



Summer/Fall 2020

### **LIRA CELEBRATES 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY!**

Hard to believe that more than 20 years have passed since a group of 50+ invitees gathered in Mineola back in January of 2000 to explore the need for creating an advocacy voice for individuals in recovery and family's affected by addiction. That very night LIRA was born. Among those attending the initial meeting were: **Stu Astor, Maureen Borkowski, Richard Buckman, Gary Butchen, Jim Devine, Joanne Devitt, Leo Hurley, Bert Johnson, Bobby Moore, Claudia Ragni, Dan Rehman, Peter Schweitzer and Bruce Till.** Each have played an important role in our success and longevity! Thank you to these visionaries and recovery advocacy pioneers!

### **RECOVERY IMPACTED BY COVID-19:**

Overshadowed by the coronavirus pandemic is the resurgent overdose epidemic. After a glimmer of hope with modest decreases in the recent past, overdose deaths skyrocketed in the first quarter of 2020 (up 40% in Suffolk and 50% in Nassau) compared to last year. Nationwide the rates climbed 16% in February 18% in March 29% in April and 42% in May over 2019. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported the highest ever one-year total of overdose deaths surpassing 72,000 in 2019. While we are not yet able to fully calculate the total impact of COVID-19, we do know is that the increase can be attributed in part to restrictions in access to inpatient treatment programs and hospital-based detox beds. In some instances, admissions were halted and in others beds were reapportioned to accommodate COVID patients. In addition, recovery coaches, peer advocates, and treatment professionals have shared a noticeable increase in the number of folks in early recovery who have returned to active substance and alcohol use during the

pandemic. The forced isolation is in direct contrast to human connection and a sense of community that adds so much to the addiction solution and recovery support for our people. Despite the setbacks and obstacles, we are steadfast in our belief that there is no group of people more resilient or better equipped to handle these unforeseen challenges. A Siena College poll indicated 59% of New Yorkers have been touched by the epidemic overall.

### **2019 ROCK N RECOVERY XI CELEBRATION**

LIRA hosted our 11th Annual Rock N Recovery celebration at St Peters Lutheran Church in Huntington Station in September. As usual >-over 200 joined together to celebrate recovery. Thanks to the generous donations of baskets, gift cards and merchandise more than \$3,000.00 in prizes were given away to attendees. LIRA presented our Friend of Recovery Award to our dear friend **Stephanie Campbell**, formerly the Executive Director of FOR-NY who is currently heading up the State Office of the Ombudsman attached to OASAS. Stephanie's star continues to rise as an outstanding advocate on behalf of our community. Thank you and Congratulations We are very proud of you! Our Friends at the **Ammon Foundation** presented a \$1000 Scholarship Award to LIRA member **Kelly Serrano** from the **Suffolk Community College** Chemical Dependency Studies program. Kelly is a dynamic young advocate, trained by LIRA as a recovery coach who now works as a CRPA at the Family Service League DASH center in Hauppauge Congratulations! Kelly! Once again, many sponsors and supporters donated funds, prizes and their time to make our annual free event possible. A huge thank you for all the support! A complete list of donors is on the last page.



Once again over 200 guests celebrated at Rock N Recovery XI

Thank you to the following individuals for their volunteer efforts helping to make our annual event a huge success: **Denise Alba, Jeff Baxter, Tina Bruzzo, Richard Buckman, Elsie Demers, Joe Dodge, Sue Ferraro, Edmond Hakimi, Eugenia Karahalias, Suzanne Loevner, Michelle Louzoun, Doreen Mazzei-Buckman, Rev. Deb Nardozzi, Ed Olsen, Timothy Page, Jean Shabkie-Fessenden and Monique Aguido.**

The following morning **LIRA** boarded a bus to Hartford CT to be part of the **National Recovery Hub** event and celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of **CCAR**. It was a great day in the glorious sunshine. We returned in time for the One Recovery meeting at Suffolk THRIVE. What an amazing weekend of recovery!



LIRA, FOR-NY and Youth Voices Matter Representing NY in CT

**ROCK N RECOVERY XII: Epic Virtual Event** Please join us this year on Friday, **September 25, 2020** for a first of its kind. This year our Rock N Recovery XII event has a special theme celebrating LIRA's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

Please join us for a fun filled recovery celebration, with awards, a DJ, raffle prizes, a scavenger hunt, featured performers and more.

**NY STATE LEGISLATIVE NEWS**

Recovery Advocacy day was originally a LIRA initiative until we helped to launch FOR-NY in 2008 and joined forces on what has evolved

into Stand-up for Recovery Day (SUFRD). On March 20, 2019, once again more than 1000 advocates from across the state traveled to Albany for the morning rally and to meet with state legislators in the afternoon. Having established New York's recovery community as a constituency of consequence on the political landscape we remain committed to growing our numbers statewide as we aim to raise our voices even louder and extend our reach and presence further to effect positive change!



Our LI contingent ready for the trip home after a day of advocacy!



>1000 advocates filled the Egg Convention Center for the AM rally

We continued to educate lawmakers about the important work of the recovery community and the need for increased funding to OASAS for peer recovery support services and additional recovery centers in every county in NY. Please join us in our advocacy efforts. With the cloud of economic uncertainty looming large we must ensure that we are at the table with a representative voice to ensure that prevention treatment and recovery support services remain a top priority for state decision makers!

**FEDERAL POLICY**

We continued to seek support for the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act: HR2482 sponsored by Congressman Paul Tonko of New York. This life saving legislation would remove the waiver acquisition requirement for physicians to prescribe buprenorphine and make this evidenced based

treatment widely available. When France did this, the overdose death rates plummeted by 79% over 4 years. Our NY efforts have led to 25 of our 27 Congressional reps supporting the bill as co-sponsors, by far the largest number in the country. Unfortunately, Congress remains bogged down by partisan politics and has been slow to act. FOR-NY spearheaded a Federal Day of Action in June and several groups met with NY Reps in a push for action.

## NY STATE RECOVERY CONFERENCE

Now an annual event, this statewide gathering of recovery has blossomed into a terrific conference with over 400 attending last year. This joint effort between FOR-NY and ASAP included a pre-conference institute with LIRA very visible once again in 2019 facilitating an advocacy training with FOR-NY. Join us this October for a Zoom Conference experience!

## RECOVERY COACH TRAININGS

LIRA continued facilitating our recovery coach trainings in 2019 using the widely respected CCAR curriculum. We facilitated 3 complete trainings and have helped place dozens of coaches into full time employment positions. The peer workforce has emerged as a valued evidenced based practice.



Above our January 2019 class launched our new year of learning



June 2019 aspiring recovery coaches are all ears!



October 2019 the future peer workforce in training

LIRA has trained more than 175 recovery coaches since 2017. Many participants are able to attend thanks to funding from OASAS via FOR-NY. **Ammon Labs** has been a generous sponsor the past two years and **St. Peters Lutheran Church** in Huntington Station has also provided funding assistance. LIRA has also provided scholarships to more than 50 individuals, an investment of **\$35,000** as we continue to support our community!

## FACES & VOICES OF RECOVERY

Spawnd by a National Summit in Minneapolis in 2001 Faces and Voices was launched with the goal of organizing recovery across the nation. FAVOR has helped to train and mobilize thousands of advocates and helped to guide the creation of dozens of startup RCO's. **ARCO: The Association of Recovery Community Organizations**, now has more than 150 organizational members in over 40 states including LIRA, FOR-NY and Recovery Fitness in NY. The annual ARCO **Leadership Academy** was held once again in June in Arlington VA and included the Annual **America Honors Recovery Banquet** for attendees.



Two of New York's fiercest advocates representing at the America Honors Recovery Gala in Arlington, VA. June 2019

## THRIVE RECOVERY CENTER

In March we helped celebrate the second anniversary of THRIVE Suffolk, Long Island's

first ever recovery center. This gem of a resource is an initiative of **LIRA, FIST, LICADD** and **FCA**, four local non-profits collaborating to help save lives, heal families and illuminate the many pathways of recovery.

An estimated 12,000 individuals came to the center in 2019. LIRA's all-inclusive, widely popular **One Recovery** meeting was the most well attended group during the year with more than 1500 participants. **Nassau THRIVE** opened its doors in Westbury during the Summer of 2019 and quickly became a valuable community resource as well.



Opening Day at Nassau THRIVE July 2019

### LIRA SPOTLIGHT

LIRA Board member **Edmond Hakimi** continues his medical residency at Stony Brook Southampton Hospital where he helped care for dozens of COVID-19 patients at the height of the pandemic in New York. **Casey Flanzraich** will be doing her social work field placement with LIRA starting September as a student in the advanced standing program at SUNY Stony Brook School of Social Welfare. Founding LIRA member **Claudia Ragni**, has been selected as our **2020 Friend of Recovery Award** recipient! Congratulations to these outstanding individuals!

LIRA hosted a Multiple Pathways of Recovery panel event at THRIVE Suffolk in November 2019, featuring an all-women's panel of LIRA members sharing their recovery journeys.



Multiple Pathways panel L to R Kelly Serrano, Jenny Von Lang, Sue Ferraro, Suzanne Loevner, Colleen Dilello, Elsie Demers

### SUPPORT LIRA

LIRA was the first ever Recovery Community Organization (RCO) in NY State. For more than 20 years now LIRA has led the recovery advocacy movement in New York working to grow and organize recovery while challenging discriminatory policies and helping to secure resources for our community. We also count on donations from our friends and others to continue our good work. Please consider supporting LIRA by making a tax-deductible contribution. Checks payable to **LIRA** can be mailed to PO Box 653, Hicksville, NY 11802 or donate directly on our web site. [www.lirany.org](http://www.lirany.org) You can also help by creating a Facebook charity fundraiser. Your generosity makes it possible for us to dedicate most of our resources directly back to support the individuals and families in our very own community on Long Island through various scholarships and our innovative and generous giving campaigns.

Save this Zoom information and join us for an Epic Virtual Celebration **Rock N Recovery XII** on **September 25, 2020 8:PM-10:PM**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88681369991>  
**Meeting ID: 886 8136 9991**

### SCROLL OF HONOR SPONSORS 2019

#### RECOVERY ANGEL

Restore Health & Wellness Center

#### RECOVERY CHAMPION

EJF Industries, Inc.

Ethan Heisler & Michelle Louzoun  
Friends of Recovery - New York  
Long Island Council on Alcohol & Drug Dependence  
(LICADD)  
Richard & Doreen Buckman  
Sue & Eddie Ferraro

### **RECOVERY AMBASSADOR**

Bridge Back to Life  
Family & Children's Association  
Florida Center for Recovery  
Long Island Center for Recovery  
Quality Consortium of Suffolk County  
Seafield Center  
Stacey Carpenter  
The Kenneth Peters Center for Recovery  
Unleash Your Full Potential Now

### **RECOVERY ADVOCATE**

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Joseph Ortado, In Memory of Maxine Materowski  
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### **RECOVERY FRIEND**

Angela Piccininni  
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Francesco's Restaurant & Pizzeria  
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John Buckman  
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### **RECOVERY SUPPORTER**

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Thirty-One Gifts - Tina Marie Morovich  
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### **GOODS AND SERVICES DONATIONS**

Bethpage Nail & Spa  
Minerva Nails & Spa  
Olympic Diner  
Stables Toymart & Garden Center  
Steve's Bagels

**Please keep these businesses and service providers in mind when the need arises. They are our friends who invest in Recovery!**

