

InPSIghts Newsletter

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Spring 2009

PSI says goodbye to President & CEO, John Cavallaro

After 17 years with PSI and 41 years in the field of recovery, John Cavallaro will retire on May 15, 2009.

John's education, affiliations and awards are numerous. After earning a BA in Economics and JD in law, he became a certified New York State Nursing Home Administrator. He directed teams at the New York State Division of Substance Abuse Services (now OASAS) and Suffolk County Department of Alcohol & Substance Abuse Services. He is the former chairman and current member of the Board of Directors for VidaCare and Outreach Project, Inc. Many are surprised to learn that he is also an ordained Roman Catholic Deacon. John's diverse experiences and wisdom have contributed tremendously to PSI's growth during his 17 years as President, CEO & Administrator.

At PSI, John encouraged a culture dedicated to responding to the changing needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. Under his leadership, PSI has grown from a 66 bed Residential Drug Treatment Facility to include Adult Day Health Care, Case Management, HIV Testing and Primary Mental and Physical Healthcare. Today PSI assists 1,400+ clients, manages a 24 million dollar budget and five locations in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens. None of this would have been possible without John's thoughtful guidance and courage to take calculated risks.

Even with his numerous awards and accomplishments, John will humbly tell you that he is only one part of the PSI family and no more important than any other employee. The family John refers to includes clients, staff and the community of donors and volunteers. Everyone is on a first name familiarity with John. This family is his main focus and source of professional inspiration and pride. When visitors arrive at his office, instead of John's many awards, one will find client artwork and poetry on display. His dedication to assisting people in their personal and professional growth is inspirational.

While the community will remember John Cavallaro for his many accomplishments in the field, at PSI, we will also remember him for his great sense of humor, his intelligence, his humility and the leadership that directed PSI and allowed for tremendous growth.

John, our respected leader, colleague and friend, you will be dearly missed. We wish you the best of luck.**



A Letter from John

During my 17 years at PSI, there have been many occasions to celebrate. Among them, the opening of new locations and the constant expanding of our mission, allowing us to serve an always growing number of clients in a variety of capacities.

But, as I prepare to leave, it's the day to day moments with the PSI family that I think I'll miss most. Few things in life bring as much happiness and fulfillment as watching clients celebrate their health and independence or staff growing professionally and knowing that I played a part in their success.

It has been an honor to be part of PSI's family. PSI truly has been among the many great joys of my life.**



Paul Vitale will join PSI as President & CEO

Paul Vitale comes to PSI most recently from Visiting Nurse Service of New York, where he served as Executive Director of Business Development. VSNY is the largest home care provider in the US, serving over 31,000 people each day throughout NYC. In his position, Paul managed a team that included 30 managers and 150+ nurses.

Prior to working at VNSNY, Paul served as Administrator for the Cambridge Health Alliance, a 400-bed hospital system in Boston. His responsibilities included operations and business development for a public hospital system.

Before moving to Boston, Paul was Vice President of Business Development for Staff Builders, Inc., a national home care company based in New York. At Staff Builders, Paul managed all national sales efforts including marketing and advertising programs.

For five years of his career, Paul served as Chief Operating Officer for Weight Watchers located in Farmington Hills, Michigan. There, as part of his public relations campaign, Paul led a weekly Detroit radio show.

Paul has been a keynote speaker for various organizations throughout the country including the National Association for Home Care, American Marketing Association, National Case Management Association, National Association for Social Workers and many other local organizations throughout the country. His graduate degree is in Health and Public Administration and has served on the faculty of Long Island University, Madonna University, and Mercy College.

Paul is experienced in non-profit, for-profit and community agency settings. Recognized for strengths and creativity that move organizations to higher growth, productivity and increased competitiveness while streamlining operations and maintaining fiscal health and stability. At PSI, we are excited that Paul chose to join our executive team.**

In honor of John Cavallaro's 17 years of commitment to PSI, we share our thoughts throughout this issue.



"I met John in 1992 when he came to the Highbridge Woodycrest Center for a tour of the facility. His history, experience and dedication to working with people involved in recovery was immediately apparent. We maintained a great working relationship over the years and, in 2006, I was honored

when he welcomed me to join PSI's management team and later when I was promoted to Chief Operating Officer. During my time at PSI, John and I have worked closely and my respect for him has grown even greater. He has given me the direction and freedom necessary to really make an impact on the agency. It has been a pleasure working with him. His leadership and friendship will be missed at PSI."

-Errol Chin-Loy, Senior Vice President**



"For over fifteen years, I have had the good fortune to share an amazing and enriching journey under John Cavallaro's leadership at PSI. With vision and encouragement, John focused all of us, year after year, on our mission as we grappled with our strategic vision and daily operational

challenges. He believed in team building and gave leadership to this process, while promoting our self-reliance and confidence in our individual areas of responsibility. Each May, as John gave the graduation address, he was visibly moved as he looked out on the PSI community of clients and staff, family and friends and offered his congratulations. These were special moments for me as well to reflect on John's accomplishments. He has built an institution of hope and healing. This is quite an enduring legacy." -Barbara Zeller, MD, Medical Director**

"...2 close friends of mine had become HIV positive. When I heard the news it definitely broke my heart and at the same time was a reality check. ... That was my driving force to ... learn more about HIV & AIDS."

- PSI Volunteer



Dr. Barbara Zeller

Dr. Zeller is PSI's Medical Director. Her compassion and dedication assure that she is highly respected by her colleagues. We're proud to share some of her current projects.

Dr. Zeller was recently interviewed by Tim Horn for POZ's Newly Diagnosed HIV/AIDS Webseries. During the interview, Dr. Zeller stresses the importance of a strong relationship between a person living with HIV/AIDS and their primary care provider. She says that, among the difficulties for the newly diagnosed person with HIV/AIDS, is the transition to seeing a doctor regularly, even when not feeling ill. Newly diagnosed people must understand that seeing a doctor regularly is going to be a part of their lives and developing a relationship with a doctor will take time, but it is important to their health. As a provider, Dr. Zeller mentions that she is required to ask very personal questions. She feels she must meet patients wherever they are in life, without judgment, to give the best possible care.

Interviewees for the webseries also include people

living with HIV/AIDS and Jennifer Herman, LMSW, who discusses the importance of social workers and case managers in assisting the newly diagnosed. You'll find a link to this webseries on our website: <http://projectsamaritan.org/news.html>.

We're also happy to announce that Dr. Zeller was picked to be a part of the Human Rights of Scientists Committee of the New York Academy of Sciences. The committee actively pursues the advancement of the basic human rights of colleagues throughout the world. They intervene in cases where scientists, engineers, health professionals and educators are detained, imprisoned, exiled, murdered or deprived of the rights to pursue science, communicate their findings with their peers and the general public, and travel freely in accordance with established policies of the International Council of Science.

Whether caring for the people living with HIV/AIDS, participating in public service discussions or working to advance and protect the global sciences, Dr. Zeller is a compassionate advocate for human rights. Her wealth of knowledge and passion for her work make her an impressive and esteemed care provider. She has been with PSI since 1997 and is a big part of the heart of the agency.**

“On John’s first day, I told him we were losing money, had 80% census, vendors were making threats and I didn’t know if we would have enough money to cover payroll. He responded by telling me that we would work on the problems together and illustrated how the team approach always prevails. Soon after, we had a 99% census, a million dollars in the checking account and were paying bills within 30 days. The last seventeen years have been the most professionally rewarding I have ever experienced and I wish I could have another 17 years with John.”

–Alan Zuckerman, Senior VP & CFO**



“It has been a great honor to work under the guidance of man of such great caliber who has dedicated so much of his life to the powerful mission of PSI. John Cavallo is a man of great character and someone I deeply respect. I can only hope to achieve a portion of what he has achieved throughout his history serving disenfranchised underserved populations and having the positive impact he has had in improving the lives of such individuals. He will be missed, but I am happy for him and wish him the best throughout his retirement.”

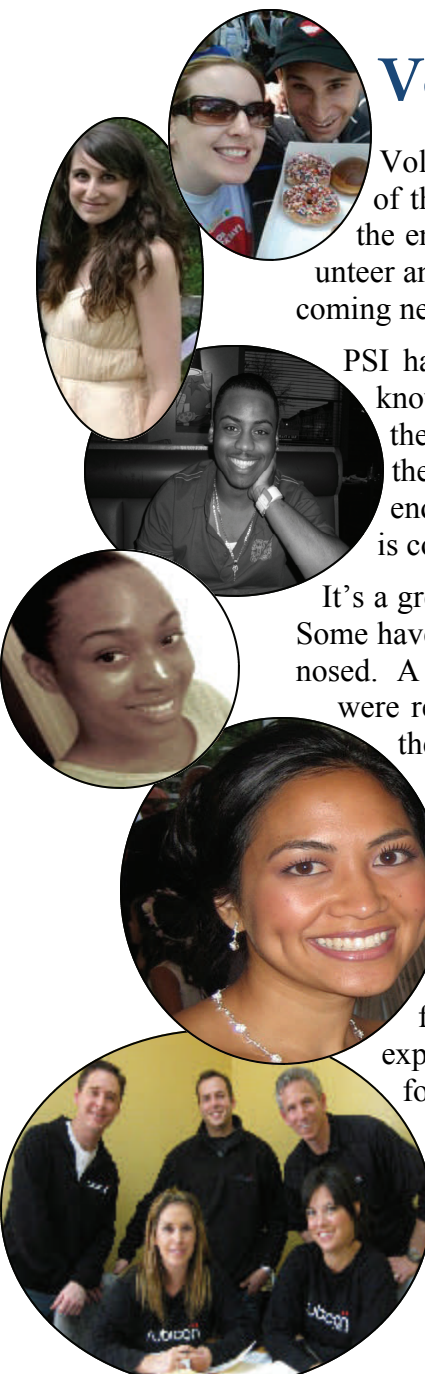
- Nunzio Sinorella, VP of Ambulatory Services**



“... I have witnessed the many lives that have changed here at PSI. I volunteer because I want to contribute something tangible to the wonderful transformational process that all clients experience.”

-PSI Volunteer

Volunteering Is Good For the Heart



Volunteering isn't just good for the volunteer's heart, it's also good for the hearts of the staff, clients and the greater organization. PSI is a better place because of the energy and enthusiasm of our volunteers and interns. As PSI expands the volunteer and intern departments, we're welcoming many new people and we're also welcoming new ideas about how the community can participate.

PSI has begun to organize volunteer orientations and it's been a blast getting to know new volunteers. At the orientation, volunteers learn about PSI's history and the work being done today. They also get a tour of our facilities and tell us how they would like to participate in our mission to make lives healthier. There is no end to the enthusiasm new volunteers bring to an orientation. Their enthusiasm is contagious.

It's a great joy and honor to hear stories about why volunteers decide to get involved. Some have lost people to HIV/AIDS, others have friends & family who are newly diagnosed. A few people have even said that they've considered volunteering for years and were recently inspired by President Obama. Among the most touching are always the stories from clients who credit PSI's programs with saving their lives and providing them with the tools that have allowed them to grow and gain independence. There are few things more touching than listening as a strong, healthy individual explains that PSI saved their life and now they want to give something back.

Volunteers come to PSI from many different places and for many different reasons. But, once their here, they quickly become part of the family. They fill our offices and events with laughter and enthusiasm as they donate time, expecting nothing in return. We can't thank our volunteers and interns enough for everything they do. As volunteer appreciation week approaches, we would like to share our deep appreciation for everything our volunteers and interns do at PSI and in their communities. Volunteers truly are part of the heart of NYC and PSI.

For more information on volunteering, interning or donations:

getinvolved@projectsamaritan.org

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“When I was asked to write something about John my first thought was, “Shouldn't they really ask somebody who actually likes John?” Of course, I'm kidding. I have nothing but deep respect for my President, CEO and friend, John Cavallaro. His legacy here at PSI will, of course, be great. His leadership led directly to so many lives being improved and even saved. A man of genuine humility, John established a culture of tolerance, kindness and humor and clients throughout the years have often expressed what a nice man he is and how he's *such a regular guy*. And, of course, we will never forget those sweaters...”

-Pat Diffley, Director of Therapeutic Recreation**

Get Involved Today

Volunteer, Intern, Donate, Tell others about PSI.

Contact us today to discuss the many ways you can get involved.

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PSI Welcomes New Team Members



Robert Cordero

Robert Cordero comes to PSI as Vice President of Development and Communications with a wealth of experience. Most recently, he served as Deputy Director for Operations with Harlem United Community AIDS Center where he oversaw human resources, information technology, development and communications. Before that, he served as VP for Development and Government Relations with Housing Works where he raised funding, oversaw implementation of the agency's strategic plan, promoted the agency's programs and policy agenda, and managed agency communications. In 2004, Mr. Cordero opened the Housing Works national advocacy office in D.C. and coordinated an advocacy campaign that brought people living with HIV/AIDS to Capitol Hill for meetings with legislators and staff throughout every session of Congress, while expanding advocacy and coalition work on AIDS treatment, health care, prevention and housing issues.

Before Housing Works, Robert was acting director of the New York City Office of AIDS Policy Coordination and served as Governmental Co-chair of the HIV Health and Human Services Planning Council of NY. He previously served as a board member and Policy co-chair of the

CAEAR (Communities Advocating for Emergency AIDS Relief) Coalition, advocating throughout two Ryan White CARE Act reauthorizations and six annual appropriation cycles. In 2002, Robert received the NY State DOH - AIDS Institute Outstanding Service Award. He currently serves on the board of Regional Addiction Prevention, Inc., a community-based housing and substance abuse treatment agency in D.C.

Robert holds a master's degree in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago, and was recently recognized as an alumnus of distinction. In 2000, he earned a certificate in Public Health Policy and Management from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland.

Robert resides in East Harlem. He says he is truly thrilled to be a part of the HELP/PSI community and looks forward to securing additional resources to ensure that our clients receive the services they need to lead healthy and productive lives.**



Luis Gonzalez

Luis Gonzalez is a professional social worker with fourteen years of post-graduate experience working with the homeless, mentally ill, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS populations in The Bronx. Prior to joining PSI in March 2009, Mr. Gonzalez successfully directed a homeless Outreach Team for the Citizens Advice Bureau, Inc., and the HASA Scatter Site II Housing Assistance Program for Mid Bronx Senior Citizens, Inc. He was also a Clinical Supervisor at the 163rd Street Improvement Council's Odgen Avenue Residence. Luis earned his Master's degree at Hunter College School of Social Work in 1994.

Luis was born in Manhattan and raised in The Bronx, where he still lives and works. He is a single parent raising his 14 year old son, Gabriel. When not working professionally he creates artwork (oil paintings), enjoys watching and playing sports, going to the movies, traveling and time with his son.

Mr. Gonzalez tells us that he is happy to be a member of the PSI family.**

"I'm pleased to share that I was here to welcome John to PSI on his first day, October 9, 1992. John introduced himself and wanted to meet the "family" right away. He lead our morning meeting where he introduced himself, asking everyone to call him "John." He took time to share his history in the field of substance abuse and to stress that he was here to support us and the agency. He made us feel safe. Throughout the years, John attended PSI's spiritual retreats. These outings were where I really got to know him as a positive, uplifting and honest person. I will miss his encouragement and all the love he shares with PSI's clients and staff. John truly encouraged PSI's family atmosphere." -Ira Weiss, Director of Residential Services**



"PSI is my family."

-PSI Client



New Yorkers Have Style

PSI is currently accepting donations of gently used clothing, accessories and small home furnishings for resale. Sales will be used to support PSI's services. We are looking forward to providing shoppers with interesting items and a new opportunity to support PSI's services. This will also provide new ways for volunteers and interns to get involved.

Columbia Prep was the first school to organize a clothing drive. Their donation of 15+ bags of clothing and accessories is a great start and provided a wonderful opportunity for us to meet their team.

PSI needs your help too! If you're a stylish New Yorker, interested in donating to support PSI's services, contact us.

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A letter from a PSI client

As a client and a person I feel that recognition and thanks should be given when there is a job well done. I also feel that it's not heard enough when someone does a great job.

I would like to take a few moments to recognize some outstanding people. A team of people who showed me they care about me. These people have done so much for me and I appreciate it and thank them very much. It has been a challenge and they have helped with getting me medical and social services. I have been treated with the utmost respect and dignity. They have proven to me to be responsible and respectful professionals and humans. From the very beginning my experience has been very good with people like the receptionist, doctor, case workers, and nurses.

Integrity definitely showed in the way this team conducted themselves with me. PSI is a great service/organization and I wish you the best. You came highly recommended by (a PSI Client), a personal friend.

Keep up the good work and GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

Love, Ruben**



"To me, John Cavallaro is not a health care administrator, nor a nonprofit CEO or a business developer. He's a teacher. Every day that I worked with John I learned something new, never trivial and always important. I count myself as extremely lucky to have had the opportunity to grow professionally under his guidance and mentorship, but even luckier to have him as a friend. As we go along in life, there are people who shape us - imperceptibly and by degrees - for the better during each moment we spend with them. John, for me, is just such a person. His achievements in building and developing PSI have been innovative and vital, but the key to that success is his ability to inspire people to realize their potential and to progress farther than they may have thought possible. I'm lucky enough to travel through the rest of my career and life with the gifts John's given me, and I'm very thankful. I wish him the absolute best in this next - and hopefully more relaxing - phase of his journey!"

- Daniel Jason, former VP, Special Projects**

"It is a rewarding experience to be part of this organization and to be able to participate in such a supportive and caring environment."

-PSI Intern



Positive Sexuality & HIV Conference

The conference, attended by 200 professionals working in the field of HIV/AIDS, included an array of topics related to sexuality and HIV. Discussions revolved around promoting a healthy lifestyle and reducing stigma associated with sexuality and HIV. PSI is about

making lives healthier, in partnership; partnership with HIV+ clients, partnership with organizations and professionals, partnership with the community.

To be kept updated on future conferences and PSI events, contact us to request we add you to our distribution list. getinvolved@projectsamaritan.org or (718) 681-8700 ext 2171**

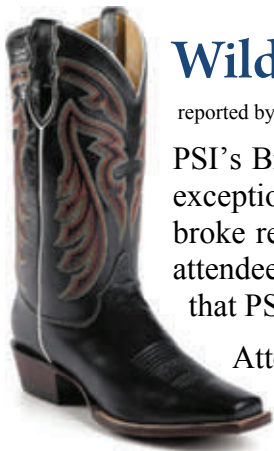


facebook

Social Networking 2.0

In an effort to increase our ability to reach new communities and tell people about our services, including HIV Testing, PSI has created MySpace and Facebook pages. Users can read about our services and link their web pages to ours, letting friends know they support PSI's mission!

PSI's website has links to our pages. projectsamaritan.org**



Wild West Dancefest

reported by Ahrmond, Peer Volunteer

PSI's Brooklyn site is known for throwing a good party. Their recent *Wild West Dancefest* was no exception. This Urban Ho-Down definitely kicked-off the spring season in grand style. The party broke records for most attended dance party with one hundred and fifteen delighted guests. A few attendees from other organizations even registered to become PSI clients! Is there any greater proof that PSI's Brooklyn site knows how to have a good time?

Attendees raved about food from Tasty Catering and DJ Passion kept the energetic crowd up on their feet throughout the evening. For information about upcoming client dance parties, contact Gail Brown at gbrown@projectsamaritan.org or (718) 804-0900 ext 6223.**

"So it's my second day at work, and I go to a management training. Before I could even find a chair, John approaches me and says, "You must be Suzette, I'm John. It's nice to have you aboard!" I thanked him. Now, he didn't say, "I'm John Cavallaro, the CEO," he just said, "John". It was only after the meeting began that I realized who he was. I thought that was both welcoming and very cool. Flash forward about a year into my service at PSI, the receptionist pages me and says that John Cavallaro is holding for me. My first reaction is. "Uh-oh, what did I do?" (lol) Y'know, because, I figure if the President & CEO is calling me directly, it must be major. I get on the line, and John tells me that he's calling just to thank me for the excellent work I'm doing with the Brooklyn program. That's all...just, "thank you". That was one of the highlights of my service so far. That he would make that extra bit of personalized effort speaks volumes about how much he cares about his staff and the work we do." -Suzette Ross, Program Director, BK ADHC**



"The program has been magnificent, affording me so much knowledge about HIV/AIDS and allowing me to give back to people who are struggling with sobriety."

-PSI Client



A brief history

- Early 80's:** AIDS begins to strike increasing numbers of residents in drug treatment programs, it becomes abundantly clear that the needs of people struggling with both the disease and substance abuse require resources beyond the capability of existing programs.
- 1988:** Project Return (now Palladia) and Samaritan Village join forces to address the needs of people living with HIV and chemical dependency.
- 1990:** PSI opens a 66 bed Residential Health Care Facility (RHCF) with financial assistance from Housing Enterprise for the Less Privileged (HELP) and Burchman Terrio, an urban planning and development consulting firm.
- 1992:** John Cavallaro joins PSI as the leader of the executive team.
- 1993:** PSI hosts its first annual graduation & induction into the Honor Society.
- 1994:** PSI establishes the COBRA Case Management program, licensed by the NY State Department of Health's AIDS Institute. With this new program, PSI expands its mission to include all people with HIV/AIDS and those at high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.
- 1997:** PSI opens an Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) facility in the Bronx.
- 1998:** Ryan White funds a pilot ADHC facility in Queens.
- 2004:** PSI opens an ADHC facility in Brooklyn.
- 2005:** The ADHC pilot in Brooklyn becomes permanent.
- 2007:** PSI opens Primary Care facilities in Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens. With this new program, PSI expands its mission again, this time to include all people in need of primary medical care and mental health services.
- 2007:** PSI's Medical Care Providers became accredited HIV Specialists by the American Academy of HIV Medicine, ensuring that Accredited HIV Specialists are working with clients at each location.
- 2009:** Paul Vitale joins PSI as President & CEO

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