

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Friends,

With every hope of seeing signs of spring very soon, I am pleased to share with you some of the joyful activities that warmed us over the cold winter months. From the generosity of our friends, families and staff to our role in battling the opioid addiction crisis in our community, the following newsletter offers what is all in a day's work at EPIC Long Island and South Shore Child Guidance Center.



Thank you for your support and partnership in our mission. Please join us for one of our upcoming events: Annual Don Luneburg Golf and Tennis Classic on July 30 and our Annual Walk for Epilepsy on October 13. For more information on these events, please contact our Development Office at 516-739-7733 ext. 355.

NEW HOPE FOR OPIOID ADDICTS

As more and more families across Long Island continue to be impacted by opioid addiction, the C.A.R.E. Center is providing a new program that may be the way to recovery.

The treatment is centered around a pioneering drug called Vivitrol. Known also by its generic name naltrexone, the monthly-administered injectable binds to the same receptors as opioids, blocking their effects and reducing cravings.

Under the supervision of Carolyn Walsh,

Program Director of the C.A.R.E. Center, and Robert Savino, LCSW, the Center's Clinical Coordinator, five patients who have recently received this treatment have shown enough promise that the Center is ready to offer it to anyone who fits the criteria.

The C.A.R.E. Center is very fortunate to have Larissa Yosseffi, a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, on staff, who will approve admission to the program. To be considered, adult patients must be 7-10 days free of opioid use, commit to monthly visits to the Center in Freeport for the shots, and participate in regular therapy sessions.

The opioid crisis is real and growing. The C.A.R.E. Center is committed to making sure those battling addiction have a place to turn, a staff focused on their recovery, and evidence-based treatments that shine the light of hope at the end of the tunnel.

EPIC LI WINS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANT

And the winner of a New York State Regional Economic Council grant is...EPIC LI!

The grants, announced by Governor Cuomo at a press conference in December, finance targeted professional development for leaders with the hope they'll decide to remain in their respective regions and continue to do outstanding work for their communities.

This summer, Stony Brook University's Center for Corporate Education, EPIC LI's partner in the grant, is projected to begin training 100 of the agency's employees, including direct support professionals, residential managers and assistant managers, and some administrators.

The Council's \$95,900 grant and Stony Brook's expertise means that EPIC LI will have an even greater staff serving the needs of Long Islanders living with developmental disabilities.



TAX CREDIT REMINDER



According to IRS Newswire, many taxpayers with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities are failing to take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). This means that a refund of up to \$6,318 isn't getting into the hands of those who qualify.

Of course, you can't get the credit if you don't file a tax return. Another impediment may also be the assumption that the refund will affect eligibility for other federal public benefits. The IRS wants you to know that is definitely not the case – refunds don't count as income where most federal aid, such as Social Security disability or Medicaid, are concerned.

This is by no means the last word on EITC – it's always best to consult your tax professional to make sure you're clear on the details of the credit and that you are truly eligible. If you are, don't miss out!

BOARD MEMBER JOEL ACKERMAN BREAKS A LEG!

Wait, that Conquistador looks familiar! Could that be EPIC LI Board Member Joel Ackerman on stage in *The Addams Family* at Northport Community Theater? It could indeed. This past Fall, Joel donned a ghostly costume to play an Addams ancestor in the creepy, funny, musical take on the 1960s television series. Stay tuned for more sightings!

COATS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Thank you to all the staff, families, and employees whose donations to the EPIC LI Coat Drive wrapped children and families at the SSCGC in much needed layers of warmth this winter. Congratulations to the Day Hab for leading this initiative!



ANNUAL GALA AND LEADERSHIP AWARDS ON MARCH 1

Great fun and a great cause were the winning combination at EPIC Long Island's 33rd Annual Gala "Thursday Night Fever" on March 1 at the Garden City Hotel.

Amid the dinner and dancing, guests enthusiastically vied for auction items, with bids totaling

in excess of \$60,000. These funds will go toward new furnishings and renovations in EPIC LI's group homes, epilepsy education programs, and establishing an employee recognition fund for the agency's Direct Support Professionals.

During the evening, three honorees received the 2018 Leadership Awards: Alan Littman from NFP Corporate Services with the Corporate Leadership Award; NYU Winthrop Hospital Department of Neuroscience with the Professional Leadership Award; and Joyce Silverman LaKamp and her brother Stephen Silverman with the Naomi and Barney Silverman Family of the Year Award, named in honor of their parents, who were among the founders of EPIC LI.

In an homage to the classic blockbuster "Saturday Night Fever," gala guests, arriving in retro 1970s attire, boogied down to live disco-era music.

Thank you to everyone who made this event not just possible, but a huge success!



DAY HAB'S COMMONS NAMED IN HONOR OF JACK LANG



In a special ceremony on November 9, our Day Hab space officially received a new name. The Jack Lang Memorial Commons honors the legendary New York Daily News baseball

journalist and winner of the Baseball Hall of Fame's prestigious award for sports writing, who died in 2007. Jack's children have been long-time supporters of EPIC Long Island, spearheading many fundraising events and, in Randy's case, serving on the agency's Board of Directors. Randy joined sister Victoria and brother Brian at the dedication, which was the culmination of their commitment to see the Jack Lang name associated with a cause so important to all of them. EPIC LI is grateful to the Lang family and deeply honored to be the site Jack's children chose to honor their father.

TRAINING SCHOOL NURSES

The Epilepsy Foundation awarded EPIC LI a competitive grant to implement new supplemental training modules for school nurses.

Carried out in conjunction with the National Epilepsy Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control, the modules address three areas of seizure management and response that will improve student care. This includes educating nurses (who, in turn, educate school staff) about psychogenic non-epileptic seizures (PNES), a condition deemed to be a physical manifestation of a psychological disorder. The second module teaches participants about currently available and new rescue therapies to be used in seizure emergencies. The final module

provides school nurses with the tools and knowledge needed to advocate for and ensure that students with epilepsy receive the necessary supports and accommodations to succeed academically.

The training is done on school grounds to accommodate nurses' schedules. About 70 nurses and staff have been trained to date across Suffolk and Nassau Counties.

The modules bridge crucial knowledge gaps, ensuring that school nurses are well equipped to attend to the medical well-being of every child in every classroom.

EPIC LI GIVES TO THE COMMUNITY

Participants in the Day Hab's Program Without Walls were busy in December spearheading an immensely successful toy drive. Their enthusiastic campaign resulted in donations from all around the agency.



But it didn't stop there. They joined forces with two local businesses, Tor Comics in Holtsville and Fourth World Comics in Smithtown, that contributed new toys and comics from their own stockrooms. Where did all these wonderful gifts go? One destination was the South Shore Child Guidance Center. And when Gary Brown, a long-time EPIC LI supporter, former Green Bay Packer and Super Bowl Champion, reached out for help on behalf of the Brentwood Family Shelter, the Program Without Walls group had found their second stop. EPIC LI representatives, including Board Member Joel Ackerman, were on hand at the shelter to help parents select the perfect items for their children from the donated bounty. Joel commented afterward, "It is so great to see organizations helping each other in such a big way. We can all feel so proud that EPIC LI was involved and really made another example of being Extraordinary People in Care."

TOYS AND A SPECIAL GUEST AT SSCGC'S HOLIDAY PARTY

Toys and meeting a football hero were on the menu at the South Shore Child Guidance Center's Dec. 28 holiday party. Former Green Bay Packer Gary Brown, who regularly visits many EPIC LI programs, stopped by SSCGC as a special surprise for the clients. At the party, he signed autographs, posed for photos, and handed out presents. Each child unwrapped a brand-new toy generously collected by Day Hab's Toy Drive and by Toys for Freeport Tots, which was coordinated by Det. Patrick Franzone of the Freeport Police Department. Cupcakes, cookies, a football legend, and toys to take home made for a day to be remembered by all!



transport, the EPIC LI haul was the second largest they'd seen for Hurricane Maria. Congratulations to Day Hab for a generous job well done!



MUSIC WITH MR. CALLOWAY

Several days a week, a man and his guitar visit Day Hab to entertain the individuals and give himself valuable therapy. Mr. Calloway has been stopping by for two years now. In an interview with Direct Support Professional Sheila Jackson, he noted that he loves playing for the individuals because "they really seem to enjoy it" and it makes him "feel special." Mr. Calloway's been playing the guitar for 50 years, and although he can still get a little nervous performing in front of a lot of people, he's found the experience to be profoundly helpful in his own self-care process. He started his performance career about 7 years ago, when his co-workers at McDonald's "encouraged me to play at the candlelight dinner service they had from 5-8pm." From that time on, Mr. Calloway has delighted in bringing his music to appreciative ears, especially at Day Hab, where "it's fun... especially when they participate." Thank you, Mr.



HELPING HURRICANE MARIA'S VICTIMS

Hurricane Maria's devastating blow to Puerto Rico touched many at EPIC LI, especially since new Day Hab manager Jasmine Beach has family on the island. With her guidance, the entire agency proudly collected upwards of 2,500 pounds of food and water for the victims. The donations came from all across the Day Hab program – participants, family, staff, and employees. It was truly a group effort that even turned into a contest! All nine activity rooms gamely "competed" to see who could donate the most (congratulations, Room 1!). The sheer volume of donations required three vans loaded up by six staff members. According to staff members at Long Island Harvest, who are overseeing the

DAY HAB MAKES HOLIDAY MEMORIES

The Day Hab program celebrated the holidays with a full-day of festivities in December. In the morning, clients honored traditions from around the world, with each of the nine classrooms hosting a different one, such as Kwanzaa, Ramadan, and Hanukkah. Then everyone enjoyed a presentation by Day Hab participants of *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* and a musical performance by the EPIC Dreamers. The afternoon was filled with gifts, stories, dancing, and, of course, plenty of holiday fare. It was a day of good cheer and great memories!



PUTTING FAMILIES FIRST

This past Fall, South Shore Child Guidance Center launched a new program focusing on the parents' perspective. Family Information Resources Support and Tools (FIRST) offers moms, dads, and other adult family members a chance to gather together, pool insights, get additional information, and support one another during a time that can be baffling, overwhelming, and isolating. All parents are welcome, as long as their child is currently a client at SSCGC. The program meeting tackles a different topic, including coping skills, positive communication, understanding a diagnosis, and behavior management. Two SSCGC clinicians, one of whom is fluent in Spanish, lead the discussion. No registration or reservation is necessary, and free childcare



is available to accommodate parents with busy schedules and multiple responsibilities. The FIRST program is helping parents discover the value of their own community and the many ways SSCGC is there for them and their children.

SAVE THE DATE!

For our **2018**

**Annual Don Lunenburg
Golf & Tennis Classic**
MONDAY, JULY 30, 2018
THE MILL RIVER CLUB
UPPER BROOKVILLE, NY

Annual Walk for Epilepsy
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2018
EISENHOWER PARK



EPIC
LONG ISLAND
Extraordinary People In Care

EPIC LONG ISLAND
1500 Hempstead Turnpike,
East Meadow, New York 11554

516.739.7733
info@epicli.org
www.epicli.org

 /epiclongisland

 @EPICLongIsland

 EPIC Long Island, Inc.