

## In The News.....



### Calendars Create Sensation!

Project Vox and St. Joe's Hospital worked together to create a 2007 Calendar that featured the faces of people from Macomb county living their lives in long-term recovery.

A press release was sent to local newspapers and stories appeared in 2 local newspapers, the Macomb Daily, and The Detroit News. The January 22 Detroit News Article follows:

### Faces of Recovery Christine Stolarz

Project Vox meets at 5:45 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month at the CARE offices, 31900 Utica Road in Fraser. For information, call Deborah Garrett at (586) 634-2316.

For the 35 years that Jim Fischer was addicted to alcohol and drugs, he committed a handful of nonviolent crimes to pay for his addictions. "My face has been out there for years ... in front of judges," said the 53-year-old Mount Clemens resident, who was 15 when he began drinking and doing heroin and cocaine. "Now, it's out in a positive light. I'm not that guy anymore. "I'm not afraid to stand up." Fischer, who has been in recovery for three years, is among a dozen local recovering substance abusers featured in a new calendar aimed at destigmatizing their struggle. The grass-roots recovery advocacy group Greater Macomb Project Vox teamed up with St. Joseph's Healthcare to distribute the 5,000 or so free

Faces of Recovery calendars to area businesses and treatment centers to help shed the stigma of addiction.

"Recovery is possible," said Deborah Garrett, chairwoman of Project Vox and six-year recovering alcoholic. "Many, many people ... live their lives in recovery from many different walks of life.

"We're stepping out and saying that 'I'm your brother,' 'I'm your mother,' 'I'm your attorney.' "

Project Vox was established in summer 2004. It's sponsored by Community Assessment Referral and Education, a Fraser-based group that provides programs and substance abuse disorder assessments. Project Vox is made up of about eight core people living their lives in recovery, the treatment community and family and friends of those who have had addictions. The members meet once a month to start letter-writing campaigns to state legislators and set up fundraisers and activities to educate the community about the disease of alcoholism and other drug addiction.

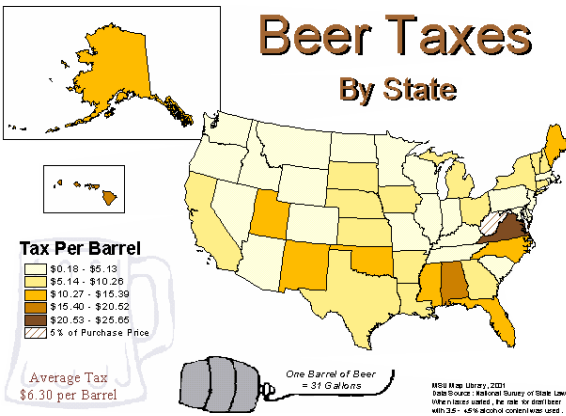
**" Advocacy is about turning personal stories into social action and presenting an alternative perception that helps effect change."**  
From Faces and Voices of Recovery Web Site

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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**

## Raising State Beer Taxes Good for Treatment?



Contributed by Kathy Rager

A recent article in the Lansing State Journal said, "The Center for Science in the Public Interest found that Michigan's beer tax to be below average nationally - 29th in the country." While some say that raising the tax would hurt our economy, the Center pointed out that high growth states like Florida and Nevada, have raised their tax and they continue to thrive. If Michigan raised taxes on beer, Greater Macomb Project Vox would encourage a large portion of those dollars be desig-

nated to state funded prevention and treatment programs. These programs have seen increased need but not increased funding over more than a decade.

Brewers and distillers assert that alcohol tax increases would cause massive job losses and harms to their industries, and they wildly overstate "hardships" caused by the 1991 beer tax increase. Government data fail to support such claims.

## From Our Members...

### By James Fischer

Hello Readers... These are truly exciting times for Greater Macomb Project Vox and we would like to take this opportunity to tell you about who we are and what we do.

Greater Macomb Project Vox is a grass roots alliance organized to educate all segments of the community that recovery is not only possible, but a reality for many people. We also advocate for change in policies that negatively affect the availability of treatment and resources for those individuals who are willing to face their problems and do something about them.

Our goal is simple in theory. If we show the public that treatment/recovery works in individual lives, the hope is that the stigma attached to addiction may change and people will then support treatment and recovery based programs through the process of legislation. The substance abuser feels that societal stigma, feels the internal shame attached to their addiction and won't seek help. By advancing success stories of people in recovery and educating the public at large what the options are for

help, we hope to bring the person living in recovery into the process. Their success may stop the cycle of addiction within their own families. Many families become reunited. People in the community will see that and then become more voices for advocacy for treatment resources.

Project Vox was started in Macomb County a little over 2 years ago and has already had an impact on our community. We have been instrumental in getting articles placed into the local newspapers profiling a family that has been reunited through the process of recovery. This article was compelling in that it showed how important recovery options are for individual families and that these efforts work and are worth our attention.

We also had a panel discussion last spring held at the Fraser high School auditorium. There were four people on the panel and they were a representative body of the recovery community. Dr. Salma Ajo, a clinical psychologist with Henry Ford Hospital's Maple Grove Treatment Center spoke about the disease concept of alcoholism and addiction. Judge James M. Biernat, of Macomb Counties Adult Felony Drug Court was also on

the panel and he spoke about the impact that drug related crime has on our community and how the Macomb Circuit Court has developed alternative sentencing designed to deal with the addict-criminal specifically. Two people in recovery were also on the panel. Sue Mooney, who has nineteen years in recovery, spoke about the tremendous value of treatment options and how they helped her in her recovery. She spoke about how the process has worked in her life and how twelve step groups were an integral part of her continued success. Sue's involvement



## *HBO Launches Media Campaign around ADDICTION Documentary*

HBO, in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), has produced a multi-platform campaign to educate Americans about advancements in the understanding of addiction and effective new treatments. Their campaign is built around a 90-minute show, *Addiction* that is part of a 14-part series that will air during a free HBO preview weekend, kicking off with a March 15 broadcast of *Addiction* at 9 p.m. ET.

ADDICTION highlights recent advancements in research and effective new treatments. It highlights the experiences of individuals and their families - providing the hope of long-term recovery. Above all, it provides hope that treatment and long-term recovery is not only possible, it happens every day with the help and support of family, community, and dedicated health professionals.

ADDICTION brings together leading

thinkers and organizations that are at the threshold of new treatments. Current advances in brain imaging science make it possible to see inside the brain of an addicted person, pinpoint the parts of the brain affected by addiction, and see how the addict's brain differs, ushering in a great many advances in medical treatment. In fact, treatments for addiction are now as effective as treatments for other chronic relapsing diseases such as diabetes, hypertension or asthma.

A candid depiction of the emotional, psychological, social and political toll that addiction takes on the country, the ADDICTION project demonstrates conclusively that the disease is treatable and shows that there are millions of Americans in long-term recovery. Topics covered include: the nature of addiction, addiction in the workplace, and the protracted insurance battles waged by families, as well as the difficulty of finding and getting adequate treatment.

On a local level, we at Project Vox en-

courage you to attend local house parties where the show will be viewed and discussed. Project Vox is hosting a house party for it's members on Saturday, March 17th at the beautiful Macomb Hillside Manor in Macomb.

The show mirrors some of Project Vox's core messages:

- Addiction is treatable.
- The sooner an addict gets into treatment the better.
- The longer an addict stays in treatment, the greater the chance treatment will be effective.

There is additional information about the show, tool kits, broadcast schedules, and much more available at the web site: [www.addictionaction.org](http://www.addictionaction.org).

### **From our Members, Cont. from pg 2**

in Project Vox and her continued involvement in twelve step programs honor one of recoveries basic principles. She is "giving back what was so freely given." The other person in recovery on the panel was a young man named Louis, who spoke about how treatment, intervention, and working a twelve step program effected his life.

Most recently Project Vox teamed up with St. Joseph Hospital and C.A.R.E. to produce a calendar which features twelve people or families in recovery in Macomb County. That these people were unafraid to step forward and be identified as persons in recovery shows that progress is being made on removing the stigma attached to addiction. The twelve represent to the commu-

nity at large and send Project Vox's message loud and clear. That recovery works, that it is a viable solution, and that efforts to garner more support for treatment services is a worthy endeavor.

Five thousand copies of the calendar were made available. Several sent out with Press Releases which resulted in articles in the Macomb Daily, Detroit News, and the local C&G newspapers.

Yes, these are exciting times for us at Project Vox. It is exciting to watch our efforts gather momentum and grow. We would like to take this opportunity to invite anyone interested in joining our efforts to come to our next meeting and have a seat. There is much we would like to do and the more people involved the more we can do.

### **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 affects 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..

Emergency Room Response: We are developing a program where we will train advocates to respond to requests to provide support to .people with AOD problems and their families who are receiving emergency room services.

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 important to speak out and how they can get involved.

Event Planning This years accomplishments include a public panel discussion held in Fraser that at-



tracted a 100 people, participation in the Walk for Recovery and Rally downtown., 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 is being update 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.

Meeting on Thurs  
March 22  
5:45 p.m.

Offices of CARE  
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(586) 541-0033  
Please call to confirm  
future meeting dates



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