

*From the Faces & Voices of Recovery Website*

## In The News...Health Insurance Equity

The first Congressional hearing in 8 years on a bill to address insurance discrimination faced by people seeking help with addiction and mental illness was held on March 27th by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means Health Subcommittee.

### **New calls for insurance reform**

For years Representatives Ramstad and Kennedy have fought for equal treatment of mental illnesses and addiction in health care. Bipartisan majorities in the US House of Representatives have supported their efforts to enact the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act since 2002. Unfortunately they were never able to bring the bill to the floor of the House for a vote because they were blocked by the Republican House leadership.

The chances of passing meaningful insurance reform are improving: A 2006 Institute of Medicine report called for laws requiring insurers to offer the coverage that is

needed for high quality, comprehensive health coverage for addiction. The use of addiction treatment paid for with employer-based health insurance has declined significantly over recent years – taxpayers are footing the bill for over 75 percent of treatment today. From 1992 to 2001, the percentage of people who used employer-based health coverage to pay for treatment dropped 23 percent.

The Ways and Means Committee hearing is the first step as H.R. 1424 winds its way through the House. The next steps are hearings before other House committees that share jurisdiction over the bill: The House Energy and Commerce Committee and the House Education and Labor Committee.

**Greater public attention and understanding** Representatives Kennedy and Ramstad, co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Addiction Treatment and Recovery have been holding field hearings across the country with allied members of

Congress to bring the stories of the toll of insurance discrimination and the hope of recovery to their communities and the media. The well-attended hearings have received great coverage in the media and mobilized advocates for insurance equity.

Recent studies have shown that the economic benefits of treating people with addiction outweigh the costs. Researchers found that the benefits outweighed the costs seven-fold, because of increased job earnings and reduced costs related to crime and imprisonment. They also found reduced costs for emergency room visits, outpatient care and residential care.

**Courtesy of the Faces and Voices Web Site. Please visit the Faces and Voices of Recovery website for updates on the progress of H.R. 1424 and to learn how you can get involved.**

**"Advocacy is about turning personal stories into social action and presenting an alternative perception that helps effect change."**

*From the Faces and Voices of Recovery Website*

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**Greater Macomb Project Vox is a grass roots effort organized to educate all segments of the community that recovery is not only possible but a reality for many people, and to advocate for change to policies that negatively affect the availability of treatment and resources for the recovering community.**

## HBO Addiction House Party Screenings a Success

By Deborah Garrett

In our last issue we reported on the airing of the HBO documentary *Addiction* and the media campaign going on around it's March airing. We would like to report that the local events held to increase awareness were a large success.

Greater Macomb Project Vox hosted a house party at Macomb Hillside Manor, a local three quarter house in Macomb Township. Thank you Wally, Sharon, and Joyce for your hospitality! The event was attended by some of the residents of the house, many of their family members, and members of Project Vox. There were approximately 13 people in attendance, which is a turnout Project Vox is proud of!



Gem Theater event. Featured from left to right are: Tom Coderre, National Field Director Faces and Voices of Recovery, Andre Johnson, Detroit Recovery Project, Don Allen, Director Office of Drug Control Policy for Michigan and Alberta Tinsley-Talabi, Chicago Councilwoman

The larger premier event at the Gem Theater downtown was heavily attended as well. That event was hosted by NCADD/ Greater Detroit and Detroit Recovery

Project. Among those in attendance were Detroit City Council members, HBO Executives, members of Faces and Voices of Recovery and state and local professionals.

Greater Macomb Project is planning another event centered around the documentary in October. Dinner and movie at Mac and Ray's Harrison Township. Further details will be released as they become available.

These were just two of the events happening throughout country that were part of the media campaign surrounding the special broadcast and it's 16 accompanying film videos. The entire series is available on DVD. For more information visit [www.addictionaction.org](http://www.addictionaction.org).

## Spotlight On Our Members...

### Joelene Beckett

By James Fischer

We here at Greater Macomb Project Vox believe that it is important for us to identify who we are. This Newsletter hopefully will help you understand who we are and what we do as a group. By getting to know us more personally, we anticipate that you will be able to identify with us, and perhaps want to become involved in our efforts to promote the recovery process. We will use this forum from time to time to tell you about our members and what they bring to Project Vox. We will also *spotlight* people in the community who are engaged in solution oriented endeavors which exemplify true service work.

With that in mind, for our inaugural *Spotlight On* article, we chose to *spotlight* Joelene Beckett. Joelene has been with Greater Macomb Project Vox since its inception two and a half years ago and is a great asset in our ongoing efforts. Joelene is a well-qualified recovery professional, and is in long term recovery.

She has not used alcohol since June 12<sup>th</sup> 1987. More than "clean and sober," Joelene exemplifies what true recovery really is.

For the past 19 years, Joelene has been involved in the MCREST Program. MCREST stands for Macomb County Rotating Emergency Shelter Team. She started with MCREST as a volunteer and worked in that capacity until eight years ago when she was hired as church recruiter and a few years later named Program Information Specialist. MCREST exists because of the churches' willingness to house and feed homeless men, women, and children on a weekly rotating basis. Recruiting and scheduling the 84 churches involved in this program is a huge task and Joelene's work in this area is paramount to its success. MCREST has received national attention for their program.

Joelene is also a Licensed Certified Prevention Specialist & Professional Recovery Coach with her own agency. A Recovery Coach is a person living a life of sustained recovery, that is trained in a variety of recovery techniques, and who partners with clients to assist them in the process of developing and maintaining an individual recovery program suited to their own personal needs. A Recovery Coach motivates, encourages, and

educates their clients, while helping them discover and address their own personal roadblocks and barriers. Although her work with MCREST puts her in contact with people who could avail themselves of her services, she does not limit her client list to only those in the MCREST program. If you know of someone who could use her services or you need help in advancing your own personal recovery process, you can contact Joelene at (586) 634-1785.

Joelene's participation in Greater Macomb Project Vox is *our* good fortune. What she has learned in the almost 20 years of her own personal recovery is invaluable to a project like Vox. Her dedication to her career also speaks volumes about her. She chose to work in a field that is in desperate need of qualified and caring people. The eleven years she worked as a volunteer, before becoming a staff person with MCREST is in keeping with one of the 12 steps' most important principles, which is, "You keep what you have by giving it away."

**So Joelene, congratulations on your long term recovery and wonderful work!!**

## Addiction Community's Influence Over Corporate Responsibility Grows

By Bob Curley

Courtesy of [www.jointogether.org](http://www.jointogether.org)

Anheuser-Busch's recent decision to pull its fruity Spykes drink mixers from the market represents the latest in a series of significant victories by the addiction field in confronting what advocates consider irresponsible marketing by big corporations.

After weeks of escalating complaints by public-health groups such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), the Marin Institute, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America and the Oregon Partnership, as well as a coalition of state attorneys general, Anheuser-Busch announced on May 17 that it was withdrawing Spykes from the market. The company continued to dispute assertions that Spykes was marketed

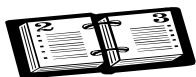


to children, but company chairman August Busch acknowledged that parental concerns played a role in the decision to yank the product.

Many of the same groups were involved in a previous (and successful) advocacy campaign that resulted in Anheuser-Busch withdrawing "Bud Pong" games from the marketplace and ending its sponsorship of "Beer Pong" tournaments. Addiction activists complained that drinking games like

Bud Pong, Beer Pong, and "Shots and Ladders" encouraged binge drinking and underage alcohol use.

The campaign, launched around the Christmas holidays, resulted in retailers like Target, Kohl's, and Linens n' Things halting sales of these games as well as another called "Drinko," an alcohol-fueled version of TV's "Plinko." The Oregon Partnership also spearheaded a campaign to get beer-related t-shirts pulled from the shelves of Macy's stores last October.



### Calendar of Events:

July 7th- Jazz Concert being hosted by Macomb Intergroup and the Eastside Alano Club at 28491 Utica Rd in Roseville. Advance tickets are available for \$25.00 by calling 248-565-5978. Tickets will also be available at the door.

Aug 1st-The Macomb county Mental Health Substance Abuse Advisory Committee will hear public concerns regarding treatment and prevention programs. The hearing will be held at the Macomb Intermediate School District, 44001 Garfield, room 206, Clinton Township at 9:00 a.m. in room 203. Written testimony will also be accepted by the Macomb Office of Substance abuse, 22550 Hall Road, Clinton Township, Michigan 48036. We at Project Vox encourage attendance, and/or submitting written testimony.

Oct 5th- Viewing of HBO Documentary and dinner at Mac and Rays on October 5th...Details forthcoming!!

Sept 8th- Celebrate Recovery!! Walk as part of National Recovery Month on Belle Isle. Contact CARE for further details.

### OUR MESSAGE

- Many people who suffer the effects of addiction can and do get better and lead meaningful and productive lives.
- The ways they achieve this are as many and varied as the people AOD problems affect.
- Shaming and stigmatizing those with AOD problems shows not only a lack of understanding of the problem, but prevents people from seeking help.
- Removing environmental barriers to recovery, which include the promotion of laws and social policies that reduce AOD problems saves money in medical, criminal justice, social services, and productivity costs.
- It is vitally important to promote services that support a recovery lifestyle.

# How To Get Involved!

Legislative and Community Activists: We have a contingent that writes letters and voices their response to legislation that affect the quality and delivery of care to those suffering from addiction, and their families. It is imperative that the stigma associated with addiction be removed. Examples would be Letters to the Editor, letters to legislatures, etc..

Event Planning Committee  
Project Vox strives to be actively involved in the recovery community and organizes several events a year. We participate in National Recovery Month events in September, and host other dinners and events throughout the year.

Speakers Bureau: We have a group of trained individuals who go to treatment agencies and other public forums to discuss what it is like to live a life in recovery, why it is important to speak out and how people can get involved with public awareness.

Event Planning This years accomplishments include a public panel discussion held in Fraser that attracted a 100



people, participation in the Walk for Recovery and Rally downtown at Belle Isle, Vox Rocks Celebration, and 2 lengthy articles in major local newspapers.

Newsletter: Contributions are gladly accepted for this newsletter. We hope to keep it chocked full of news about current events and issues facing those living a life in recovery. It's purpose is to share what fellow advocates all over the country are doing, and some valuable resources for how to "put a face on recovery."

Web Site and Message Board  
Project Vox's web site ([www.projectvox.com](http://www.projectvox.com)) is being updated with links and

meeting information. It includes information about a Yahoo message board has been set up so that folks can keep posted on Vox events and stay involved.

Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 5:45 pm

CARE  
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Please call to confirm future meeting dates



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