

Our First Year Celebrated at Annual Meeting With Open House and Awards

On June 24th an air of celebration filled the hall at St. Ann's Arts and Cultural Center as over 200 people, including Board of Directors, staff, "Friends," and invited guests, attended the first Annual Meeting of Community Care Alliance. While sampling appetizers, guests spoke with staff and viewed the creative displays used to illustrate the diversity and scope of programs and services offered since the merger of NRI Community Services and Family Resources Community Action a year ago.

President/CEO, Benedict F. Lessing, Jr., spoke of his vision for Community Care Alliance and introduced keynote speaker, Maria Montanaro, Director of the RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, who described the behavioral health landscape and where we are headed in the State of Rhode Island.



Keynote Speaker, Maria Montanaro, MSW, Director of RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals.

Montanaro stated, "Policy makers cannot get there without the vital partnerships that we have with our providers."

The highest commendation, the Paul H. Dempster Award, was presented to Susan Grislis, Executive Director of Project LEARN, for her more than 30 years of service supporting adult literacy in Woonsocket. Project LEARN merged with Community Care Alliance on July 1, 2015, adding to the array of services offered through CCA.

The Ubuntu Award to honor a CCA staff person who embodies the spirit of humanity toward others was presented to Gerri Floody-Duarte, Housing Specialist at CCA. Gerri was chosen by fellow employees.

Board Chair, William M. Ryan, led the business meeting of the Board of Directors in which the election of Judith R. Dance was affirmed as a Woonsocket Director and Jill Rasmussen was elected as a Director representing the Private Sector. The slate of Directors and Officers was approved unanimously effective July 1, 2015.

"We're trying to create for people who live with a serious mental illness, a system of care where the right door is the community mental health center and the medical home that they encounter there [...]"

—Maria Montanaro

Did you know?

600 of CCA's clients are also patients at Thundermist Health Center. We collaborate for improved care coordination that means better health for people in our programs.

[Find Out More on Page 6](#)



Susan Grislis, Executive Director of Project LEARN, Paul H. Dempster Award recipient, and Nancy Benoit, CCA Board Vice Chair (top). Gerri Floody-Duarte received the Ubuntu Award, which was given this year for the first time.



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Our Mission

We support individuals and families in their efforts to meet economic, social and emotional challenges and enhance their well-being.

A Message from the President/CEO

Benedict F. Lessing, Jr., MSW

The past year has been an exciting one for Community Care Alliance.

We are a new, comprehensive agency built on a foundation of three legacy organizations encompassing family services, community action and community mental health. CCA is the culmination of nearly 15 years of progressive and strategic collaboration among these organizations, whose goals were to customize services, resources and interventions for populations served. Now merged, our vision is that of a 21st century human services agency that is integrated across programs reducing the confusion often experienced by people seeking services within a fragmented system of care.

Our goal is to work with the people we serve to address the key elements that contribute to well-being.

Prevention and Early Engagement

We engage individuals and families as early as possible, assisting them with strategies and solutions that reinforce their self-determination and reduce the likelihood of intrusive, restrictive interventions. To this end, we provide critical supports and services to infants, toddlers and their families under stress, parents who have come to the attention of the child welfare system, youth and adults struggling with their first psychiatric episode and other populations in need.

Recovery Focus

The Psychologist Abraham Maslow once noted, "If the only tool you have is a hammer every problem looks like a nail." The families and individuals we serve frequently have multiple needs not easily resolved by traditional, silo-oriented service delivery systems. For this reason we implement a recovery-driven model that is individualized, strength based, and multi-faceted. Our framework for care assumes recovery to be a continuing,

Imagine a circle of compassion...

Greg Boyle, S.J., Founder, Homeboy Industries, the Largest Gang Intervention and Re-entry Program in the United States

Imagine nobody is standing outside that circle."

developmental process utilizing multiple tools and resources that may include peer support, formalized treatment and other services, employment and training, education, development of life skills and housing support. Foremost, recovery-focused care must engender hope, dignity, respect and empowerment for individuals and families.

Economic Stability

The majority of people we serve live at or below the federal poverty level. Meeting one's basic economic needs is essential to mental health and well-being, as well as the ability to provide positive parenting and nurturing of children. In order to serve people in a holistic manner, we work to address economic insecurity through an array of strategies that includes support with basic needs, vocational services, employment and training, emergency shelter, transitional and permanent supportive housing, coordination with local landlords, financial education, tax preparation and access to Earned Income Tax Credits.

Community Inclusion

Many of the people we serve live at the margins of our society. They often have limited income and commonly have experienced significant,

One Story

sometimes unimaginable trauma. They are often powerless, voiceless and marginalized because of the impact of poverty, life circumstances and various “diagnoses.” We are committed to creating a therapeutic community whereby the people we serve experience themselves as unconditionally valued and respected. The truth that we must instill in this new organization is that there cannot be “us” and “them” but rather, just “us”—a sense of kinship and mutuality that we all belong to and are affected by one another. Owing to the populations we serve, social justice must be at the heart of our efforts on a daily basis. In addition, we continually strive to be a multi-cultural organization that assures the people we serve, as well as staff, are treated with dignity and respect through understanding and celebrating culture, ethnicity, traditions, gender identity and marital preference.

Collaboration

While our agency has a robust array of services and supportive resources, we also know the importance of collaboration (see article on page 6). We will continue to work in conjunction with partners encompassing healthcare, housing, domestic violence services, education, childcare and other social services. As a community based organization, our focus is to accompany the people we serve on their journey and assist them in weaving together the resources that improve their well-being, dignity and integration within the larger community.

Due to the generations of Board members and staff that have come before us, we have a strong foundation. Our hope is that you will accompany us on our continuing journey. Your support is an essential ingredient for Community Care Alliance to effectively and successfully serve individuals and families striving for a better life.



Young people enhance work-readiness skills at Youth Summer Jobs program.

Workforce Partnership of Greater RI and Governor’s Workforce Board and CCA’s community employer partners. The summer jobs program begins with a week of work-readiness training covering workplace expectations, resume building, interviews and financial literacy to help prepare young people for the working world. Youth receive five weeks of paid work experience at 15 local work sites.

For many youth, this is their first work experience that can lead to future employment and career success. Last year, 67 youth that participated in the summer jobs program found permanent jobs. Dekhi Touray, age 17, is one such youth. Last year, Dekhi had his first job ever through the summer jobs program and flourished. He utilized the job readiness skills he learned and landed a job, first at Burger King, and then at Texas Roadhouse. As a recent high school graduate, Dekhi is planning to attend CCRI in the fall. This summer, due to his interest in the healthcare field, he was placed at Landmark Medical Center in the Nursing Department. Dekhi works with the nurses to prep rooms and assists with non-patient duties such as greeting hospital visitors, answering questions and escorting visitors to patient rooms.



Dekhi Touray, at Landmark Medical Center where he works in the Nursing Department.

“There are so many negative preconceived notions of youth,” said CCA Youth Services Manager Stump Evans. “I wish folks could see what we see during the summer jobs program—hundreds of young people lining up to apply for work because they want to help their families pay bills, learn job skills and stay out of trouble.”

“The reality is the more positive, meaningful activities there are for youth here in Woonsocket, the better their chances are of making decisions that will benefit their lives.”

—Stump Evans, CCA Youth Services Manager

Special Events



The Nolan Center Named for Founders of Community Mental Health Center

Corrine Nolan Recognized for Leadership

A dedication ceremony was held in December at 800 Clinton Street in Woonsocket to honor the late Edward Nolan, Ph.D. and Corrine Nolan, MSW, founders of the legacy Woonsocket-based community mental health center in 1966. The Northern Rhode Island Community Mental Health Clinic, as it was then known, was one of the first of its kind in Rhode Island, serving people with chronic mental illness in the community. While they had significant support from the community, the Nolans faced a number of challenges, including the fear and stigma often associated with mental illness. Their commitment to improving mental health services created a foundation for Community Care Alliance as it is today. The building was dedicated to these pioneers whose efforts led to Community Care Alliance serving Woonsocket, all of Northern RI and nearby Massachusetts and Connecticut.



VITA Program: From Kick-Off to \$1,602,022 Returned to Taxpayers

Free Tax Preparation Helps Working Families

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program helps low and modest-income Rhode Islanders file their taxes and receive tax refunds bringing millions back into the local economy. The statewide EITC/VITA kick-off event organized by the RI Community Action Association, Citizens Bank and the United Way of Rhode Island, brought politicians and providers together to promote this program that puts money back in the pockets of low and modest income taxpayers. This year, CCA assisted over 1200 people with their taxes free of charge, helping them receive all the tax credits and deductions they deserve. Over \$1.6 million in refunds went back into the pockets of working people, including over \$625,000 in Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC). Many working families rely on these refunds to pay for basic needs, such as food, clothing and utilities, which also helps boost the local economy.



Corrine Nolan with family, friends and CCA staff at dedication (top); Corrine with Benedict F. Lessing, Jr., CCA President/CEO and Christian L. Stephens, former President/CEO of NRI Community Services (legacy agency) and current President/CEO of Horizon Healthcare Partners.



Rita Gandhi, Community Care Alliance Finance Director and VITA Program leader with Gov. Gina Raimondo at the EITC/VITA Kick Off, which was well attended by state and local politicians. The event was held January 30th at the Museum of Work & Culture in Woonsocket.

Save the Date!

27th Annual ShelterWalk ▶ Saturday ▶ October 17, 2015





With "Red Parrott Tulips" by Janet Alling: Rebecca Leuchak, TAC Board; Kim Griffith, Co-Director Emergency Services; Peter Leuchak, TAC Board; Mary Dwyer, Senior VP Community Support & Recovery; Ben Lessing, President/CEO; Wendy Ingram, TAC President; Deborah Deragon, Northern RI Visitation Center Program Manager; Jane Bassman, artist/donor; Tracey Abrams, VP Communications & Development.

Artists' Donations Appreciated

Art Connection RI Deeds 24 Pieces to CCA

The Art Connection-RI and Community Care Alliance have worked together to transform several Community Care Alliance sites into a more welcoming environment for clients, staff, and visitors. The Art Connection-RI facilitated the donation of 24 original works of art by 11 artists. Artwork has been installed at the agency's Partial Hospitalization Program and Intensive Outpatient Program space at 800 Clinton Street, at the Community Support Program at 55 Cummings Way, and at the Northern Rhode Island Visitation Center at 31 Orchard Street, Woonsocket. At a reception held on May 28th in honor of The Art Connection, CCA President & CEO, Ben Lessing, spoke of the positive impact the donation has had on the people served by the agency. The Art Connection-RI builds connections between artists and their communities by bringing art to community organizations.



Josie Byrd, Assistant to Ben Lessing enjoys The Love Dogs along with other concert guests.

13th Annual Community Champions Music Series 🎵

\$12,000 Raised

Over 100 people came out for each concert in April and May to recognize the honorable careers of six worthy "Champions" who have created positive change in the community (see photo back cover), and to raise funds to support our programs and services. On April 30th, Chan's in Woonsocket was rocking with The Love Dogs as we recognized champions, Chief Thomas Carey, Woonsocket Police Department, for his commitment working with local organizations and all citizens to create a better, safer community; Steve Bacon, Associate Pastor of Harvest Community Church, for his dedication and advocacy for homeless people in northern RI; and Lori Ziegler Halt, Human Resources Manager at CCA, for her ongoing support to employees and helping connect staff to needed resources. On May 21st, Becky Chace entertained guests and honorees: Kate Brewster, Executive Director of the Economic Progress Institute, for her leadership in helping low income families to improve their economic stability; Rita Gandhi, CCA Finance Director, for her work leading the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program over the past 10 years; and Pamela Messoré, Director of Outpatient Services at CCA, for her compassionate commitment to helping people with mental health concerns. Visit www.CommunityCareRI.org for a full list of event sponsors.

10th Annual Golf Tournament

\$16,000 Raised

Over 80 people came out for Community Care Alliance's 10th Annual Golf Tournament on June 19th at Wentworth Hills Golf Club in Plainville MA. The event raised more than \$16,000 to support the Woonsocket Shelter and homelessness prevention programs administered by CCA. Twenty eight sponsors supported the event including the premier sponsors listed on back cover. For a full listing of sponsors and supporters, visit www.CommunityCareRI.org.



Collaboration



CEOs met in Ben's office. Chuck Jones, CEO of Thundermist Health Center and Ben Lessing discuss recent project collaborations.

“I’m excited to work with CCA as we make the shift to a healthcare system that values integration, collaboration, and high quality community based care.”

—Chuck Jones, CEO Thundermist Health Center

Health & Well-being Go Hand in Hand

So do Thundermist and CCA

There is truth in the saying, “If you ain’t got your health...” It is also true that one’s health is closely tied to one’s mental health status. According to SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 68% of adults with a mental illness have one or more chronic physical conditions and 1 in 5 adults with mental illness have a co-occurring substance use disorder. It has also been shown that integrated care—that is the coordination of mental health, substance abuse treatment and primary care services, can lead to reductions in inpatient hospital costs, emergency room costs, and total medical costs. Historically, Thundermist and Community Care Alliance are ideal partners in this having worked jointly to better serve shared clients through such integrated services.

Community Care Alliance legacy organizations and Thundermist Health Center have shared a relationship since the 1970’s. The two organizations have mutually served many populations including Southeast Asian refugees by coordinating primary health and mental health services. Subsequent to the development of the Woonsocket Emergency Shelter the two organizations

worked together to assure homeless families and individuals had access to healthcare. Later, CCA and Thundermist collaborated in the development of infectious disease, primary care and community based social services for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Over the past seven years, Beata Nelken, M.D., a Thundermist pediatrician, has been instrumental in evolving the relationship between the two organizations to better serve families with newborn or very young children. Dr. Nelken understands the social determinants that impact health and well-being for young children and has worked extensively with CCA staff to assure access to early childhood and mental health services. Communication and collaboration between the agencies relative to this population are now routine.

With the evolution of a value-based delivery system in Rhode Island, it is clear that community mental health and primary care organizations must do a better job of integrating their services. Most recently, the two organizations are creating integrative strategies for individuals with behavioral health and primary care needs that improve access to community based resources as an alternative to the use of emergency room and hospital inpatient care. For many low income communities this new model is a cultural shift away from the days when individuals viewed hospitals as their primary health care resource. To this end, Community Care Alliance and Thundermist view this latest population-focused collaboration as a significant opportunity to improve the overall well-being for the people we serve. Our goal is that the people receiving services have their health issues addressed so that their lives are less stressful and they are able to live productive and fulfilling lives.

Program Spotlight

New Program Provides Intensive Services to People Seeking Recovery

With the growing epidemic of drug overdoses and addiction, CCA has responded with an expansion of services available to people seeking treatment and recovery support. Rise to Recovery offers an array of services with multiple levels of care to fit the specific needs of people struggling with addiction.

CCA's new Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) and Daytime Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) in Woonsocket and IOP in Pawtucket provide specialized trauma informed treatment as well as holistic and wellness practices. These programs build on the Evening IOP and General Outpatient Program (GOP) currently available in Woonsocket.

PHP, a five day/week program, is helpful for people seeking recovery who do not require inpatient or residential treatment, but have not succeeded in lower intensity outpatient services. IOP, a three day/week program, is for individuals needing a more structured program due to a substantial risk of relapse.

Having various levels of treatment options in a supportive, judgment-free environment helps ensure people get the support they need for where they are in their lives. Clients work actively on setting goals for themselves to enhance their skills and address barriers to recovery. "Our approach is whatever works for you works," said Pamela Messoré, LICSW, LCDP, Director of Outpatient Services. "All roads lead to recovery." Both PHP and IOP include meditation, stretching and music to help people relax so they can be open and ready for recovery. A weekly parenting group provides additional support for people to share their experiences. Clients are also referred to individual counseling through CCA's GOP and other supportive services. Transportation is available to and from the daytime IOP for those in need.

"People in these programs are experiencing the progression of the disease to the extent that their lives are derailed," said Celeste Greene, LMHC, PHP/Daytime IOP Manager. "We help clients work on their overall health—medical, emotional, financial, healthy relationships. If people are able to address all aspects of a healthy life, then there is a good chance they will be able to build good recovery capital and a strong safety net."

The recent closing of other local treatment programs has made the availability of intensive community-based services even more critical, noted Tawny Solmere, MA, LCDP, Evening IOP Coordinator. "It is helpful to have a higher level of care for people who don't need residential service or for whom the wait places them at great risk," said Tawny.

People struggling with addiction are often dealing with multiple issues related to past trauma, poverty and other concerns. Having access to an array of services helps ensure people get the support they need to move forward in their lives. "Recovery is hard work, there is no way around it," said Celeste. "It is a minute by minute commitment."

In the first four months of 2015 there were 74 confirmed overdose deaths in Rhode Island

RI Department of Health
www.health.ri.gov/data/drugoverdoses



Tawny Solmere, MA, LCDP, Evening IOP Coordinator (left) and Celeste Greene, LMHC, PHP/Daytime IOP Manager discuss program coordination in the new program suite.

"We understand that substance use, trauma, and untreated medical conditions all need to be addressed for successful recovery."

—Richard Crino, RN, Vice President of Acute Services

"This program made me feel really good about myself. It helped me change my thinking."

—IOP Client

Most insurance is accepted. An Intake Coordinator is available at 1-844-702-7473 to help determine the right level of care for each individual seeking treatment.



Our Community Champions (top) Pamela Messori, Kate Brewster, and Rita Gandhi; (bottom) Chief Thomas Carey, Lori Ziegler Halt, and Steve Bacon

Continuing Traditions

Community Champions Music Series & Golf Tournament Success Thanks to Our Supporters

Our legacy organization events, Community Champions Music Series, the Golf Tournament, and ShelterWalk are part of our heritage. During our first year, we continued the tradition as these events help support so many of our programs. Premier Sponsors send us a one time donation of \$2500 that supports our events throughout the year. Read this newsletter for more event information, photos, and other program news.

Thank You Premier Sponsors

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