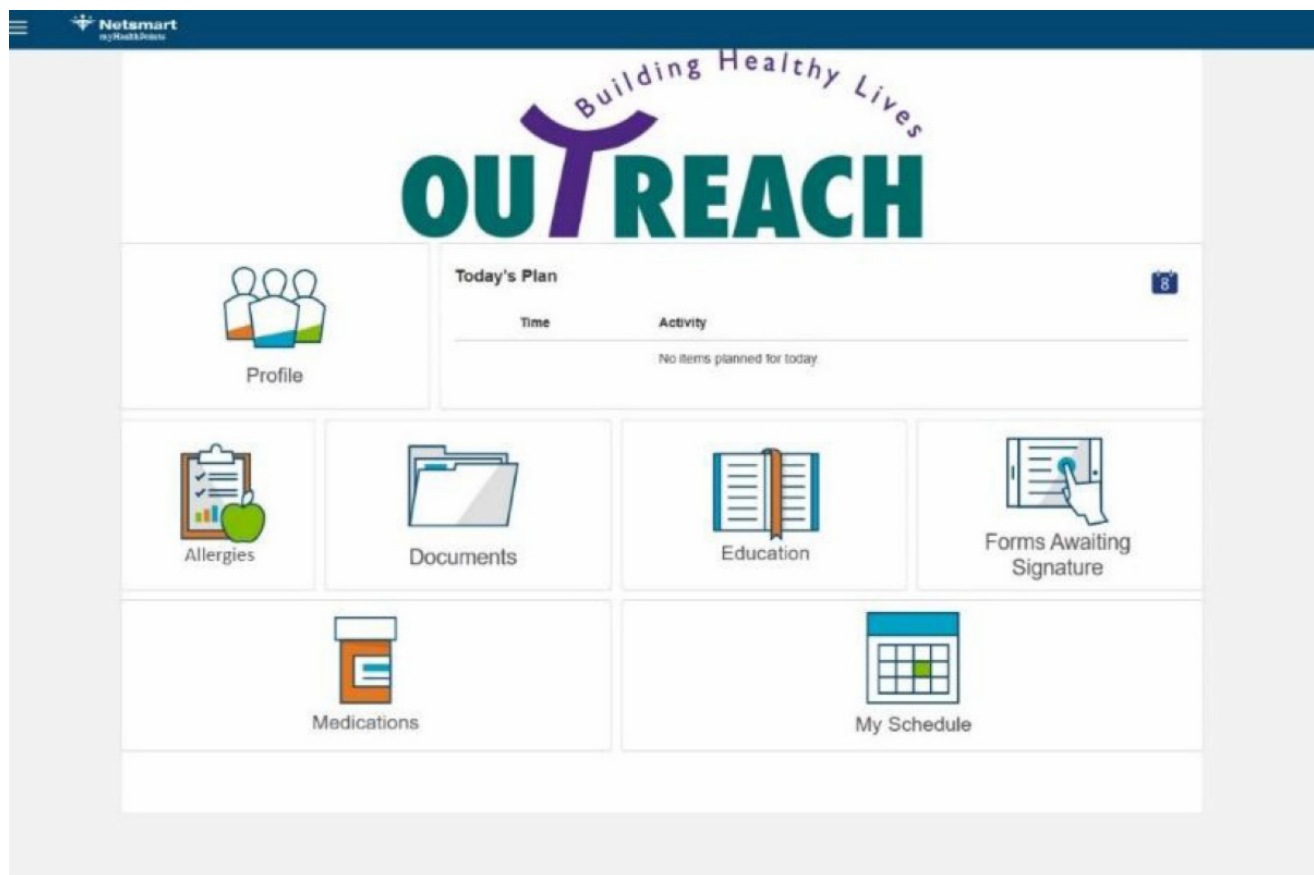
Accessing healthcare information, especially during times of mental health duress can be challenging. At Outreach, we believe that better communication with our clients leads to better client outcomes. In our ongoing commitment to increasing client engagement, this past April, Outreach introduced a new service, the **myHealthPointe** client portal, which makes it easy to access the care they need.

**myHealthPointe** supports consumer-driven care by



connecting individuals to their treatment through a user-friendly, secure solution. Seamlessly integrated with our electronic healthcare system MyAvatar, the new portal provides clients convenient access to their clinical and personal information and allows them to actively participate in their own health plan and recovery.

From this site, clients can not only view their health information with Outreach, they can also review appointments, see their list of medications, sign open forms online before appointments, receive messages and care planning documents from their providers, and access educational information and articles about treatment options, all on their phone or computer. Additional functionalities such as appointment requests and secure messaging will be added in the coming months.



## Expanding Integrated Services for Those with Substance Use and Co-Occurring Mental Health Disorders

According to the federal agency, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) more than half of the people (56%) struggling with substance use disorders (SUD)

are also grappling with other mental health disorders. Often providers offer one co-occurring treatment model that will first treat substance misuse and then, once those symptoms are stable, provide referrals to others who treat the individual's symptoms related to their other co-occurring disorders. However, this has been shown to be less effective than integrated care models that treat ALL of a person's co-occurring disorders at the same time.

When someone is struggling with co-occurring disorders, there is a disruption in the flow of communication between the different areas of their brain which can prevent healthy integration. Treating just one part of a client's struggle, such as SUD, but not their co-occurring mental health disorder/s, may offer some relief but is often just a temporary fix. Studies show that by providing multiple services through a multi-disciplinary team approach can lead to improved outcomes for clients, such as decreased or eliminated substance use, improved mental health symptoms and overall functioning, increased successful recovery for the co-occurring disorders, decreased hospitalization, increased housing stability, lower incarceration rates, and an overall better quality of life.

Last year Outreach received significant funding to expand the agency's integrated services. The NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) and Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) have awarded a grant to help Outreach provide integrated substance use treatment, medical and behavioral health care to children, families, and adults in Western Queens, New York. With this support, the agency's Richmond Hill Wellness Clinic is designated as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) and the scope of services for its neighboring community has expanded. OMH and OASAS have also awarded Outreach a contract to open a new Supportive Crisis Stabilization Center in eastern Suffolk County, where there is a dearth of crisis services especially for low-income and marginalized communities. This new walk-in facility (expected to open in 2025) will be accessible 24/7, 365 days a year for anyone (youth, adults, and families) feeling overwhelmed by mental health, substance use, or other life issues as emotional distress, anxiety, depression, family issues, addiction and/or intoxication.

"Throughout our history, Outreach has been committed to the success of the whole person we treat," says Outreach's Chief Operating Officer Krista Whitman, "we've been doing integrated healthcare all along. However, these two grants enable us to expand the number of services we provide and reach people who often go unserved, especially for co-occurring disorders. We are excited about the opportunities these grants offer us to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve."

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## Meet Bobby Staley, new Director of Outreach's Richmond Hill CCBHC

*"Social Work is a calling more than a profession, it's part of the helping field. Experience has taught me that it's not for everybody, but it feels natural to me to be willing to help other people. How did I get here? Somebody helped me along the way, and I felt that I had to pay it forward."*

And that's exactly what Outreach's new CCBHC



Senior Director Bobby Staley has done.



Bobby Staley began his career during the height of the HIV/AIDS and Crack/Cocaine epidemics in the early 90's. As a re-entry counselor for a therapeutic community, a substance abuse modality; his passion for the human service profession began to develop. Bobby's journey led to a wide range of experience in working with underserved populations, substance abuse, chronic mental illness, the formerly incarcerated and people living with HIV AIDS. He was a Team leader on an ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) team in the Bronx for six years; prior to that, he served as Director of Scattered Site Housing. Bobby also served as Associate Director of ACT Services for the Federation of Organizations, providing oversight, and lending his experience to their agency's three ACT teams. As Clinical Managing Director of at Hospital Medical Center in Queens, Bobby oversaw the NYOASAS outpatient substance abuse program, which provided treatment for substance use disorders including Opiates. Shortly before and during the COVID pandemic, he worked as the Program Director of a Mental Health Men's Shelter.

Bobby Staley joined Outreach this past March as the Senior Director of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) program, a model that is designed to ensure access to coordinated comprehensive behavioral health care. CCBHCs are required to serve anyone who requests care for mental health and or substance use, regardless of their ability to pay, place of residence, or age – including developmentally appropriate care for children and youth.

CCBHCs must meet standards for the range of services they provide and are required to get people into care quickly. An important feature of the CCBHC model is that it requires crisis services that are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. CCBHCs must provide care coordination to help people navigate behavioral health care, physical health care, social services, and the other systems they are involved in.

Bobby believes that there is something practical about social work because oftentimes it can be seen as technical but, in actuality, it is simple, he states: "I enjoy the work and the profession. To be able to apply certain principles and therapeutic concepts simply put is almost like a mother's nurturing spirit." His goal for the Outreach CCBHC is to combat stigma and focus on mental wellness not illness.

Bobby is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and a Master Level Credentialed Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC). He serves as a consultant, teaching Motivational Interviewing and counseling skills to staff working with the New York City Cure Violence Project.

He earned his Master's Degree in Social Work from Touro University Graduate School of Social Work and served as the Founder and President of their alumni association for 10 years. Outreach is thrilled to have Bobby Staley at the helm of its new CCBHC for the Western Queens community.

## Our Interns:

### Fine Tuning Their Professional Skills While Helping the Outreach Community

Over the course of any given year, Outreach engages over 40 interns from a variety of colleges and universities and accreditation programs across the country, including our own Outreach Training Institute's 350-hour CASAC (Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor) training program. As the spring semester nears its close, we are pleased to feature two of our outstanding interns who have been working hard on building their professional experience while helping to support our clinical facilities and clients.



### Christian DiConsiglio

#### Where are you from?

Merrick, NY

#### Where are you a student and when do you expect to complete your degree/certification program?

I'm a Graduate student at Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service. Graduating with both an MSW and CASAC in May 2024.

#### What are your career goals?

Unsure at this time of what is ahead in the long run. Social work is such a vast field, and I am interested in multiple aspects of practice. As of now I am maintaining my current full-time position as a social worker at a St. John the



### Adrianna DeSantis

#### Where are you from?

Suffolk County Long Island

#### Where are you a student and when do you expect to complete your degree/certification program?

I am working towards my Masters in Social Work at Stony Brook University. I will be graduating in May of 2025.

#### What are your career goals?

I would like to do clinical social work in a hospital when I get my LMSW.

#### What facility are you working at as an intern

Evangelist and Parish Social Ministry Program where I provide individuals and families with clinical mental health counseling and case management services and coordinate various community service projects in the Mastic/Shirley community.

### **What facility are you working at as an intern and what are your main internship responsibilities?**

Social Work intern at Team Islip on Suffolk Ave in Brentwood. My responsibilities include providing individual and group counseling to clients, document services, and participating in team meetings.

### **What do you like most about interning at Outreach?**

For myself, the best part of Outreach is our team atmosphere. We are all here to help each other help our clients. As a unit we accomplish far more and make a far greater impact on our clients' lives than we would individually. It has been amazing working with my colleagues at the Suffolk Ave location and I would never have learned so much without those I work with. Additionally, I am a firm believer in supervision being key in growth and empowerment as a clinician. I would like to acknowledge my supervisor for embracing my learning style, providing me so much support both during successes and mistakes, teaching me such important lessons about clinical interventions, and for being an inspiration for the future possibilities as a social worker.

### **and what are your main internship responsibilities?**

I am currently interning at Outreach House II in Brentwood in the family department. This is a residential facility for adolescents. I am responsible for facilitating individual sessions and individual family sessions, co-facilitating multi-family therapy sessions and parents support groups. I communicate with parents to provide resident updates, facilitate phone calls between residents and their parents and screen letters to and from residents and parents.

### **What do you like most about interning at Outreach?**

I really enjoy being able to work with a client and their parents within individual family sessions and multi-family therapy. I believe fostering the parent/child relationship is crucial to substance use recovery, especially for this age group. Through these sessions not only are the residents growing but so are their parents; so when they return home, the whole family is changing for the better. Being a part of developing that family connection has been such a rewarding and heartwarming experience.

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## **Outreach Training Institute's CASAC Student Internships Available to Organizations**

Thanks to generous grants from OASAS and the Suffolk County Opioid Settlement Funds, the Outreach Training Institute (OTI) has been able to provide full and partial scholarships to hundreds of individuals from across New York State to attend its 350-hour Certified Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor training program. Grant funds also provide stipends for some of OTI's students to have paid internships with providers, broadening their skills and providing needed support, not to mention potential employees, to organizations. Many of OTI's students

## Rehabilitation Services added to Women's Community Residence in Brentwood



Earlier this month OASAS approved Outreach's plan to expand services at its Women's Community Residence in Brentwood to include a Rehabilitation Level of Care for adult women with significant functional impairment requiring a structured environment to help them transition back into their communities.

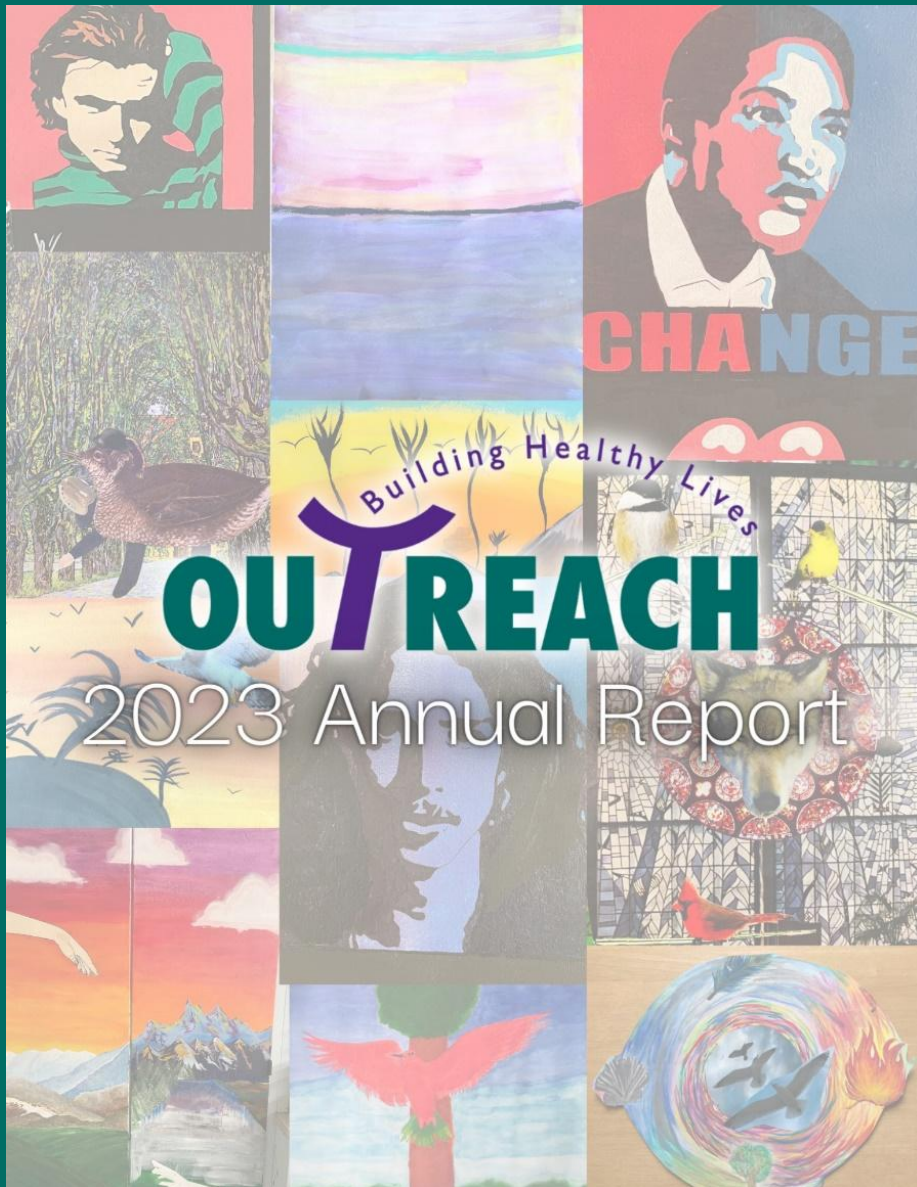
This new element offers a comprehensive array of clinical services for women 18 years of age and older in an already established safe, trauma-informed, and supportive living environment with a high degree of structure. The rehabilitation services include group counseling, individual counseling, medication assisted treatment, peer services, supportive family services, social supports, vocational services and access to skills and community-based connections that prepare residents for transition to housing, education, and legal services and other social determinants of health.

Individuals who enter rehabilitation are at different stages in the progression of their substance use disorder, mental health issues, support systems, vocational skills, and housing. Understanding that a one size program cannot possibly fit the needs of all, the Women's Residence rehabilitation element operates from a person-centered approach. Our goal is to provide a highly structured therapeutic environment designed to cater to where a person is at and help them make a seamless transition from rehabilitation back into the community or into an outpatient re-integration program.



## 2023 Annual Report Out in June to Feature Adolescent Residents Artwork!

Art therapy offers those in recovery an opportunity to explore, understand, and come to terms with issues they may feel uncomfortable talking about in therapy sessions. This practice is especially effective for young people, who may have difficulty expressing in words the emotions that come up for them when trying to understand their addiction. Both of Outreach's two residencies for adolescents – Outreach House I and Outreach House II – offer art therapy as part of their array of therapeutic services to help their young clients express and better understand themselves. Outreach is proud to feature on the cover of its new 2023 annual report the beautiful and expressive artwork of our young residents. Check out this sneak peek at the cover below.



Keep an eye out in June for an email with a link to the annual report to read about how the support of our Board members, donors, and friends

## Business and Labor Leaders to be Honored at 30th Annual Long Island Luncheon in June

Outreach will honor three outstanding business, labor, nonprofit and community leaders at our 30th Annual Long Island Luncheon, themed *"Building Stronger Communities Together,"* on Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at 12:00 pm at the Stonebridge Country Club in Smithtown. The event is chaired by Matthew Aracich, President, Building & Construction Trades Council of Nassau & Suffolk Counties. All event proceeds will enable Outreach to continue to enhance its array of varied programs and services across Long Island.



From left to right: John Guadagno, Jason Lipiec, Robyn Fellrath.

Honored at the luncheon will be Jason Lipiec, Executive Vice President & Long Island Regional President of M&T Bank; John Guadagno, President, IBEW Local 24 and Robyn Fellrath, Long Island Regional Director of the Workforce Development Institute who will receive the John Brower, Jr. Award in memory of a young man who died of an overdose and whose family has since helped Outreach raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in his name for addiction treatment services and awareness.

"We're forever thankful to our three extraordinary 2024 honorees. Their support of our mission and pledge to become part of the fight to help people struggling with addiction has helped us build stronger and healthier communities across Long Island" said Debra Pantin, President, and CEO of Outreach. "We're so grateful for the dedication, time, and effort they put into this lifesaving work."

For information about available sponsorship opportunities and ticket sales visit: <https://opiny.org/donate/outreachs-30th-annual-long-island-luncheon> or call Marsha Radulov at 718-847-9233.

# HEROES AGAINST HEROIN

*John Brower Jr.*  
FOUNDATION

Building Healthy Lives  
**OUTREACH**

## 9th Annual 5K Walk

**Saturday, September 14, 2024**

**Registration 9:00am**

**Walk Begins 10:00am**

**Jones Beach - Field 1**

**Free Parking**

*"Some people come into our lives and quickly go.  
Some stay for awhile and leave footprints on our  
hearts. And we are never, ever the same."*

## ACCOLADES AND PROMOTIONS

### OTI Awarded Two New Grants to Enhance Provision of Trauma-Informed Care in NYS

The Outreach Training Institute received a grant from OASAS and the University of Buffalo's Clinical and Research Institute of Addictions to Enhance Organizational Proficiency to Provide Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) for providers across New York State. The funded pilot project is geared toward organizational change by educating staff members at all levels of participating organizations, including all line staff with client contact, clinical, clinical supervisors, management, and executive team members. OTI's training will be role specific and conducted at all staff levels to promote an





organizational approach to TIC.

OTI was also awarded Legislative Initiative support through New York State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo (15th Senate District). These funds will help create a new professional development Crisis Management curriculum which will be used to train our Richmond Hill CCBHC staff in current evidence-based practices in crisis management, ensuring that community members experiencing mental health and/or substance crisis will receive the appropriate and compassionate care they need at our clinic.

## Outreach's President & CEO and Chief Operating Officer Featured in Videos for Union Members

President & CEO Debbie Pantin and Chief Operating Officer Krista Whitman videotaped interviews with Michael Fina, Founder of the Union Labor Advisory (ULA) Network, to discuss Outreach's programs and services, as well as the agency's long history of partnership with the trade and labor union communities. ULA is a website ([ulanetwork.com](http://ulanetwork.com)) that supports, educates, and promotes informational content relevant to the union labor community. Two videos were filmed and shared on the Network's website reaching thousands of union members throughout New York State and beyond.



**ULA**  
network

Staff attended the kick-off to the Long Island Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence (aka LICADD)'s Angel Ball in support of our Vice President for Residential Services and Business Development John Venza, who will be honored at



the Gala Event this June.



Chief Strategy Officer, Christal Montague attended the NYS Alliance for Rights and Recovery's 20th Annual Executive Seminar that featured Lonetta Albright who opened the event as keynote speaker on Embracing a Growth Mindset to Navigate Uncertainty, Cultivate Resilience & Grow in Turbulent Times.



## Outreach Recognized as Healthy Workplace

Outreach was recognized by Cigna Healthcare as a Healthy Workforce for our agency's commitment to employee well-being and vitality.

During the month of May we honor National HR week which offers us an opportunity to shine a light on the invaluable role our HR professionals play in helping our organization succeed and recognize & celebrate the value of their role and the positive impact they each have on our agency's most valuable resource, our incredible staff. We are fortunate to have a small but mighty team of dedicated HR professionals here at Outreach. They work tirelessly to ensure that our agency has a

strong, talented, mission-driven staff on all levels. They also help to make sure that everyone has the resources they need for healthy work-life balance by promoting staff wellness, professional development opportunities, and fun, including all staff non-work events and other special treats, throughout the year. The team is led by HR Director Lydia McNeil, and includes HR Generalist Michael Garcia and HR Associate Cassandra Thompson-Spence.



## New Hires & Promotions



### **Bobby Staley, LCSW, (M)CASAC**

Joined Outreach as Senior Director of the Richmond Hill CCBHC in March. He brought with him a wide breadth of experience, as a Team leader on an ACT team in the Bronx, Director of Scattered Site Housing, and as an Associate Director of ACT Services for the Federation of Organizations.



### **Eric Yagual**

Recently joined Outreach as the Assistant Director of the Richmond Hill CCBHC. A Queens native, Eric's last position was Lead Supervisor at Nassau Psychology.



### **Melissa Hermann**

Recently joined Outreach as the new Director of the EQUITY Project. She joins the agency after serving most recently as a Project Supervisor at Concern Housing and prior to that as Case Manager at the Center for Discovery.



### **Rebecca Hladky, LMSW**

Recently joined the Residential Services team as Assistant Director. Prior to joining Outreach, Rebecca was the Campus Director for the Phoenix House Ronkonkoma campus where she managed a 96-bed coed facility.



### **Catherine Maguire, LCSW**

Has transitioned to becoming the Director of Outreach House II residence for adolescents. Since joining Outreach's Residential Services team in 2019, Catie has diligently worked her way up the ranks from starting as per diem staff at Outreach House I residence for adolescents to their full-time Community Specialist. She was then promoted to Assistant Director of the Women's Recovery Residence before being named the site's Director.

### **Kimberly Schumann**

Who has been working at Outreach House II residence for adolescents, most recently as a Primary Counselor, has been promoted to a new role as the facility's Assistant Director.

Outreach Development Corporation | 117-11 Myrtle Avenue | Richmond Hill, NY 11418 US

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