

news

SUMMER 2012



Several Board members during the Equinox Celestial Celebration Gala on May 4th at the Albany Country Club. From left to right - Seated: Sherry Gold (Secretary), Karen Asher (Chair), Dorothy Cucinelli (CEO), John Carl (Treasurer); Standing: Linda MacFarlane, David Meyers, Scott Fein, Lauri Rosmarin-Plattner, Rose Jackson, Dennis McDonald, Elmer Streeer, Lorraine D'Aleo.

Equinox and ClearView Center Merged!

The merger between Equinox and ClearView Center, which became official on June 27, marks a new and exciting step in the evolution of two strong and established community organizations. The foundation of this successful merger was built on a shared commitment to strengthening individuals and families, decades of experience, and years of cooperative work.

The new organization, Equinox, provides the Capital Region with the high-quality and innovative services for which each organization is known. Specifically: counseling and treatment for those with chemical dependency; residential programs and support services for victims of domestic violence; residential, outpatient, and case management services for individuals and families living with mental illness; residential and counsel-

ing programs for homeless youth and innovative after-school and outreach programs for teens; and the Annual Equinox Thanksgiving Day Community Dinner.

With a staff of more than 200 dedicated employees, the new Equinox will provide services and support to more than 5,000 people each year at 11 different locations throughout Albany County. The centralized administration allows clients to easily access comprehensive services.

"Each agency comes from a position of strength with similar values and complementary programs. This has enabled us to create a new organization with a shared vision offering greater services for all of our clients," said Equinox Board Chair Karen Asher. ●

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Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the first issue of *Equinox News*, featuring our new look and logo.

I am delighted to report that, after many months of hard work mixed with eager anticipation, the merger of ClearView Center and Equinox is complete. By bringing together the programs and services of ClearView Center and Equinox, we have enhanced our offerings to all our clients.

We would not be at this major milestone without the support of all our many friends – donors, volunteers, board members, employees, and, of course, clients – who have been with us over the years. Thank you to all of you! I look forward to continued partnership as we move into the future.

In this newsletter, you will read about a new and innovative mental health program called PROS, which is already showing promising results, and has been well-received by staff and clients alike (*New Program Places Participants at the Center of Their Recovery Plan*). We are also pleased to share a story about a young woman who has successfully recovered from chemical dependency with the help of the Equinox Counseling Center (*Counseling Center Client Achieves a Life She Never Dreamed Possible*).

Looking ahead, we are excited that our combined resources will bring us new opportunities to help those we serve move forward on their paths to recovery, healing, and independence.

Sincerely,

Dorothy S. Cucinelli

Dorothy S. Cucinelli, PhD
CEO, Equinox

New program places participants at the center of their recovery plan

Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS)

Gregg, 22, is a bright and personable young man who has lots of plans for his future. "I'm in the process of getting a job. I'd like to start making my own money. Eventually I want to have my own automotive business. I'd also like to have a wife and kids one day, but I want to have a steady job first," he explained.

With the help of a new and innovative program at Equinox, Gregg is not only managing his illness, he is developing the skills to turn his plans into reality.

The program, called PROS, or Personalized Recovery Oriented Services, is a short-term treatment approach to helping individuals with serious mental illness overcome obstacles that keep them from achieving a major life goal, such as independent housing or employment.

PROS participants are encouraged to develop gratifying pursuits, such as jewelry making, as part of their recovery plan.

"We encourage people to develop gratifying pursuits as part of their recovery plan and assist them to develop skills and locate resources in the community. PROS offers more of an element of choice. Participants choose what they need, and there is an emphasis on getting ready for the work place – learning new skills, such as how to use a computer, as well as how to prepare a resume and handle an interview," said Godfrey, adding: "Research shows that mental health improves when individuals are employed. Many of these participants have been cut out of the job market, but PROS brings them back in."

The Equinox PROS program, launched in January 2012, is currently serving about 90 people, and can accommodate up to 125.

PROS participants enjoy using the computers to hone their skills, write resumes, and look for employment opportunities.



"PROS is a strength-based program that looks at the entire person and not just their mental illness," said Janet Furbeck, Recovery Advisor. "We offer classes that build on what people can already do well and teach skills people need to learn, not only to succeed in the community, but also to succeed in life. This program has a high energy level, and is very client-centered. I have never felt so hopeful about the future for the clients we serve."

Unlike traditional community day treatment programs, PROS encourages participant integration with community supports, noted Dan Godfrey, Senior Director of Recovery Services.

PROS participants receive clinical treatment, individually and in groups, as well as medication management. But the heart of the program is helping participants take a larger role in developing a recovery plan to minimize or manage symptoms.

Although PROS is relatively new to Equinox, it has changed the way that participants view recovery services and has empowered and motivated them in the navigation of their recovery. Participants frequently refer to PROS as "being in college" and "earning a new degree on life."

Continued on page 5

Counseling Center Client Achieves a Life She Never Dreamed Possible

Jody knows that mistakes happen, but that mistakes are an opportunity to grow. "There's always something to learn. What's important to know is that *I'm* not a mistake."

For more than half her life, Jody has struggled with addiction – to alcohol, to heroin, cocaine, pills. She was in and out of rehab programs and had short-term stretches of sobriety. With several family members dealing with their own addictions, being at home often made things more difficult.

Eventually her involvement with a controlling, drug-dealing boyfriend led to her arrest and seven years of felony probation.

Today, this vivacious young woman is celebrating two years of being clean and sober, has a full-time job she loves, and lives in her own apartment.

But getting to this point has taken a tremendous amount of work, and the support and guidance she received attending outpatient substance abuse treatment at the Equinox Counseling Center.

Prior to coming to Equinox, Jody had been sent to a residential addiction treatment center in Albany, where she spent eight months. She then moved into an independent living facility for close to a year. It was during that year, when she left the structure of the residential program, that Equinox became essential to her recovery.

"Jody really worked hard at her recovery, welcomed feedback, and was able to implement many changes in a positive way," said Jeanne Dufkin Stearns, Senior Counselor and Quality Assurance Director. "She followed through on all the suggestions; she went to the meetings, found a sponsor, worked on relationships, and broke co-dependent relationships. She even stayed in our program longer than she had to in order to accomplish her goals."

"Equinox is a 'we' program," said Jody. "You don't go it alone. When they suggested something, like attending an additional group, I took the advice because doing things my old way was what got me there."

Continued on page 5



A collage Jody created for a friend. "I've always wanted to explore my creative abilities, and sobriety has enabled me to do things I've always dreamed of. This is one of the gifts that sobriety has given me."

2012 Equinox Celestial Celebration

The 2012 Equinox Celestial Celebration was a great success – our first gala as a new organization, and in a new venue – the beautiful Albany Country Club. ●

Many thanks to Jeff and Diane Stone for co-chairing the 2012 Celestial Celebration. In recognition of their stellar commitment to Equinox, Jeff, Key Bank Capital Region President, and Diane were named “Stars in the Equinox Sky.”



Left to right: Danielle Fernandez, Carolyn London, Taria Pleasure and Jessica Whitaker enjoyed their first Celestial Celebration as staff members of the new Equinox.



Thanksgiving: The Tradition Continues

Equinox gives heartfelt thanks to the extraordinary volunteers and donors who make the **Annual Equinox Thanksgiving Day Community Dinner** a great success each year. Donors give money, products, and food. Schools and other organizations hold food drives. In 2011, volunteers prepared a record-setting 9,350 meals, and to feed people beyond Thanksgiving we introduced “Project Soup,” which provides turkey and ham bones to soup kitchens and food pantries for soups and stews. A special

thank you to Price Chopper for donating all of the turkeys and for partnering with us on Project Soup by donating all the needed soup ingredients.

Planning has already begun for the 2012 dinner. To be involved in this special holiday tradition or to request a dinner, call the “T Day” hotline beginning in mid-October, 518.434.0131. ●



EQUINOX WISH LIST

Equinox has an ongoing need for the items listed below for our clients. With your help, Equinox provides our clients with basic necessities and other modest comforts. If you would like to donate or have any questions, please contact Development and Community Relations at 518.434.6135.

- Baby Formula
- Bus Passes, Movie Passes
- Diapers (all sizes)
- Flashlights & Batteries
- Flip Flops (all sizes, m/f)
- Gift Cards (Walmart, Target, Price Chopper, Hannaford, ShopRite)
- Headphones
- Lamps
- Musical Instruments
- Non-perishable Food
- Personal Care Items (shampoo, conditioner, lotion, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shaving cream, deodorant, hand soap)
- Plastic Hangers
- Socks (all sizes, m/f)
- Telephone Answering Machines
- Towels
- Travel-Size Hygiene Products
- Twin Sheet Sets, Blankets, Pillows, Waterproof Twin Mattress Covers
- Underwear (all sizes, m/f)
- Wheelchair (for use at Equinox)

In 2011 Equinox provided...

Shelter and support to **148 adults** and **79 children** in our Domestic Violence Shelter

Services to **676 individuals** through Domestic Violence Outreach

Chemical dependency counseling services to **516 adolescents and adults**

Clinical services to **580 adults** through our outpatient clinic

Housing and care to **138 teens** at the Equinox House for Youth

Housing and care to **42 teens** and **11 babies** in the Transitional Living Programs

Housing and care to **135 adults** through Holt House, Recovery Residence, Cohoes Residence, and the Apartment Program

Mental health case management to **271 adults**

Vocational services to **129 adults**

Support to **544 individuals** through our Family Resources program

Service to **2,063** through our Youth Outreach & Mentoring Programs

AND OF COURSE,

Thanksgiving dinner for more than **9,350 individuals** in our community

PROS *continued from page 3*

"PROS is great. It's the next step for people like me who want to advance more," said Gregg. "It makes what you want to do attainable - if you want to learn to cook, or get your driver's license, get a job, go to school. It makes you more ready for life after PROS." ●

Counseling Center Client Success Story *continued from page 3*

"Even though you've put down the drugs, you still have to fix what's up here - in your head - to learn how to do things differently," she said. "Meetings are like medicine for me. Now when I talk at meetings, I can talk without always crying. I'm grateful to be in recovery. People get stuck in resentment and guilt. You need to get out of your head."

"When I came to Equinox, I was more advanced because I had already been in treatment. I don't judge anybody. If you do, you're not taking a look at yourself. The only reason I am the way I am now is because I went through treatment. Now I can help other people."

The progress she made at Equinox gave Jody the courage to keep growing. She attended Toastmasters, volunteered at the VA, and sought out assistance and support from Northeast Career Planning. "I needed to do something. I did a lot of research, ran around looking for grants, and found one that paid for a phlebotomy program."

She completed the phlebotomy course, and, lacking confidence because of a learning disability, chose to repeat the course. Jody graduated with a 92 average, and earned a 94 on the state exam - for which she is, deservedly, very proud.

"My life now is beyond my wildest dreams. I have a full-time job as a phlebotomist at the Red Cross. I'm responsible, I pay my bills early, I have health insurance. If I keep doing it right, I know I'll get to where I'm going. I've had enough of that 'poor me' stuff."

Looking toward her future, Jody is arranging to work with a tutor at her library to improve her reading skills and hopes to one day have a career in counseling or a related field.

Even though she is not required to, Jody continues to attend meetings. "I know I'll feel better afterwards. Equinox taught me to be true to myself, to have integrity, and hold myself accountable." ●

SPECIAL WAYS TO SUPPORT EQUINOX

A gift to Equinox is a wonderful way to honor someone special, mark an important occasion, or remember a loved one's legacy. We are grateful to those who did so in 2011 and 2012 on behalf of those listed below. Please contact Development and Community Relations at 518.434.6135 if you would like to make such a gift. For a complete listing of the donors who made these types of contributions in 2011 and 2012, please visit www.equinoxinc.org.

GIFTS IN HONOR OF

Susan Blabey
George Boehler
Susan Bokan
Julia Brown
Chrissy D'Aleo
Lorraine D'Aleo
Kathleen and Gary Davis
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James F. Seeley
Vic Walker
Carol Wenger's Mother
Bernard Zitomer

GENEROUS AND DELICIOUS!

Thank you to these generous supporters and restaurants for providing services, supplies and tasty food for the participants of the New Pathways and Journey mentoring programs since last Fall.

A Better Bite
Abrookin Vocational Technical Center
Albany County Department of Health
Amo La Bella
Bokland Custom Visuals
Caffe Italia
Central Catering Company
Central District Management Association
Chili's of Colonie
The Ginger Man
Grand Street Art
The Healthy Cafe Catering Company
Wes Holloway, Golub Corp.
Honest Weight Food Co-op

La Salle School
Olive Garden
Orchard Tavern, Michael Noonan
Romano's Macaroni Grill
St. Anne Institute
Erika Sanger
Siena College
Susan Taylor, GreatFinds
Times Union
Too Deep Entertainment
UAlbany Athletic Department
Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood
Suwie Waweru, Capital Kidzwear

\$557,958 IN PRIVATE GRANTS SUPPORT PROGRAMS, MERGER

We are grateful to the many local, regional, and national private foundations that have awarded Equinox grants between September 2011 and May 2012. These funds provide vital support to our many programs.

Youth Outreach Services

\$33,540 Ann Allen Cetrino Family Fund
\$25,000 Daniel & Susan Pfau Foundation (Greater Cincinnati Foundation)
\$15,000 Frederick McDonald Trust
\$12,668 Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Capital Region, Inc.
\$10,000 Citizens Bank Foundation
\$10,000 Sidney and Beatrice Albert Foundation
\$5,000 Bank of America Charitable Foundation
\$5,000 The Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region's Bender Family Foundation
\$5,000 Price Chopper's Golub Foundation
\$5,000 Review Foundation
\$3,500 Berkshire Bank Foundation

Domestic Violence Services

\$20,000 Mary Kay Foundation
\$10,000 Verizon Wireless Hopeline Fund

\$4,000 The Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region's Assemblyman Robert Reilly Salary Fund

Journey & New Pathways Mentoring Programs

\$50,000 William Randolph Hearst Foundation
\$17,500 First Niagara Bank Foundation Mentoring Matters
\$10,000 The Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region's Standish Family Foundation
\$1,500 Emma Willard's Phila Club

InSights Campus Project

\$5,000 Mental Health Foundation

General Operating Fund

\$5,000 HomeGoods
\$3,250 Stewart's Holiday Match
\$2,000 Hubbard Broadcasting Foundation

Merger-Related Expenses

\$300,000 NYS Health Foundation



"I AM ..." YOUTH SELF-REFLECTION PROJECT

The 25 youth (ages 17-22) of Equinox's New Pathways Mentoring Program took part in a collaborative project with the Times Union. Participants were given a camera and asked to express their identity in pictures and words. The result is a powerful and uplifting exhibit that responds to the question: "Who are inner-city Albany youth?" The exhibit debuted during Albany's First Friday event in June and is on display at Equinox.



I AM RESILIENT

"Like a dandelion, I may seem soft, but I'm strong inside."



Donate on line
www.equinoxinc.org



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UPCOMING EVENTS

July (TBD) Youth Achievement and Scholarship Awards

Summer (TBD) Youth Outreach Center Summer Olympics

September 29 AIDS Walk at Washington Park

October Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Wear purple on Wednesdays!

October 13 Race Away Stigma, Hudson Valley Community College, Joe Bruno Stadium.

November 22 Annual Equinox Thanksgiving Day Community Dinner. Hotline open mid-October through Thanksgiving: 518.434.0131

December Holiday Gift Drive. It's never too early to join in on this wonderful annual effort. Call us today for more information.

For more information about any of our events, please call 518.434.6135, ext 348.

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EQUINOX WISH LIST

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