

## Shiver Me Timbers!

In April, the Brooklyn ADHC took to the high seas of Captain Jack Sparrow and was overrun by pirates. The day was magically transformed, looking less like Brooklyn and more like the bottom of Davy Jones' locker. Brooklyn clients and staff, let loose and took part in wonderful pirate-themed day to celebrate the season. Captain Suzette with her eye patch and parrot made sure everyone had a good time. No one walked the plank, but instead took to the dance floor for an afternoon of some fun. More summer fun is fast approaching. Keep reading matey – ARRRRRRRG!



# HELP | Project Samaritan

SPRING 2011

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*Building Hope, Empowering Change*

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Residential Health Care  
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(718) 681-8700

Bronx Adult Day Health Care,  
COBRA Case Management  
& Primary Care & Dental Clinic  
1543-45 Inwood Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452  
(718) 299-5500 (ADHC)  
(718) 299-3000 (COBRA)

Brooklyn Adult Day Health  
Care & Primary Care Clinic  
803 Sterling Place  
Brooklyn, NY 11216  
(718) 804-0900

Queens Adult Day Health  
Care & Primary Care Clinic  
105-04 Sutphin Blvd.  
Jamaica, NY 11435  
(718) 725-5000

Queens COBRA  
Case Management  
89-31 161st Street  
Jamaica, NY 11432  
(718) 739-2800

## Harm Reduction Forum

On Friday, April 15th in the South Bronx nearly 200 community leaders, advocates, healthcare service providers, public health officials, and members of the law enforcement community came together for a forum to discuss innovative and comprehensive ways to address meaningful harm reduction in our communities, improve the lives of those struggling with addiction, and successfully integrate those in recovery back into a supportive community as full contributing members.

The groundbreaking gathering, entitled "South Bronx Community Action Forum: Reducing Harm & Improving Lives" took place at Hostos Community College and included as a panelist, HELP/PSI's own, Nunzio Signorella, Vice President for Operations, who discussed treatment facilities.

With the specter of New York's arcane Rockefeller Drug Laws no longer casting a dark shadow over the entire state, we now embark on a new approach to address the community's struggle with substance abuse. The forum focused on a model that first emerged in Europe nearly two decades ago – the Four Pillar Approach. The four pillars are prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and enforcement.

Prevention looks at ways to prevent abuse of drugs in the first place and in doing so, closely examines the factors that contribute to such abuse, namely education, employment, healthcare access, and housing. This pillar further looks into capacities already built into a community, while seeking to identify weaknesses.

The treatment pillar closely looks at the myriad of options available to all types of addictions and under a variety of circumstances. Ranging from complete abstinence to harm reduction, from outpatient services to inpatient care, while identifying the exact audience for treatment –



an individual or families, as well as someone recently incarcerated, this pillar involves great attention to the details contributing to successful treatment.

Harm Reduction continues to grow as a scientifically proven method critical in the care of someone dealing with substance abuse. Identifying the adequate tools necessary to combat addiction, while gauging the access in one's community to the necessary harm reduction services plays a vital role in developing successful strategies. Also, integrating harm reduction methods into every aspect of healthcare services creates a broader view of this pillar as a day-to-day action.

Lastly, enforcement is a pillar that not only is important to the individual, but also to the entire community and the very fabric of our justice system. How we can simultaneously maintain public safety, while ensuring the rights and dignity of a drug user speaks directly to our ability to interact as a society and the choices we make as we encounter the realities of drug abuse. Public safety and health & well being are tenets of our society that intersect here, making sensible enforcement critical to any comprehensive plan.

HELP/PSI seeks to embody the Four Pillar Approach as we move into this new decade and work within the new legal structure recently adopted by the state.



## U.S. News and World Report

This past winter U.S. News and World Report rated the HELP/PSI Bronx Residential Nursing Home Facility one of the top nursing home facilities in the entire nation for 2011. In the areas of health inspections, quality measurements and safety Bronx HELP/PSI far outpaced the national and state averages, showing exemplary standards in healthcare. Additionally, the registered nurse staff garnered 5 out of 5 stars for their overall superb quality of care.

This honored designation comes just months following the 20th anniversary of the facility and serves as an affirmation of the incredible work HELP/PSI has accomplished over the past two decades. With an overwhelming number of the residential population coping with HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and mental health issues, and in need of a myriad of specialized services, the fact that Bronx HELP/PSI has been able to maintain high standards and see residents achieve amazing success is a testament to the commitment of the staff and residents alike.

HELP/PSI Bronx nursing home will not only continue with this outstanding work, but also serve as a model that other nursing home facilities will try to replicate, not just in New York State, but throughout the nation. Kudos to all for this magnificent achievement!

## State Budget

On March 31st, in the earliest possible hours of the morning, both the State Senate and State Assembly passed a budget, that was later signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo. The new governor craftily negotiated with legislative leaders – Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (Democrat) and Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos (Republican) – to pass the first on-time budget in five years. Given the difficult decisions that needed to be made in these hard economic times, the nearly \$134 billion budget was down two percent from last year. The attempt to close the \$10 billion budget gap New Yorkers were facing was achieved solely by cuts to programs and without any additional tax increases, despite some in the Legislature pushing for greater taxes on millionaires.



Despite the budget cuts, the AIDS Institute (AI), the state agency charged with executing most of the state's programs for HIV/AIDS services, was spared, receiving the same level of funding as last year. This is in stark contrast to the seven budget cuts the AI sustained over the last four fiscal years. However, by not rolling back previous years' cuts, AI is still operating at a funding level far below 2007.

Of particular importance to the HELP/PSI community, the Governor proposed and the Legislature approved significant cuts to Medicaid, slashing \$2.8 billion. Given the recent federal healthcare reform, it is uncertain what the real impact will be on New Yorkers, however, with no meaningful new revenue, it appears the state budget is being balanced on the backs of New York's most vulnerable residents. Over the next several years, as the new federal healthcare law is slowly actualized, we will know more of the full extent of Medicaid coverage for low-income New Yorkers.

## Save the Date!

**Monday, July 11**

**Golf Outing Fundraiser  
Cedar Hill Golf & Country Club  
Livingston, New Jersey**

**Monday, November 7**

**PSI's Annual Fundraising Gala  
Tribeca Grand Hotel  
New York City**



## Prison Closures

Following the on-time passage of the state budget, Governor Cuomo announced his plan for eliminating 3,700 beds in our state's prisons. The budget called for the closing of six prisons throughout the state. In an unusual step, the governor decided to forgo the utilization of a commission to determine prison closures, and will assume that decision himself. The governor has promised though that closures will be sustained in various regions throughout the state and not impact any one region disproportionately.



## Fun in the Sun!

*Summer is around the corner and it's time for some fun in the sun!!!*

There are a number of upcoming outings in June, July & August that will help us cope with the summer heat, get us out of the city and have FUN. Save the dates:

- Thursday, June 9**      **Staff Appreciation Day**  
**Woodmont Day Camp**
- Wednesday, June 29**      **Rockland State Park**  
**for some pool & BBQ**
- Monday, July 25**      **Dorney Park**  
**& WildWater Kingdom**
- Saturday, August 20**      **Hershey Park**

Contact your site Recreational Staff for details and qualifications.

## Editorial

The weather is finally warming up, the flowers are blooming, and trees are looking green again – spring is definitely in the air. As we welcome spring's



return, it is also time to think about one of the rites of spring for hundreds of years – graduation. May 12th marks the annual HELP/PSI graduation and induction of honorees who have successfully completed and worked the rigorous programs that all of the treatment facilities provide.

I recently sat down with Leonardo Vicente of the Bronx Residential Health Care Facility and Suzette Ross of the Brooklyn Adult Day Health Care & Primary Care Clinic to discuss their thoughts on the work done at their facilities, as well as their hopes for this year's graduating class.

The Bronx Facility, being a residential program, requires intense introspection among its residents who have been struggling with addiction for years, affecting their work, home, and community lives. Numerous staff in a wide array of fields – social work, recreation, admissions, medical, nursing, workforce development, to name a few, work around the clock to assist patients as they work to break the cycle of addiction.

The Bronx facility is a nursing home, but not in the traditional sense one would imagine. According to Webster's Dictionary nursing is defined as "the work of caring for the sick, injured, or infirm," while home is defined as "the sacred refuge of our life; a place of rest; or to arrive at or get closer to an intended goal." This notion is exemplified at the Bronx residential facility and Brooklyn ADHC, as well as throughout all of HELP/PSI. It is the hope of all involved that when one walks out through the doors, though always welcomed back, that s/he is closer to their goal and able to live a more fulfilling life, free from addiction.

In the Brooklyn clinic, spring could not be more apparent. On top of the smell of popcorn wafting through the air and some incredibly vibrant artwork in every corner, there is immense anticipation of the new outdoor space that is currently being transformed and landscaped. This new space, once open, will allow for open-air programming and even greater relaxation in an already warm environment. (Stay tuned for more on the new patio in the next newsletter!)

Speaking with both Lenny and Suzette brought to light the work done within their respective facilities, as well as provided a deeper knowledge of the day-to-day struggles of all residents and participants; and how through these difficult times, there is great hope. It is that hope that is carrying forth into the upcoming graduation festivities. Graduation, again according to Webster's, is defined as "a successful transition to a higher level of ability; ready to move forward with your accomplishments and do more important things."

Not only do we have the sweet smells of spring lingering in the air, but there is also great hope for a brighter future. With every new season there is change. May this change carry our graduates and honorees into their higher level and raise us all up with them.

*Special thanks to Leonardo Vicente, Suzette Ross, Mechelle Jones, Cornelia Porter, & Jose Quizhpi.*