IAAC CHALLENGE
LONG ISLAND’S PREMIER AIDS CARE AGENCY • FALL 2017

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The Board of Directors management team and staff of LIAC want to extend our heartfelt best wishes and offer our deep gratitude to Dr. Gail Barouh on her impending retirement as President/CEO of this organization. Dr. Barouh will be retiring July 1, 2017.

Although Dr. Barouh informed the Board in August of 2016 that she was retiring at the end of that year, she was asked to, and thankfully agreed to stay on an extra six months, to assist the Agency in the transition process. We are extremely grateful to her for agreeing to do so.

Dr. Barouh has guided LIAC since its inception, for 31 years, and her decades of invaluable experience and unwavering commitment to the people LIAC serves has resulted in the Agency becoming the nation’s oldest and largest suburban HIV/AIDS service agency. As a result of Dr. Barouh’s leadership, LIAC is the premier community service provider in the region and recognized nationally for its foresight and services. As the needs of our clients changed over the years, Dr. Barouh made sure that LIAC remained a leader in providing services and support for Long Islanders infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as those who are at high risk for other infectious diseases. As a result of Dr. Barouh’s leadership, LIAC’s clients have been able to navigate the complicated maze that all too often prevents people from being connected to the medical professionals, support services, and social service providers they desperately need. This also includes, but isn’t limited to, Dr. Barouh’s spearheading LIAC’s Medicaid initiative, which partners with regional/lead health homes in Suffolk County, Nassau County and Queens.

From the early years of fighting to ensure that HIV/AIDS was recognized as the devastating health threat it is to all populations, to the current need to be vigilant in ensuring that the public is aware that there remains a need to educate, spread prevention awareness, and care for those still affected, Dr. Barouh has been unwavering in her efforts to treat all people in need of LIAC’s services with dignity, respect, and care. Her tireless commitment and service to all in need cannot be overstated, and both LIAC and the clients we serve could not have had a better champion.

We all wish Dr. Barouh the best in her well-deserved retirement from LIAC. We will miss her deeply, and because we know her so well, we are certain that whatever she turns her attention to next will be successful.

The Board of Directors of LIAC

Catherine Hart Retirement

The Long Island Association for AIDS Care, Inc. (LIAC) announces the retirement of Catherine Hart, LMSW, Chief Operating Officer and 20-year agency veteran. Her last day will be June 30, 2017. Under Catherine’s leadership, LIAC obtained over 30 million dollars in federal funding awards from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and Office of Minority Health (OMH). Catherine pioneered LIAC’s Health Homes Medicaid program, which provides services to thousands of Long Islanders infected/affected with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses.

Dr. Gail Barouh, LIAC President and CEO, praised Catherine who started as a volunteer on the HIV/AIDS hotline during the height of the AIDS epidemic. In 1997, Catherine joined LIAC as an employee and went on to hold various agency positions until becoming COO in 2009. Beyond her work within the agency, Catherine also mentored young social work interns from Stony Brook University and Adelphi University.

As a family member of a relative who died of HIV/AIDS early in the epidemic, Catherine always brought compassion, respect, and dedication to all clients and their families.

Although her retirement is well earned and deserved, Catherine will be greatly missed by all the LIAC staff. The Board of Directors thanks Catherine for her pioneering efforts and appreciates her many years of service to the agency and Long Island. We wish Catherine all the best in her retirement.

LIAC is excited to announce that we have been awarded funding by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) for a comprehensive HIV prevention program, focusing on Young Men of Color who have Sex with Men (YMSM). LIAC’s YMSM Alternative Prevention and Care (YMSM APAC) program will address HIV prevention with this population, who are at the highest risk of acquiring HIV. This is LIAC’s third grant directly funded from the CDC.

Dr. Gail Barouh, President/CEO of LIAC, congratulated the hard working staff of LIAC for once again securing funding for our clients, noting that reducing new infections among the YMSM community, through increased access and linkage to care, will improve the overall wellbeing of all Long Islanders.

Through this funding opportunity, LIAC is proud to provide targeted testing, diligent outreach, and effective intervention programs to the YMSM community. This will mean a focus on reducing new infections, increasing access to care for HIV-positive individuals, and promoting healthy choices. Using a mobile approach of street and social media outreach, our Care Navigators will engage high risk HIV-negative persons in testing. PrEP services, and VOICES/VOCES, an interactive group discussion on condom education and safer sex. Testing will include HIV, HCV and STIs (Gonorrhea, Chlamydia and Syphilis).

LIAC is excited to bring rapid Syphilis testing, as well as couples testing through this program. Individuals who are identified as HIV-positive will be linked to proper medical care, provided essential and supportive services, as well as enrolled in CLEAR (Choosing Life! Empowerment! Action! Results!), a multi-session, one-on-one program that provides individuals with education and techniques to make healthy choices and reduce the spread of HIV. YMSM APAC will also include a mentoring program, provided by an Engagement Specialist, to empower YMSM individuals and promote community leadership.
World AIDS Day, an initiative intended to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and to support those living with HIV, is celebrated annually on December 1st. This year, LIAAC co-hosted an event with Stony Brook University’s LGBTQ* and Student Health Advisory Committee on December 1st from 12 to 9 p.m. in the Sidney Gelber Auditorium. LIAAC also cosponsored a three-day celebration at SUNY Old Westbury with Student Health Services. The celebration events were held during the campus’s common hour, which takes place daily from 2:30-3:50 p.m., in the Atrium of the Student Center.

Stony Brook University Event

Throughout the event, several organizations provided information tables for the students and staff of Stony Brook University. In attendance was The Long Island Association for AIDS Care, Stony Brook Medicine’s PEPFAR Services; Pride for Youth; Stony Brook University’s LGBTQ*; Mothers Against Drunk Driving; Stony Brook University’s Commuter Student Association; Campus Residences; Stony Brook University’s AIDS Peer Educators; and the Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC).

At this event, LIAAC sponsored a screening of the film Rent, a musical about New Yorkers in the early 1990s struggling to pay their rent and live their lives during the AIDS epidemic. This screening was attended by approximately 70 students and staff members.

The event also featured a screening of Blood Brother, a documentary about “Rocky Braat, a young man from a fractured orphanage — a meeting that changed everything for him”. The documentary about the AIDS activist movement followed by several discussions about condom use and safer sex practices. As you can hear in one of the videos, one student had never tried to put a condom on before, and others were unsure how to tell if it was on correctly.

When students completed a game of Drunk Condom, a member of LIAAC staff would perform a condom demonstration, explaining each of the steps necessary to put on a condom correctly. This led to discussions about how to talk to your partner about using condoms; sexually transmitted infections that can be contracted through oral sex; how to make a flavored condom into a dental dam; how to use an internal condom; why not to use a flavored condom for vaginal or anal sex; and the benefits of using PrEP for HIV prevention.

Throughout the course of these events, LIAAC tested 15 individuals for HIV, Hepatitis-C, and STIs. Additionally, LIAAC distributed over 900 condoms during the World AIDS Day celebrations.

SUNY Old Westbury Event

In addition to LIAAC, Pride for Youth; Long Island Against Domestic Violence; Five Towns Community Center; and the SUNY Old Westbury chapter of Lambda Sigma Epsilon were in attendance. During these celebrations, LIAAC provided two tables full of information, condoms, and informative games to help interact with and share information about HIV, STIs, risky behaviors, and sexual health with as many students as possible.

LIAAC’s ECHO program used a small version of a game show with questions such as “What is HIV?” and “How many drinks are in a binge?” to start a conversation with students about sexual health and risky drinking behaviors. For each correct answer, the participant won a World AIDS Day themed prize, such as a lanyard with the AIDS ribbon on it, a Red Ribbon rubber duck, or a Red Ribbon mini football.

LIAAC’s ECHO program also brought a game called “Drunk Condom” to the students of SUNY Old Westbury. This activity asked participants to wear a pair of “Fatal Vision” Drunk Goggles, which were loaned to LIAAC by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and attempt to put a condom on a demonstrator to show how difficult it can be to correctly put a condom on while intoxicated.

The most common error made by students was putting the condom on upside down, with some even tearing the condom. Drunk Condom sparked several discussions about condom use and safer sex practices. As you can hear in one of the videos, one student had never tried to put a condom on before, and others were unsure how to tell if it was on correctly.

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In the ECHO Program’s Communities Talk: Town Hall Meetings to Prevent Underage Drinking involved a panel discussion of several esteemed professionals in their respective fields. These panelists included: Assemblyman Philip Ramos of the 6th Assembly District, Police Officer Elisa McVeigh of the Suffolk County Community Relations Bureau, Alexander Arias of Brentwood High School, Leah Richberg and Kavita Chadee of the ECHO program, Brittany Becker from the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Isai Fuentes and Melissa Smith of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Charlene Rogers of L.I. Against Domestic Violence, and Anthony Rizzuto of Seafield Services.

The panel discussion spanned two hours, consisting of conversations about what to do if you suspect someone is underage drinking. The panelists included Assemblyman Philip Ramos of the 6th Assembly District, Police Officer Elisa McVeigh of the Suffolk County Community Relations Bureau, Alexander Arias of Brentwood High School, Leah Richberg and Kavita Chadee of the ECHO program, Brittany Becker from the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Isai Fuentes and Melissa Smith of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Charlene Rogers of L.I. Against Domestic Violence, and Anthony Rizzuto of Seafield Services.

The Communities Talk: Town Hall Meetings to Prevent Underage Drinking was an outstanding success on social media. The event was live-streamed on Facebook and reached 1,758 people with 621 views. For future Town Hall Meetings, the ECHO program hopes to boost physical attendance while maintaining the vast reach on social media. Those who attended the event suggested hosting a future event during the school year to increase attendance. Overall, the event was extremely effective, providing the Brentwood community with much needed resources to help combat the epidemic of underage drinking.
Women and Girls
HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

BY: Melissa Colleary

For National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, the Long Island Association for AIDS Care, Inc., Project ECHO (Educated Choices Healthy Options) grant, hosted a Red Pump and Red Tie Event aimed at creating a conversation surrounding women’s health and the rising rates of HIV infection among women, particularly those considered to be ethnic and racial minorities in low income areas. This year’s Red Pump and Red Tie Event was held at Brentwood Public Library which sits in the heart of a generally underserved minority community.

While traditionally the red ribbon is the symbol for HIV and AIDS awareness, for National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, the red pump takes the place of the traditional awareness ribbon, to celebrate and empower women while simultaneously providing education and resources. For this year’s event, LIAAC’s Project ECHO decided to add red ties as a way for men to join the conversation about women’s health.

This year’s Red Pump and Red Tie Event has been the most outstanding and impactful event with over 300 condoms distributed to 66 people within a four hour period. In addition to condom packs, we distributed informational pamphlets, condom keychains, safety flashlights, and safety whistles. Part of what made this event such a success was the help of several vendors, including: Five Towns Community Center; TriCare Systems; Hudson River Health; Long Island Harvest; Affinity Health; Long Island Against Domestic Violence; and the National Coalition for Negro Women: Suffolk Chapter.

The National Coalition for Negro Women: Suffolk Chapter donated red velvet cupcakes which were used in this year’s Condoms and Cupcakes initiative which required participants to correctly demonstrate how to put on a condom or correctly answer three questions about sexual health to win a cupcake. As 44 out of the 66 encounters of the day were youths between the ages of 13 and 25, this initiative proved to be an invaluable resource in helping a community that experiences teen pregnancy rates that are 73% higher than Suffolk County’s average in 2013.

LIAAC also sponsored a social media campaign that asked participants to write down the reasons why they think it is important to know their HIV, Hep-C, and STI status as a way to reduce the stigma behind the conversation about sexual health in hopes of stopping further spread. The written responses were photographed and turned into a video using the app Flipagram and can be viewed at https://flipagram.com/f/lwrwGb32x1.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), “In 2015, 39,513 people were diagnosed with HIV infection in the United States. The number of new HIV diagnoses fell 19% from 2005 to 2014. Because HIV testing has remained stable or increased in recent years, this decrease in diagnoses suggests a true decline in new infections. The decrease may be due to targeted HIV prevention efforts. However, progress has been uneven, and diagnoses have increased among a few groups” (https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/ataglance.html). LIAAC has understood the importance of providing HIV education as well as providing free and confidential rapid HIV testing. Statistics show that HIV is prevalent amongst the Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), low income, and African American communities.

LIAAC utilizes a mobile approach that enables staff to reach out to Long Island residents who have trouble accessing reliable transportation or are unaware of resources available to them. The Project Safety Net (PSN) outreach team provides all of its services within the “mobile office”, traveling throughout all of the Long on Island. From Hempstead to Riverhead, Port Washington to Bay Shore, and Valley Stream to Coram; there isn’t a town or village in either Nassau or Suffolk County that isn’t eligible for PSN services.

From the mobile units and community provider collaborations, LIAAC’s Project Safety Net program was able to provide 380 free and rapid HIV tests and over 100 rapid Hepatitis C tests in the 2015-2016 grant year. Additionally, Project Safety Net aims to assist community members who are struggling with Substance Use Disorder (SUD) or Co-occurring Disorder (COD). Often, PSN team members will be found encountering people at local bus terminals and train stations, outside of malls and shopping centers, and at community events. By outreaching to Long Island residents through this method, Project Safety Net was able to encounter over 1,200 individuals in the 2015-2016 grant year and provide information on Substance Use Disorder, HIV, Viral Hepatitis, and Trauma. Through our partnership with Seafield Center, the program is able to link individuals struggling with SUD or COD to much needed treatment. PSN utilizes its Brief Strengths-Based Case Management evidenced-based practice to assist those individuals who identify barriers to treatment. PSN program staff link clients to resources to help overcome those barriers so they may access substance abuse treatment. In the 2015-2016 grant year, 50 clients were enrolled into the SBSCM program. Program staff provided fast-track services to 24 individuals who were ready and willing to enter substance abuse treatment. Lastly, over 480 community referrals were provided Long Island residents in the 2015-2016 grant year.

In July of 2017, PSN will host its third Annual Wellness Fair in Wyandanch. In collaboration with the Wyandanch Resource Center and the Martin Luther King Health Center, LIAAC will provide free and confidential HIV/HCV/STI testing and provide health information and promotional items. Our community partners, including the Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk (EOC), National Association for Drug Abuse Problems (NADAP), and Stony Brook University hospital, will join us to present information on the services they provide to assist the community.

The First Monday and the Third Monday of every month, the PSN team can be found at one of the selected Walgreens locations in Nassau County. Through our partnership with Walgreens, education and free testing is available for both HIV and Hepatitis C. Those locations include Hempstead, Freeport, and Uniondale. These locations are chosen based on communities considered to be at the highest risk. In addition to the monthly test dates, services are provided on national health awareness days such as on National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, Caribbean American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, National HIV Testing Day and Hepatitis Testing Day.

By continuing to provide services throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties, LIAAC’s PSN program hopes to continue to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS across all of Long Island. Furthermore, PSN’s goal is to also raise the awareness of viral Hepatitis C as well. PSN has identified a need for the community to be educated about HCV, especially the link between HCV transmission and needle sharing habits since PSN has an HCV positivity rate of 5%. Awareness and education on viral Hepatitis is even more important today as heroin use has increased dramatically on Long Island over the past decade. The greater the awareness amongst the community, the greater will be the chances of lowering the rate of contraction for both viruses. For more information or to schedule a test today, please call LIAAC’s toll-free hotline: 877-865-4222.
THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

Proceeds from LIAAC’s events provide the backbone for the development and continuation of innovative programs not funded by government or other sources. LIAAC acknowledges the kindness of individuals and businesses who have demonstrated powerful commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

SUPPORT LIAAC
Help change the lives of those in need
MAKE A DONATION TODAY!
Visit us online at LIAAC.ORG or call 1-631-385-2451

LIAAC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LIAAC is always looking for talented individuals to join their staff. If you are interested in employment with LIAAC please mail or fax your resume to us for consideration and review. All resumes must be accompanied by a cover letter. We will keep your resume on file and if your qualifications match any open positions we will contact you. Please check our website at www.liaac.org for current open positions and services and follow us on Facebook.

LIAAC is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Excellent benefits.

Available Positions: Case Manager • Health Educators • Health Home Outreach Worker • Prevention Specialist
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