



# Matters of Substance

FROM THE ALCOHOL & DRUG COUNCIL

SPRING 2009

## Celebrate Alcohol Awareness Month



Alcohol Awareness Month began in 1987 in an effort to reach the American public with information about the disease of alcoholism - that it is a treatable disease, not a moral weakness, and that alcoholics are capable of recovery. During this month, people in our community, as well as the nation, have taken time to consider how alcohol impacts all of us. Alcohol Awareness month also tries to raise awareness of underage drinking. Statistics show that almost 20 percent of teens have taken part in binge drinking in the past month. Binge drinking is defined as drinking alcohol that raises your blood alcohol concentration to 0.08 percent or more in 2 hours or less. Teens who drink alcohol more often report bad grades than those who do not drink and are much more likely to drop out of high school.

Youth who report drinking before the age of 15 are more likely than those who begin drinking later in life to have other substance abuse problems during adolescence. They are more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior, be involved in car crashes, experience unintentional injuries, or have physical fights after drinking, both during adolescence and in adulthood.

Teens who drink alcohol also have a high risk of having an alcohol-related injury, including the risk of being in a deadly car accident. In 2004, 24% of all fatal car crashes among 15-20 year olds were alcohol related. Car crashes are the leading cause of death for people ages 15-20 years old.

If you're interested in seeing the unintended consequences of drinking and driving, Tompkins Cortland Community College is hosting a national traveling exhibit called "Friends". It chronicles the lives of seven upstate New York college students who were involved in a fatal drunk driving crash in November 2000 near Colgate University.

### *Friends Exhibit*

*April 1-30, TC3 Room 121*

*Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.*

*Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.*

*Sunday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.*

*No reservations are necessary. Park in TC3 Lot #1 and enter through college's main entrance.*

## Primary Prevention and Teens: Finding Their Voices



The Prevention and Education Department of the Alcohol & Drug Council is excited to be a part of the first annual Teen Empowerment Forum, scheduled for Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at the Clarion Hotel in Ithaca. The core group of teens planning the forum spans Tompkins County and together they came up with the theme for this year's forum: Finding Your Voice.

Teens working on the event designed a day of meaningful workshops and activities that would be appealing to youth, offer them important skills, and provide information about opportunities to connect and give back to their communities. Teens have been involved in all phases of the planning and all workshops and entertainment were selected by teens. Eighth- 12<sup>th</sup> graders can sign up for workshops ranging from self-defense to environmental action to understanding post-high school options. Significant funding came from Stop DWI and there will be areas where teens can learn about the consequences of alcohol impairment and discover alternatives to substance use.

The forum planning is guided by Talia Miller of the

Council, along with staff from Greater Ithaca Activities Center, The Ithaca Youth Bureau, Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes, Reality Check, Rural Youth Services, and Tompkins County Youth Services. Teens began working on the project in summer and planning committees have met over the past several months in towns across the county. Research shows that primary prevention, or the provision of support and positive engagement for teens, significantly improves their substance avoidance and refusal skills. At this point, the Teen Empowerment Forum has engaged dozens of teen planners and will bring a hundred more together on the day of the event. In times of tight budgets, the Alcohol & Drug Council is proud to make a commitment to this kind of prevention work.

*If you would like more information about registering a teen for the event or volunteering, please email Talia Miller at [tmiller@alcoholdrugcouncil.org](mailto:tmiller@alcoholdrugcouncil.org), call the Council at 274-6288, or check out the forum group on Facebook under Teen Empowerment Forum: Finding Your Voice.*



## Message from the Director

Recent events in the domestic and world economy underscore what people in recovery have always known – that everything is connected. A small act by an individual has a direct impact on those around him. And when a group acts in unison, the results are profound.

Battling addiction can be an overwhelming and dispiriting experience. The individual in recovery faces severe judgments by family, friends, the community, social service providers and the legal system.

Join us in celebrating Alcohol Awareness Month by battling the stigma still attached to seeking treatment for alcohol and substance abuse. This stigma is so deeply rooted in our society that insurance companies get away with refusing to pay for alcohol and drug treatment, and charging higher deductibles and co-pays than for treating any other disease. Food stamps and baby formula have been denied to mothers who have past drug convictions because mothers who used drugs

have few supporters in the political system and face lots of people who think they are “just bad mothers”. Many people still view addiction as a weakness or character flaw that can’t be cured despite overwhelming evidence that it is a treatable physical disease. When people internalize the stigma associated with the disease, it is transformed into shame, which can keep them from seeking the very help they need.

Be an advocate for an individual or family with an addiction problem. Encourage them to seek treatment. Demand equal medical insurance coverage for alcohol and drug treatment. Ask your elected representatives to remove the legal barriers that hinder recovering individuals from getting jobs. When you advocate for someone in recovery, you are advocating for a safer, healthier community.

Kathleen M. Blair, LCSW-R  
Executive Director

## Thank you to Our Donors

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Dr. John Bezirgianian; Jo Ann and Robert Clune; Rebecca Teeter, Ciaschi, Dietershagen, Little, and Mickelson & Co. LLP CPAs; Arthur Kuckes and Martha Wright-Tompkins Charitable Gift Fund; Tim Kessler-Lynkes Technology Services

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*Newsletter designed /edited by:*

Stacy Cangelosi, MSW  
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or contact us through  
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## Welcome!

Jim Brown, LCSW-R, CASAC, comes to the Alcohol & Drug Council as Clinical Director, bringing with him over 20 years of chemical dependency and mental health treatment experience. He is particularly interested in issues faced by the dually diagnosed patient, the impact of chemical dependency on the family, and the spiritual aspects of recovery from addiction. After working as a clinician in various inpatient and outpatient treatment settings, he is looking forward to the challenges that will come with this new administrative position.



Jim Brown



## A Tribute to Our Friend

Our friend and colleague, Jim Currado, a beloved clinician, passed away on December 14, 2008 after a brief illness.

Our friend Jim Currado was beloved. As I reflect on Jim, I understand what a truly singular and exceptional man he was—a beloved friend and colleague, a beloved and devoted father and husband, a man of faith and a clinician who touched the hearts of his clients in ways few can.

Jim buoyed us with his gravitas and generosity, his sense of humor, his gentle chiding and his example. He always felt blessed, even through adversity and illness. He embraced life each day, grateful to have his family and friends and grateful to be here, at the Alcohol and Drug Council, doing his work in such an animated “Jim” way. Jim’s deep and devout faith made him a pioneer in treatment; he started our Straight Paths group at a time when spirituality in treatment and recovery was unspoken. Creating this group was a courageous and critical decision in support of our clients who wanted a faith-based component to their treatment.

I feel very fortunate and humbled to have seen Jim with his two sons, Elijah James and Jacob Joseph and witness how he loved them in such a pure way. “My boys, my Princes” were the core of his existence. He doted on them and I always looked forward to hearing of their escapades over the weekends. I became a better person and father through having Jim in my life.

As we agonize and grieve over Jim’s passing, we also take solace and hope from the legacy of his work. From Crouse Hospital, to Charles Street Residence, to Alpha House and here at the Council, Jim made immeasurable and profound changes in people’s lives. It was heartfelt. It was Jim. The depth of our grief is understandable. It is in proportion to our love for him. We will always carry him in our hearts and work – our beloved Jim.

- Allen J. Agnew

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” Corinthians

## Wish list

Thinking about donating to the Council? Did you know you can make an in-kind donation, as well? Due to an increase in demand for our services, we are renovating our waiting area and are in need of furniture and rugs. We completed a CPR training and need an automatic external defibrillator for emergency use. If you would like to donate, please call Jennifer Fendrick-Jaynes at 274-6288.

***ADC is celebrating 44 years of service to the community!***

## Client Corner

### Comments from a Drinking Driver Program student

Did you know Tetrahydroquinolin (THIQ) is created in the brain, and it only occurs in the brain of the alcoholic drinker? THIQ does not exist in the brain of a social drinker. This is just one piece of information taught in Tompkins County's Drinking Driver Program (DDP). One of New York State's programs to reduce the losses caused by drivers under the influence of alcohol and or drugs.

The DDP helps the participant examine the arrest experience and the reason for their arrest. It also helps them learn to make appropriate driving decisions for the future. Under the guidance of the director and the classroom instructor, the lessons are geared around the social, medical, legal, and safety issues caused by alcohol.

The majority of us are court mandated to attend this program in order to obtain driving privileges. The initial response was how much more punishment must I endure for a mistake? However, after my first class I realized that my "punishment" was actually a valuable re-education. The classroom Instructor's knowledge accompanied by her enthusiasm for the subject matter made the class more than bearable, it was a pleasure. I did not feel that I was being judged and lectured to, she cared for us and wanted us to be better prepared for when

we re-enter the world of driving. Her sincere desire was for us not to repeat our mistakes.

I expected someone to be standing in the front of the class telling us we are all alcoholics, never to drink again, and we must attend AA or else. Instead, we were instructed on who the alcoholic is, how they are affected and how they affect the people around them. She explained that alcoholism is a disease, but there is help if you want it. One thing that sticks out in my mind was the conversation about AA meetings. She simply stated that AA isn't for everyone, but it has a high success rate. There are different types of meetings; you just need to find the group that fits you if you are interested.

According the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, every day 36 people in the United States die, and approximately 700 more are injured, in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. The annual cost of alcohol-related crashes totals more than \$51 billion. But there are effective measures that can help prevent injuries and deaths from alcohol-impaired driving. The Alcohol & Drug Council is instrumental in providing all the tools to overcome these pitfalls. The staff's dedication to providing these tools, as well as their support is astounding.

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VISIT THE ALCOHOL & DRUG COUNCIL ONLINE: [www.alcoholdrugcouncil.org](http://www.alcoholdrugcouncil.org)

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