

TASC | News & Views

Fall 2007

TASC Leadership Award Luncheon Celebrates Recovery

TASC's 2007 Leadership Award Luncheon featured speakers and singers who together embodied the theme of National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month: *Join the Voices for Recovery: Saving Lives, Saving Dollars.*

The September 19 luncheon, held at the InterContinental Chicago hotel, opened with lively and uplifting music by the Hope House Men's Choir, whose members all have overcome alcohol and other drug problems. The luncheon closed with a festive drawing of raffle prizes, including grand prizes from American Airlines. In between, local and national speakers drew ovations for sharing their personal experiences and professional perspectives on seeking truth, justice, and recovery.

Dr. H. Westley Clark, director of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), spoke about the societal costs related to substance use disorders and the benefits that result from investing in treatment and recovery. He recognized TASC for being "on the frontier of change and social responsibility."

TASC's 2007 Leadership Award honorees were acknowledged for their

contributions from the fields of law and journalism, respectively.

Timothy C. Evans, chief judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, received TASC's *Justice Leadership Award* in recognition for his leadership in providing innovative and cost effective interventions throughout the court system for individuals with substance abuse and/or chronic mental health problems.

Madeleine Doubek, managing editor of the Daily Herald, accepted the *Public Voice Leadership Award* on behalf of the suburban daily newspaper. TASC honored the Daily Herald for its consistent, thoughtful, and in-depth news coverage of social issues such as underage drinking and alternatives to incarceration.

Several individuals shared their moving personal experiences of addiction and recovery. There was Cheryl Cline, who became addicted to crack while in college and began her recovery while in prison. Next was Beatrice Bates, who witnessed her daughter's daily struggles and triumphs in remaining drug-free. The final speaker was Shrong Clemons, who transformed his experiences of addiction and incarceration into



CSAT Director Dr. H. Westley Clark emphasized that alcohol and other drug addiction happens in communities and affects us all. Recovery too, he said, happens in communities and uplifts us all.

Photo by Paul Merideth

poems of healing and discovery. (See insert for photos and speech excerpts.)

TASC President Melody M. Heaps summed up the luncheon's theme. "As we witness today, more and more people and families are publicly acknowledging their struggle with addictions and rejoicing in their recovery. We applaud them and the friends and families who have traveled with them on their journeys."

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TASC, Inc. (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities) is an independent, statewide, nonprofit agency that helps people transition beyond their involvement in criminal justice systems and government programs, and into health and self-sufficiency in the community. Adults and youth who have drug problems or other difficulties are referred to TASC by courts, corrections, child welfare, and other Illinois government service systems, and TASC manages their access to community-based treatment and support. In addition, through research, public policy advocacy, training, and consultation, TASC works to improve the social factors that affect our clients and communities. **Visit us online at www.tasc.org.**

2007 TASC Leadership Award Luncheon Images and Impressions

Voices for Recovery

“The challenge for TASC today, and for those of you who care about our work and the fundamentals of a just society, is to challenge irrational public policies, to promote safe alternatives to incarceration, to support public health services for treating addiction as the disease it is, and to think about how we must come to understand the phenomenon of drug abuse and addiction in our midst.

I am happy to report that many in the room today—our friends in the justice system, our judges, state’s attorneys, public defenders and corrections officials – have joined in that challenge. We are graced in this state by strong and competent treatment providers, upon which TASC relies and without whom recovery from addiction is not possible.”

- Melody M. Heaps, TASC President



TASC President Melody M. Heaps with Cheryl Cline of Aurora, IL

Cheryl told how TASC’s Winners’ Circle provided the support she needed when she returned home from prison newly sober and without employment. With four years in recovery, Cheryl is now a certified addictions counselor and is pursuing a master’s degree in social work.

“I truly believe that TASC helped me get to where I am today.”

Beatrice Bates of Chicago, IL and TASC VP Peter Palanca

Beatrice credited TASC’s Juvenile Justice staff for helping her daughter Janice, and the whole family, gain the hope and strength they needed to succeed.

“I guess that’s what I like most about TASC. They not only look out for the best interest of Janice and our family, but they do so with such relentless dedication.”



Shrong Clemons of Chicago, IL shared his journey toward recovery in his poem “Awaken.”

*So from this day I proclaim
A new way
And on this day comes a new life*

Shrong was also featured in “Maximum Capacity,” a segment of PBS’s NOW with David Brancaccio which aired nationally this summer.



More than 240 guests filled the Grand Ballroom of the InterContinental Chicago hotel on Wednesday, September 19.



Music was provided by Hope House Men’s Choir, led by Stanley Ratliff.

The members of the Hope House Men’s Choir share their journeys of healing and recovery through gospel music.

Thank You! We couldn't do it without you...

Thanks to all who supported the TASC 2007 Leadership Award Luncheon.

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Outstanding Leaders Honored

TASC Leadership Awards are presented to individuals or organizations who have made significant contributions to the health and safety of communities in Illinois.

The 2007 recipients were:

Justice Leadership Award - Timothy C. Evans, chief judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County

Public Voice Leadership Award - Daily Herald



Chief Judge Evans credited TASC's expertise and its role in keeping the judiciary informed about the latest evidence-based practices for addressing substance abuse and mental health problems.

"We need science that can stand the test in courts... TASC is a leader throughout this country."



(L - R) TASC Board Chairman Louis B. Garippo, Daily Herald Managing Editor Madeleine Doubek, and TASC Board Member Jim Durkan

In describing the impetus behind the Daily Herald's series of articles regarding increased drug use among suburban youth, Ms. Doubek stated, "We began to notice in our obituary notices that too many young people were dying - and they were not car accidents."

New Leaders Join TASC

Jim Durkan

TASC Board Member

Jim Durkan, president and CEO of Community Memorial Foundation and a recognized leader in philanthropy and community health, has joined TASC's board of directors.

Community Memorial Foundation is a Hinsdale-based private foundation dedicated to improving the health of people who live and work in the western suburbs of Chicago.

Named 2006 *Man of the Year* by the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Durkan holds leadership roles with a variety of community organizations. He is the board president of the Hinsdale Center for the Arts, a member of the board of directors of both Harris Bank Central Region and the Siragusa Foundation, and a former board member of the Donors Forum of Chicago. He also has served on numerous state and local committees focused on issues ranging from child health to aging.

Prior to joining Community Memorial Foundation, Mr. Durkan worked in marketing, strategic planning, and fund development for hospitals in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. He was educated at St. Patrick's College in Ireland, and received his MBA from the Keller Graduate School of Management in Chicago.



Audrey M. Walker

TASC Director of Human Resources

Audrey M. Walker became TASC's director of Human Resources in July. Ms. Walker has specialized in human resources for more than 16 years, including five years as vice president for Chicago Youth Centers. Prior to joining TASC, Ms. Walker led her own consulting agency, assisting small to mid-sized agencies with their human resources needs.

Ms. Walker serves on the board of Alliance for Community Peace in Chicago. She received her undergraduate degree in Business Administration from Chicago State University and her MBA from Aurora University.

TASC VP Peter Palanca Elected to IADDA Board

TASC Vice President Peter Palanca has been elected to serve on the board of directors of the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association (IADDA).

IADDA is a statewide advocacy organization that represents more than 100 prevention and treatment agencies across Illinois. IADDA members educate government officials in Springfield, Illinois and Washington, D.C., and work to increase the public's understanding of substance abuse, addiction, and recovery.

There are currently 24 IADDA board members, each of whom is elected to a two-year term. TASC has been a member of IADDA since 1979.



TASC

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TASC's Benneth Lee Receives National Recovery Award

Benneth "Benny" Lee, community liaison and reentry specialist for TASC, was honored at the Johnson Institute's *America Honors Recovery* luncheon for his work in guiding others toward long-term recovery. The luncheon, held in late September at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., honored six individuals who use their own recovery experiences to help others affected by alcohol and other drug addiction.

"Our six honorees are part of an emerging generation of survivors who are proud of their success and humbled by their experience," said

Johnny Allem, president and CEO of the Johnson Institute.

Once a high-profile Chicago gang leader who cycled in and out of prison, Benny has dedicated the past 18 years to working with individuals, families, and communities affected by drug use and crime. He has pioneered new strategies in working with gang-affiliated individuals with drug problems and traveled globally to train corrections professionals on how to work effectively with former offenders.

"For each person, we have to pull from him a new perception of himself. And we have to address how he will function in life safely," said



(L-R) Pam Rodriguez, TASC executive vice president; Benny Lee; and Johnny Allem, president and CEO of the Johnson Institute

Benny. "I search for stuff in every guy that is good and spiritual. I just keep talking about bringing out new values."

The Johnson Institute works to identify and eliminate barriers to recovery. The Institute mobilizes and trains people in recovery for advocacy campaigns, conducts policy research, and promotes congregational team ministries.

TASC receives significant funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA).

TASC is licensed by DASA and the Illinois Department of Human Services, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.