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MINUTES

Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

September 17, 2019

Call to Order

The three hundred and thirty sixth regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by 2nd Vice Chair Gregg Benson.

Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Mr. Benson announced that notice of this meeting was provided in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21).

Roll Call

Katelyn Assenheimer called the roll. Members present and absent were noted for the record. Mr. Benson informed the Council that this meeting would be for informational purposes only due to the lack of quorum.

Chairman's Report

Acting Executive Director Celina Levy welcomed everyone to the meeting and shared that Acting Chairman Neil Van Ess regretted not being able to attend the meeting since this yearly recognition is very important to him.

Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Resolutions

Ms. Levy read resolutions recognizing Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in New Jersey. These resolutions will be voted on at the next meeting.

Presentation: “2019 Volunteer of the Year Award Ceremony”

Sara Thode, Director of Prevention and Planning shared with the audience that the Alliances represent the largest network of community-based anti-drug coalitions in the nation with over 380 Alliances encompassing over 500 municipalities statewide. The grassroots network of Alliances and its volunteers are more critical than ever in helping to communicate and execute the systems necessary to evoke the community level change across New Jersey. Ms. Thode introduced the County Volunteers of the Year and presented each with a certificate in recognition of their service.

Ms. Thode introduced the W. Cary Edwards State Volunteer of the Year Award winner, Kathleen Pittaluga of the Dennis Township Municipal Alliance in Cape May County. Kathy has lived in and worked as the Dennis Township School Social Worker for 30 years. Kathy has been an essential part of the Alliance for many years. Her contributions as a volunteer include planning and organizing events for the community. Kathy also works behind the scenes and has provided valuable information and input regarding the needs of Dennis Township during the needs assessment process. Ms. Pittaluga was presented with a plaque for her service and commitment to the Dennis Township Municipal Alliance.

Ms. Thode thanked the volunteers for their dedication and commitment to the Alliance Program and invited the volunteers and their guests to a luncheon immediately following the meeting.

After the award presentation, Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro introduced the First Place Winner of New Jersey Shouts Down Drugs Prevention Concert, Tiffany Enemu to perform her song “Had It All”.

Ms. Alfaro then gave an overview of the Knock Out Opiate Abuse Day in New Jersey. Knock Out Opiate Abuse Day is currently in its fifth year and occurs on October 6th and is the largest single day-initiative in the county. This is a collaborative effort between the Partnership for a Drug Free New Jersey, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, GCADA and the prevention and treatment communities as well as concerned citizens to raise awareness of the potential for dependency on prescribed pain medicine and its link to heroin abuse rates in New Jersey. Volunteers across the state will visit physician and dental offices, as well as homes in the communities to distribute this information on door hangers and guides for prescribing these medications.

Acting Executive Director’s Report

Acting Executive Director Celina Levy shared that the 5th Annual Suicide Prevention Conference took place on September 10th. Ms. Levy moderated a panel of individuals who had lost someone to suicide or had survived their own attempts. Topics also included the issue of stigma associated with mental health and substance use disorders and how to change systems to improve access to coverage.

Ms. Levy again thanked the volunteers and County Alliance coordinators for their dedication to the Alliance Program and the Council members for their support in all of GCADA's efforts.

Adjournment

Mr. Benson adjourned the meeting at 11:37.