



Road to *Recovery Month*

Vol. 4 Issue 3, Fall 2013

By Brian Dominguez

Welcome Rockland Independent Living Center!

In this Fall 2013 *Recovery Month* issue, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) would like to welcome George Hoehmann with Rockland Independent Living Center to the *Recovery Month* community.

Rockland Independent Living Center is a New City-based consumer-directed, cross-disability advocacy and service organization dedicated to empowering people with disabilities to exert independence, choice, and control in every aspect of their life. RILC was founded in 1987 and is one of thirty-seven Independent Living Centers within New York State licensed under the New York State Education and Department of Health to provide advocacy and support to persons with disabilities.

RILC CEO/Executive Director George Hoehmann is an active advocate for people with disabilities who serves on multiple

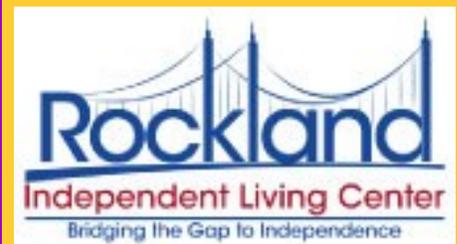
boards and committees. He is an elected official, a Councilman for the town of Clarks-town, proposing and supporting many important initiatives, including Project Lifesaver and the File of Life to help safeguard the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Mr. Hoehmann has focused on improving agency marketing and fundraising efforts. Recent grants awarded to the agency have supported programs ranging from homework help for students with learning disabilities, a therapeutic riding program for young people with autism, and a satellite clinic in Nyack for the Rockland Psychiatric Center through the New York State Office of Mental Health. SAMHSA selected Rockland Independent Living Center for a grant to participate in the "Million Hearts Social Marketing Program" for Peer-Run/Community Organizations. With this grant the Center produced a short documentary film that addresses the cardiovascular health issues faced by individuals with mental illness and/or substance abuse.

Going forward, RILC will be looking for ways to improve and expand existing programs while looking for ways to break down the still existing, systemic barriers to independence and self-actualization for people with disabilities.

For more information visit:

<http://www.rilc.org/>



The Northern Ohio Recovery Association

The Northern Ohio Recovery Association (NORA) values individual recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction as an essential factor in the survival and growth of our communities. NORA's Administrative team believes that recovery is a process in which a person becomes abstinent from chemicals and becomes a more productive member of society.

The organization's Director supports the notion that in order to combat discriminatory practices in society we must put a face to recovery. NORA's purpose is to help those struggling with substance abuse by engaging them in fun group activities that refocus their minds and provide positive stimulus.

The agency began hosting *Recovery Month* events almost 10 years ago. "We decided at the grass roots effort to recognize someone from the Na-

tional, State and local levels as Advocate of the year. We have honored ONDCP staff, SAMHSA, and Ohio's 1st lady just to name a few" said Executive Director Anita Bradley. Every year the agency hosts a *Recovery Month* Motorcycle Ride during the month of September. The motorcycle riders participate in a two hour ride through the beautiful Cleveland Metro parks. Since 2012 NORA has added a [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) account to communicate inspirational content and SAMSHA information.

NORA was founded in 2004 by Anita Bertand- Bradley. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) gave NORA its start. The Executive Directors vision included opening three Recovery Resource Centers in Northern Ohio and providing recovery support services to over 1250 people each year for the first four years. Those services were the beginning of NORA's existence and as

a result, have sparked recovery support services and other important educational forums for almost a decade now.

NORA looks forward to being a part of several community functions in 2014. Their plan is to participate in National Mental Health month in May, Annual Building Bridges Conference, Community Festivals, Wade Oval Concerts, and Mayors Night Out. During 2014 *National Recovery* month NORA will host their annual 2014 Recovery Ride and participate as a community partner in the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) walk. NORA is also planning to host a Gala Event next year to celebrate their ten years of providing services to the community.

To find more information visit:

<http://norainc.org/>

Social Healing Words: Using Language to Promote Recovery and Resilience

Words are the most powerful means of communication for humans. We use words for many different reasons, whether it's to motivate, educate, inspire, or praise. Words can also be used in a negative connotation, often with no intent of hatred or resentment. Nonetheless, many use words intentionally to discriminate, denounce, minimize or to oppress other individuals.

According to Sade Ali, author of the booklet titled "Social Healing Words: Using Language to Promote Recovery and Resilience," labeling individuals with mental health and substance use

disorders has a tendency to draw out sympathy or pity. This creates oppressive situations for individuals and families, casting a negative light upon them and perpetuating negative stereotypes.

Being labeled as an alcoholic, diabetic, schizophrenic, or a drug addict tends to reduce an individual or a family to their challenges instead of someone living with and trying to recover from their symptoms.

The field of behavioral health treatment is historically condescending in working with people and families. Many

professions in the behavioral health field label people and families with whom they work. Social healing words can help the behavioral health field remove a patronizing approach to the people they work with. The field can work along with individuals and families instead of doing things for them.

The use of healing words can contribute to the improvement and positive outcomes of physical, emotional, and spiritual health. There are many suggested terms for some of the traditional phrases used to describe a person dealing with behavioral health issues. For example,

instead of saying “problem,” say “challenge”, “survivor” instead of “victim” or “intellectually disabled” instead of “mentally retarded.”

As Mahatma Gandhi said, “where there is love there is life.” Labeling can be harmful and insensitive to individuals and families dealing with behavioral

health issues. Using healing words can help our peers who deal with behavioral health symptoms recover, heal and excel in life.

The Well Being for Latino Immigrants

Like most immigrants, Latinos are often motivated to come to the United States in search of new social, educational and/or economic opportunities. Latino immigrants make up a vast population in in the United States. According to the Pew Hispanic Research Center, as of 2011, the Latino population included approximately 19 million immigrants from nearly 20 countries. However, the immigration process for Latinos can be very stressful and even traumatic. Latino immigrants leave behind family and social ties from their native country. In addition they face the challenges of adapting to American culture, which for some can be very difficult.

Studies have shown that Latinos experience mental health symptoms more than any other ethnic group. In response to traumatic events, Latinos

experience anxiety, flashbacks, and nightmares. According to the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Society* some Latinos in the U.S. face racism and discrimination that limit their opportunities for better jobs, and many live in poverty. However, research studies have documented that foreign-born Latinos appear to be healthier, both physically and emotionally, than those born in the U.S. A national study published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* said that foreign-born Latinos were less likely to experience depression, anxiety, or substance abuse than any Latinos born in the U.S. The risk for mental health and substance use increases with more time spent living in the United States.

These findings can be a result of strong cultural values, including

family ties or religious beliefs from their native country that represents a Latino immigrant’s mental stability. It appears that the preservation of Latino culture could be a very useful approach to maintaining the well-being of Latinos in the U.S. across generations. This is why being culturally competent is important, especially when treating behavioral health issues. For more information visit:

<http://www.attcnetwork.org/index.asp>
<http://attcnetwork.org/regcenters/productDocs/19/FACT%20SHEET-12-11-2013-ENGLISH%20AND%20SPANISH.pdf>

Recovery Month Thanks Ms. Wilma Townsend



Recovery Month would like to extend its loving gratitude to Ms. Wilma

Townsend for serving as Acting Associate Director of the Consumer Affairs, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). Wilma has been serving as Acting Director since April 8, 2013 in the wake of Ivette Torres detail with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO). Ms. Townsend will be reassigned when Ivette Torres returns as Acting Director on January 1, 2014.

Ms. Wilma Townsend said she

“thoroughly enjoyed being the Acting-Director” and would like to thank Dr. H. Westley Clark, Ivette Torres and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) for the opportunity.

She enjoyed working with people recovering from substance use and helping them interact with people dealing with mental health issues. Wilma believes their interaction “allowed them to see commonalities, respect each other’s differences and form alliances to work with each other in the future.”

Ms. Townsend stated that much of the work for **Recovery Month** was organized and efficient, which made it easy for her to step into this position. She had two excellent staff members

who were knowledgeable and skilled that did the majority of the work for **Recovery Month**, which made it easy for her to supervise.

What Wilma enjoyed the most was interacting with people at the recovery rallies and events during **Recovery Month**. “People celebrating recovery instead of getting caught up in the trials and tribulations of addiction gave me a renewed sense of doing this work,” Wilma said. As a result she will continue to work in the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.

Ms. Townsend, on behalf of the **Recovery Month** Planning Partners, we thank you!