



The Outreach Vision Summer 2025

Building Strength Through Community

As we look ahead to Recovery Month this September, we embrace the 2025 theme: *“Recovery is for Everyone—Every Person, Every Family, Every Community.”* This powerful message reminds us that recovery is possible for all, no matter their background, and that community support is essential to the journey. While every path to healing is deeply personal, one truth holds firm: **we are stronger together.**



At Outreach, we witness the power of community each and every day. Our

Our impact extends beyond our doors. We are proud to partner with unions,

clients, staff, and incredible interns, some of whom are featured in this issue, remind us that recovery is not just an individual experience but a shared journey of resilience, hope, and connection. Their stories inspire us and reaffirm our commitment to walking beside each person with empathy, dignity, and respect.

We are proud to support individuals from all walks of life through our integrated behavioral health services. One shining example is our Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) in Richmond Hill, Queens, licensed by the NYS Office of Mental Health and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports. There, we offer timely, compassionate care, often within 24 to 48 hours, through in-person and hybrid telehealth services. Whether addressing substance use or co-occurring mental health conditions, our mission remains the same: to provide help and healing when it's needed most.

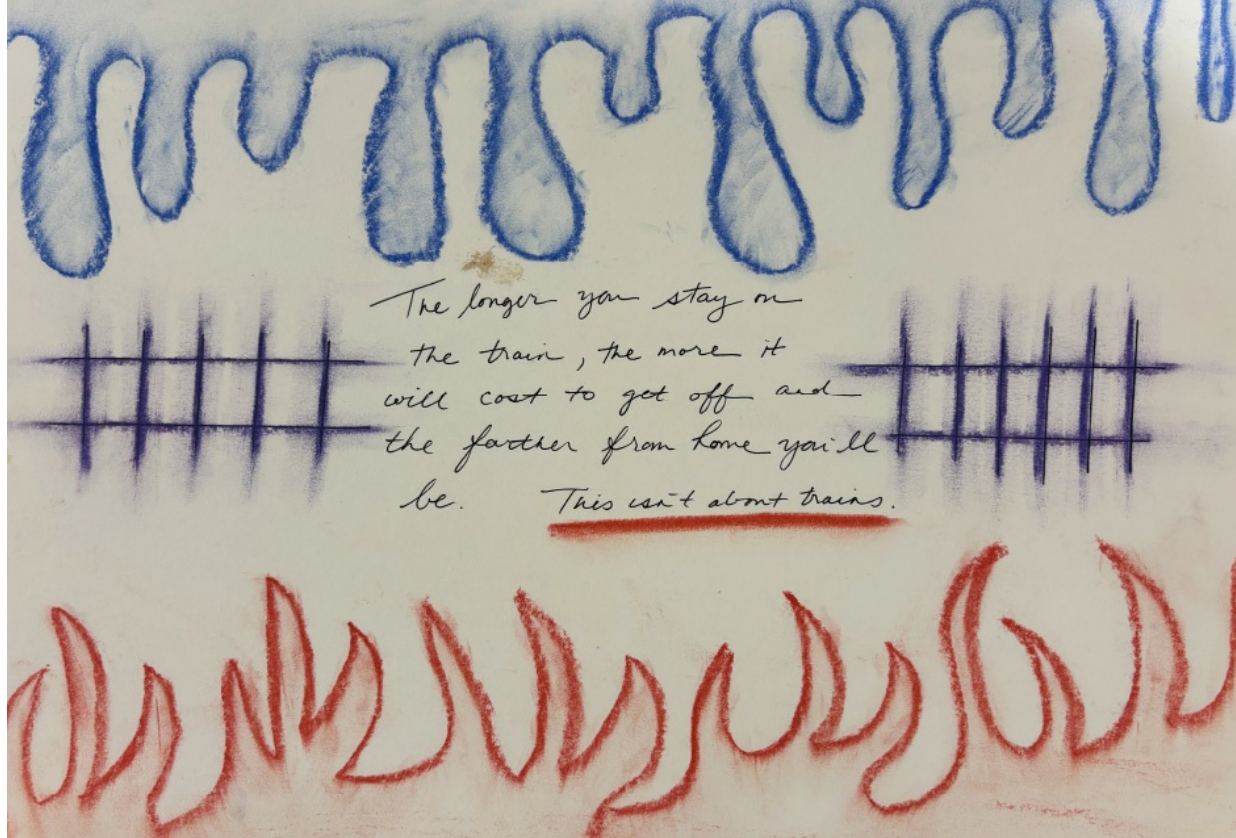
But supporting others starts with supporting our own. At Outreach, staff wellness is a core value. We know that when our team feels cared for, they can better care for others—building trust, forming meaningful relationships, and creating lasting change. In this issue, we highlight how our Human Resources team is going “Beyond the Benefits” to cultivate a workplace culture rooted in wellness, resilience, and joy.

trade associations, and local businesses to raise awareness and secure critical funding. Our 31st Annual Long Island Luncheon, held on June 30, raised nearly \$200,000—fueling our ability to provide lifesaving care for those who need it most.

At Outreach, we celebrate the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and identities of the people we serve. We treat the whole person, not just the addiction, and offer real solutions for the real-life challenges individuals and families face. Creative expression is a vital part of that healing process. In our adolescent residences, art therapy empowers young people to explore and express their emotions, transforming their experiences into powerful works of art.

Every story of struggle contains a seed of strength. By sharing these stories, we hope to spark healing and hope throughout our community. We're honored to be part of this movement and grateful that you're with us. We hope this issue uplifts and inspires you with the voices, stories, and spirit of recovery that shine through every page.

The Healing Power of Art: A Creative Path to Recovery



At Outreach, we recognize that successful and lasting recovery from substance use disorders and co-occurring mental health conditions requires a multi-faceted approach. While evidence-based practices form the cornerstone of our treatment model, we also embrace complementary therapies—among them, the powerful practice of art therapy.

Research shows that creative expression can significantly reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, while boosting enjoyment, fulfillment, and emotional well-being. That's why we integrate creative arts groups into our programming, with a special emphasis on adolescents in our residential care. These sessions provide clients with an alternative way to explore their inner world, especially when verbal communication feels overwhelming or out of reach. Through the creative process, participants can process painful experiences and gain insight in ways that traditional talk therapy may not fully unlock.

According to the American Art Therapy Association, art therapy is a mental health practice that enhances the lives of individuals, families, and communities through active artmaking, creative process, psychological theory, and human connection—all within a therapeutic framework. Used in the treatment of substance use disorders since the 1950s, art therapy continues to gain recognition as a meaningful and effective therapeutic tool.

At its core, art therapy is grounded in the belief that people can express thoughts and feelings through non-verbal, imaginative means.

Techniques might include incident drawings (depicting moments related to substance use), emotional painting, stress painting, art journaling, or sculpture. These practices allow individuals to process complex experiences, often surfacing

emotions and insights that might otherwise remain buried.

Research highlights numerous benefits of art therapy for individuals with SUD, including reduced denial, increased willingness to engage in treatment, a safe outlet for emotional expression, and relief from shame. Group art sessions, where participants share, view, and discuss each other's work, can also foster connection, spark reflection, and inspire change.

Building Healthy Lives **OUTREACH** WRC ARTSHOW



June 27th, 2025

The women of The WRC came together to create a beautiful art show. They spent weeks creating their works for the show. Food was served and the community came together to celebrate the creativity in recovery.

At Outreach, we've seen the profound impact of art therapy, particularly among adolescents. As John Venza, Vice President for Adolescent Services shares, "Art therapy offers our young clients a powerful outlet for expression when words fall short. For those working through substance use and co-occurring mental health issues, creative processes can provide a safe space to explore their emotions, build resilience, and begin healing. At our agency, we view art therapy not just as a complement to treatment—but as a vital pathway to self-discovery and recovery."



Our 2024 Outreach Annual Report features artwork created by residents of *Outreach House I* and *Outreach House II*, our two adolescent residential programs. Their powerful visual expressions serve as a testament to the healing potential of creativity.

To view the report, visit:

opiny.org/annual-report

By incorporating creative expression into our programs, Outreach continues to support healing on every level, **body, mind, and spirit.**

31st Annual Long Island Luncheon Honors Local Leaders and Raises Critical Funds

Thanks to the generous support of friends, sponsors, and partners, Outreach's 31st Annual Long Island Luncheon—held on June 30, 2025, at the beautiful Stonebridge Country Club in Smithtown—was another resounding success! The event raised vital funds to help Outreach continue its mission of building stronger, healthier futures for Long Islanders facing substance misuse and behavioral health challenges.



Photo Credit: Blue Pictorial

Emceed by Long Island Luncheon Committee Chair Matthew Aracich, the afternoon brought together community members and advocates to celebrate the dedication of three outstanding local leaders, each recognized for their deep commitment to the health and well-being of our region. This year's distinguished honorees were Steven J. Kuperschmid, Partner, Ruskin Moscou Faltischek PC; Janet Powers-Pacella, Business Agent, Steamfitters Local 638, who also

celebrated her birthday that day; and Kevin J. McCaffrey, Presiding Officer, Suffolk County Legislature, 14th Legislative District and President of Teamsters Local 707, recipient of the 2025 *John Brower, Jr. Memorial Award*.



Photo Credit: Blue Pictorial

"Everybody knows someone who has lost someone to the epidemic of addiction. Four hundred and sixty-three people in Suffolk County died last year to overdose. That is 463 too many,"

Kevin J. McCaffrey, recipient of the 2025 *John Brower, Jr. Memorial Award*.



Photo Credit: Blue Pictorial

"This honor is an incredible reminder of the power of community, collaboration and share purpose,"

Janet Powers, 2025 Honoree



Photo Credit: Blue Pictorial

"Thank you for standing behind this mission. Your generosity helps Outreach thrive and ensures that the remarkable stories of transformation continue,"

Steven J. Kuperschmid,
2025 Honoree



Photo Credit: Blue Pictorial

Right to left: Outreach House Resident Layla, her father John and friend.

The afternoon featured several moving moments, including a heartfelt introduction by Interim CEO Paul Vitale, who welcomed young people from Outreach House, our residential program for adolescents. "You are the most important people here today," Vitale said. "You are our stars. We love you and want you to succeed." The young people then received a standing ovation from the audience. Another especially powerful moment came from Layla, a young resident nearing the completion of her stay at Outreach House, courageously shared her story of growth and resilience. Layla was introduced by her father, John, whose pride and emotion left not a dry eye in the room.

(See below for John and Layla's full remarks.)

Outreach extends heartfelt thanks to our generous event sponsors - **Luncheon Sponsor:** Ruskin

Moscou Faltischek, P.C.; **Gold Sponsors:** IBEW 25; Mason Tenders District Council of Greater New York, Northeast Structural Steel, Inc., Teamsters Local 25; **Silver Sponsors:** Building Material Teamsters, Local 282, Enterprise Association of Steamfitters Local Union 638, PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP; **Journal and Invitation Sponsors:** Anthem BlueCross BlueShield, Magnacare; **Adolescent Sponsors:** Bancker Construction Corp., Collins Building Services Inc., LI Chapter of NECA & IBEW Local 25 Labor Management; **Frontline Worker Heroes:** Iron Workers Local 361, Long Island Contractors' Association, Inc., Mutual of America, Teamsters Local 731.

We are also incredibly grateful to our dedicated 2025 Long Island Luncheon Committee, led by Chair Matthew Aracich, for their leadership and support. Special thanks to Marsha Radulov, Director of Special Events and Fundraising for her tireless work behind the scenes in planning and executing such a heartwarming and impactful event.



In Their Own Words: John and Layla

John:

I am so proud and honored to be here. First off, I want to thank you for all you've done to restore Layla's life and our family. None of this would have been possible without your kindness and donations. Sometimes we donate and don't see the basis for our support. I want you to take a look at my beautiful daughter Layla. She's so talented. She's a beautiful singer, she plays the piano, and she plays the guitar. She does exceptionally well at school. Being a parent means to work hard to have your kids in the best school district. There's never any thought that substance use disorder would touch your family. Well, it touched mine.

There were points when you have no hope. You have nowhere to turn, and you're left in despair. I am blessed by God. I know John Brower and his son Robert. I've known them for quite a while and made a few donations to their foundation, not knowing that it would come full circle where one day my daughter would need help. I want to thank the Brower Foundation. Outreach has

changed my daughter's life. Everyone at Outreach has helped to get her life back. I am so proud of her. It took a lot of work that she did on her own but with the guidance of everyone at Outreach.

None of this is possible without your help. I implore you to keep helping because all these kids' lives. God has a beautiful plan for every one of them. It is possible with your help. Layla is here because she is the fruit of your donation and labor and all the staff's work. I am so proud to introduce her today. I want you to know that she has graduated High School. I never thought I would see this at points during her recovery. I thought I might lose her. But here she is today, graduated high school. She is college bound. She has a scholarship to attend St. John's University. All these things were made possible because of your donations and all your kindness. I can't thank you enough for all you have done for Layla and all the children here. Outreach will be a part of my life until the day I die because I could never repay them for giving me my daughter back. With that, I introduce you to my beautiful daughter Layla.

Layla:

Hi, my name is Layla, and I am a resident at Outreach House II. My journey to recovery started about two years ago when my parents discovered that I was abusing substances. They realized that my use was impacting my education and family relationships. They made the decision to send me to an inpatient substance abuse facility. The program was in Connecticut, which for me was far from home. The distance made me feel uneasy and I struggled to make any sort of progress. Relationships with my family continued to suffer because I was so far away from home. I could only see them once or twice a month. I felt depressed and lonely. After 3 months, I became treatment-fatigued and was sent back home.

Shortly after I returned home, I became overwhelmed with triggers I was facing and relapsed into nicotine. I felt alone and didn't utilize my treatment to develop proper coping skills. I had no way of proactively dealing with my triggers. Other than using nicotine, I remained sober from the other substances I was previously using.

Coming home from the program and transitioning back into a school environment was slightly difficult for me. I was homeschooled while my district worked with my family to find a place for me to pursue the rest of my high school education. After about 2 months, we came across Aspire Academy, the only recovery high school in New York, run by Outreach. My school reached out to set up a meeting with the people at Aspire. A few weeks later I was told that I would be able to attend their program.

I started at Aspire in March 2024 and began to do really well. Aspire opened my eyes to many aspects of my life. It educated me in recovery. The teachers and staff were well equipped with the skills to help adolescents, like me, in recovery. They made me feel comfortable and understood. With the help of my teachers, I loved doing schoolwork more than ever. What I especially enjoyed was the after-school program they offered. I built bonds with my peers while discovering how to have healthy, sober fun. Aspire really helped me in my recovery. I continued

to go there until October 2024.

I was having a hard time managing my emotions and relapsed onto harder drugs as a result. My counselors at Aspire and I agreed that I needed more intense support and a stronger foundation for my recovery than what was provided at the program in Connecticut. They suggested I go to Outreach House. I agreed to give it a try and came there on October 14, 2024.

At first, I really struggled and didn't do very well. I believe that was because I was afraid to change and didn't know how to go about it. Over time I started making small changes that seemed insignificant but pushed me to continue to better myself. In March 2025, I finally made the decision to be a part of my recovery. I had been struggling for so long and came to a point where I was tired of living the way I was living.

With this decision came significant amounts of change. I started pushing myself to be the best version of myself that I could be. Outreach provided me with the tools to take the important step in my recovery of becoming a role model for my peers and to look up when they're struggling. I now provide support for those going through a tough time.

What really kept me motivated was the constant support that the Outreach staff had to offer me. From day one, I had people pushing me to better myself. They encouraged me to get through the hard times. All the staff here at Outreach have the skills to support the residents. I am really grateful to them.

I believe the biggest turning point in my treatment was when I became ready to repair my relationship with my parents. I wasn't willing to do so for a long time. But as soon as I was, I had the Outreach Family Department's time and support that I needed to work on this. Over time, my family relationships became healthier and easier to manage. I began to go on home passes on the weekends, which was a great way to display the changes I was making to my family and rebuild their trust. Without the help of Outreach, I would never have been able to repair these important relationships. I'm appreciative of the support they've provided me and my family. Not only did I make changes, but with the help of weekly parent support groups, my parents did as well.

The staff at Outreach support the entire family, not just the residents. Outreach stands out from other programs for this reason. My family and I have received endless amounts of support from this program. We love being a part of the Outreach family.

As of June 25th, I am a high school graduate. Thanks to Outreach's program, which offered me credit recovery options, I was able to graduate on time. I'm excited for what lies ahead for me. I am completing my Outreach program and will be going to St. John's University to get a degree in psychology. I would like to go to medical school to become a psychiatrist. I'm ready to do the work to achieve my goals. A few months ago, when I first entered the doors to Outreach, I didn't think these things were possible. But with their support, I've unlocked so much of my potential.

Outreach's slogan is "Building Health Lives." I can say from experience that they've helped me rebuild my unmanageable life into one that's healthy and beautiful. I will forever be grateful for all the time, love, and dedication that was put into me becoming who I am now. I feel so blessed to

have had this opportunity to turn my life around with the guidance provided by Outreach's program. Thank you for letting me share.

Thriving Together: How Outreach Supports Staff Wellness



At Outreach, our mission of *Building Healthy Lives* extends beyond the individuals and families we serve—it begins with our own team. We believe that when our staff are healthy and supported, everyone benefits.

“Having a healthy staff is central to our success as an agency,” says Brian Krempa, Outreach’s Director of Human Resources. “We want our employees to feel their best, both at work and in their personal lives. To support that we’ve introduced a variety of wellness initiatives throughout the year to help staff care for their physical and mental health.”

Over the years, Outreach’s Employee Wellness Program has included a diverse mix of engaging and fun activities. From the annual Cigna Fitness Challenge and Zumba classes to creative outlets like staff painting workshops and aromatherapy sessions, we’ve aimed to offer something for everyone. One of our signature community events, the John Brower, Jr. Heroes for Heroin Walk held each September at Jones Beach, offers another opportunity for staff to connect with our mission in a meaningful way.

We also host annual all-staff celebrations, such as the summer BBQ and January holiday gathering, along with site-based events across our Queens and Long Island programs. These celebrations give staff a chance to unwind, connect, and simply enjoy each other’s company—an important part of fostering a healthy and supportive work environment.

In honor of 2025 Mental Health Awareness Month in May, staff were invited to share how they care for their own mental and physical well-being. We were inspired by the honest and heartfelt responses, and excited to share a few of them with you:



“I ride a Peloton for 30–45 minutes every day. I fell in love with cycling and can’t get off the bike. I’ve done almost 4,300 rides since 2019.”



“Journaling, listening to music, dancing, and traveling!”

Elliot J. Kloper, MS
Talent Acquisition Specialist



“With sleep being the most important factor for both mental and physical well-being, I’ve implemented a wind-down routine to support better rest.”

Galit Shayo
Senior Director of Finance

Kalisha Smith, DSW, LCSW, CASAC-M
Director, Outreach Training Institute



“To stay mentally and physically well, I spend a lot of time outdoors. Hiking is one of my favorite activities—it’s peaceful, and when you reach the top of a mountain, you gain a sense of mental clarity just by taking in the view.”

Stacy Hunt, CRPA/CARC
Suffolk Avenue Outpatient Services



“Along with physical exercise, I see my therapist once a week to exercise my mind and work through personal challenges. As social workers, we spend so much time advocating for others that we sometimes forget to care for ourselves.”

Caitlin Duddy, LMSW
House Manager, Outreach Recovery Center

As these reflections show, wellness looks different for everyone. Whether it’s through movement, creativity, connection, or quiet reflection, we’re proud to support our staff in prioritizing their health—because when we take care of ourselves, we’re better equipped to care for others.

Investing in the Future: Celebrating Our Interns’ Impact and Growth

Each year, Outreach proudly welcomes 20–30 interns from colleges, universities, and accredited training programs across the country—including students from our very own Outreach Training Institute’s Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) training program. As the spring semester wound down, we took the opportunity to spotlight two exceptional interns who have been making meaningful contributions while gaining valuable professional experience in our clinical programs.

Erin Gomez

Arizona State University

Where are you from?

I am from Far Rockaway, New York.

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

I am currently a student attending Arizona State University. I am expected to graduate in August of 2026 with my Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW).

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

I was a social work intern at the Richmond Hill Office. My main responsibilities were providing individual counseling. I have also observed and co-facilitated a group session with one of my team members. In addition, I also documented client sessions, treatment plans and any other necessary documentation.

What do you like most about interning at Outreach?

What I enjoyed the most about interning at Outreach was the learning environment the organization provides. During case conferences, I felt comfortable to share my experiences with clients and their families. I was also provided with feedback and advice when I was feeling stuck and unsure of how to move forward. I always knew that if I needed guidance that I could easily reach out to my supervisor or another team member. It was a very safe and encouraging location to complete my first internship.

What are your future goals?

I would like to continue working with non-profit organizations like Outreach and provide mental health counseling.



Mary Pierce

Touro University

2025 Residential Services Intern

Where are you from?

Lake Grove, New York.

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

I got to Touro University. I expect to graduate in spring 2026.

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

I worked in the Women's Residential Reintegration Program. My main responsibilities were case management, telephone screens, and bed eligibility.

What do you like most about interning at Outreach?

I love the client interactions.

What are your future goals?

I would like to work with adolescents.

Former Outreach Intern Christian DiConsiglio



We also recently reconnected with one of last year's standout interns, Christian DiConsiglio. Below are some excerpts from a letter he sent us reflecting on his journey at Outreach and offering insightful advice for the next generation of interns.

I interned at Outreach last year with Team Islip (aka Suffolk Avenue Outpatient Services)... After graduation, I secured full-time employment as a social worker at Hope House Ministries, non-for-profit, 18 month-long therapeutic community, that provides services for 50-60 persons any given time, who are struggling with substance use and other mental health disorders... I passed my CASAC exam... I am now looking forward to starting a new job at Integrity Partners in Nassau County.

My internship at Outreach was unbelievable. I worked alongside a passionate and empathetic team led by (Suffolk Avenue's Program Director) Donna Bornfriend, who also was my direct supervisor. Donna taught me so much not only about engaging, assessing, and intervening with clients but also about myself as a clinician...One of the best things I learned from Donna was how to properly write notes! Documentation is crucial to be a competent and all-around solid clinician. This is definitely something that has stayed with me since working at Outreach as has the application of various clinical theories and methods such as Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Psychoanalysis... Donna has continued to leave her door wide open to me since commencing...and she always gets back to me with sound, fruitful, and honest advice.

Words of wisdom for the aspiring interns, clinicians, and others entering the behavioral health field are simply to engage. Jump right in and make as many mistakes as possible. Every mistake provides the opportunity to learn something new and get creative. We are not experts, our clients are. Learn about your clients and how you can help them... Embrace the philosophy of "getting comfortable being uncomfortable." This field is not easy and isn't supposed to be. However, that struggle and unease is what creates the unbelievably rewarding space no other profession gets to encounter. No amount of monetary gain is of equal value to what we experience every day. I am beyond grateful for my experience at Outreach.

ACCOLADES AND PARTNERSHIPS



Suffolk Avenue Outpatient Services Program Director Donna Bornfriend and Peer Stacy Hunt provided Narcan training at the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists' (CBTU) Health Fair in North Amityville. Outreach employee Ruby Thomas (also pictured below) is on the CBTU Board.

Outreach's Richmond Hill CCBHC and EQUITY teams attended a family event hosted by the Brooklyn Angels that provided clothing, hygiene kits, toys and other baby products for the over 300 families who attended.



In June, Outreach's-Western Suffolk (County) BOCES collaboration, the Aspire Academy, the only recovery high school in New York, enjoyed the commencement of three High School graduates, who had previously completed residential treatment at Outreach House II on Long Island.

Outreach is proud to have been selected by Stop & Shop as its nonprofit partner in its Stop & Shop Community Bag Program for July 2025. Outreach will receive a \$1 donation for every \$2.50 reusable community bag sold at its Ozone Park store.



New Staff & Promotions



Brian Krempa

MS-HRM

Brian has joined the team as Director of Human Resources. He brings 22+ years of HR experience in healthcare and academic settings to Outreach.



Stephanie Laureano

LCSW MBA

Outreach also welcomes Stephanie as the new Program Director of the Women's Recovery Residence in Brentwood, NY. She comes to the agency with over 20 years of extensive and diverse experience in the human services and behavioral health fields.



Jovanna Djurdjevic

LMSW, CASAC-ADV

Congratulations to Jovanna for her recent promotion to Program Director of Outreach House I in Ridgewood, Queens. Congratulations as well to Stephanie Munoz, who was promoted to the position of Assistant Director at OH II



Mary Brite

LCSW, CASAC, CHC

Mary has been appointed Interim Chief Operating Officer. Formerly our Chief Compliance Officer, Mary now oversees the day-to-day operations of Outreach's programs, training initiatives, and service delivery systems. In this role, she ensures that we consistently deliver the highest quality care to clients and

their families, while maximizing operational efficiency and effectiveness



Christal Montague
LMHC, Master CASAC-G, CARC

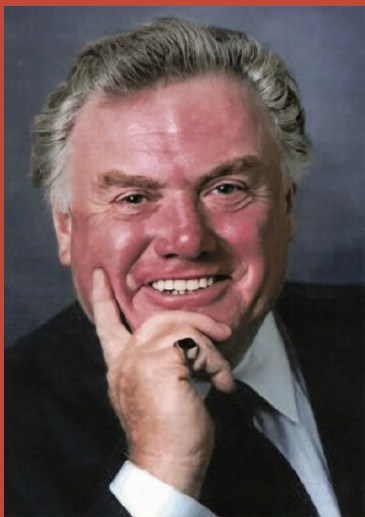
Christal has taken on the new title of Chief Strategy & Growth Officer. In addition to continuing her leadership of Fundraising, Development, and Communications departments, Christal now also heads our newly formed Business Development department, helping to drive expansion and scale our impact in communities across the region.



David Vizzini
MS, CASAC

David has been promoted to Chief Administrative Officer. In his new role, David is responsible for the strategic coordination and oversight of Outreach's core administrative functions, including Human Resources, Facilities Management, Information Technology Services, Capital Projects, and general administrative operations, supporting our infrastructure and advancing organizational excellence.

In Memoriam



It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of former Outreach Board member Joseph K. Collins, founder and owner of Collins Building Services, and beloved father of our current Board member, Kenneth Collins.

Joseph Collins joined the Board shortly after being honored at our 1996 Metropolitan Luncheon and served with unwavering dedication and heart for more than 25 years before passing the torch to his son. He was a kind and thoughtful presence — a generous supporter of Outreach and a steadfast advocate for our annual Metropolitan Luncheon. As a Board member, he graciously shared his insight, humor, experience,

and wisdom, always with the aim of helping our agency grow and thrive.



Outreach mourns the passing of **Gerald (Gerry) Chasin**, a 2024 Metropolitan Luncheon honoree, founder and Managing Director of The Chasin Group at Morgan Stanley, and father of Board member, Matthew (Matt) Chasin.

Gerry enjoyed a remarkable career spanning nearly five decades in the investment and consulting industries, holding leadership roles at some of the nation's most respected financial institutions, including Morgan Stanley, Cantor Fitzgerald & Co., Oppenheimer & Co., and UBS. Beyond his professional accomplishments, Gerry was also a beloved figure in the equine community—a founder of the North Shore Equestrian Center and an accomplished competitive horseman. His warmth, humor, and deep compassion left a meaningful impression on all of us at Outreach.

SAVE THE DATE!

HEROES AGAINST HEROIN

John Brewer Jr
FOUNDATION

Building Healthy Lives
OUTREACH

10th Annual 5K Walk

Saturday, September 13, 2025

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."*

Building Healthy Lives
OUTREACH



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