



**Pamela F. Rodriguez**  
TASC President

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**TASC, Inc.** (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities) is an independent, statewide, nonprofit agency that advocates for people in need of health and other rehabilitative services. We work in partnership with Illinois courts, prisons, child welfare programs, and community-based service providers to help adults and youth get the help they need to rebuild their lives. Please visit us online at [www.tasc.org](http://www.tasc.org).

#### President's Corner

### Getting Criminal Justice Right in Illinois

The average annual cost to hold an adult in an Illinois prison is \$21,451—more than double the cost of room and board for a school year at the University of Illinois.

Fifty-seven percent of individuals entering the Illinois prison system are charged with non-violent offenses and are legally eligible for, but do not receive, alternative sentences that are less costly than prison. Forty-seven percent of individuals released from Illinois state prisons return within three years.

The causes for recidivism are complex, but one certainty is that substance use and mental health disorders contribute to repeated cycles of arrest and incarceration. About half of the current prison population has a diagnosable substance use disorder, and one in six has a serious mental illness.

At TASC, we collaborate with partners in the public and private sectors to advance alternatives to incarceration, with a particular focus on diverting individuals with substance use or mental health issues into appropriate sanctions and services in the community. Along with our statewide direct services that reached nearly 29,000 people last year, we also work to advance sound public policies in the often intersecting areas of drug policy, substance use and mental health treatment, health care financing, diversion and alternatives to incarceration, community reentry, and juvenile justice system reform.

Our policy priorities aim to improve the efficient and effective dispensation of justice. In Illinois, these principles are in strong alignment with the State's Budgeting for Results goals of ensuring access to healthcare, protecting public safety, and spending efficiently.

Our key public policy initiatives include:

**1. No Entry diversion and alternatives to incarceration.** We seek to protect and expand diversion from criminal justice system involvement and alternatives to incarceration for people charged with non-violent offenses, while investing in community resources to provide behavioral health care and recovery support services. We promote evidence-based diversion strategies and alternatives to incarceration that effectively ensure accountability and facilitate positive behavior change.

Please stay tuned to our blog ([iltasc.wordpress.com](http://iltasc.wordpress.com)) for a report by TASC's Center for Health and Justice regarding diversion programs across the country.

**2. Community reentry and restored citizenship following incarceration.** We work to protect and expand policies and programs that decrease barriers to successful community reentry. Because most people spend a relatively short time in jail or prison, and because the vast majority will be released to the community, it is critical to have reentry policies and programs in place that provide behavioral and medical health care and recovery support services. Doing so promotes health and recovery, and helps to prevent costly and harmful re-offenses and returns to jail and prison.

**3. Leveraging health care reform.** We are working to make the most of additional federal financing for behavioral health care access under the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). Because behavioral health conditions are significantly more prevalent among people in jails and prisons, and community capacity to provide treatment to the justice-involved population has long been insufficient to meet need, and the risk of re-offense and recidivism increases when treatment is limited or absent, the potential of the ACA to expand access to behavioral health and medical care should be maximized.

**4. Curbing Illinois' heroin problem.** We promote comprehensive approaches that meaningfully address the problems of heroin and prescription opiate misuse and overdose in communities across the state. As addiction to prescription opiates and heroin continues to endanger youth and adults in Illinois, programs and policies should provide and facilitate a comprehensive, evidence-based strategy that includes prevention, education, addiction treatment, overdose prevention, and diversion from the justice system and into community-based treatment. Special attention on groups with especially high risk of overdose death is warranted, including those recently released from prisons, jails, and addiction treatment.

**5. Helping boys and young men safely reach age 25.** Illinois has made progress in implementing an approach to juvenile justice policy that reflects an understanding of cognitive development, holding adolescents responsible for their behavior while at the same time recognizing that the developing brains

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## National Survey Shows Societal Benefits of Recovery

September 2013 marked the 24th annual celebration of National Recovery Month, a time to recognize the contributions and successes of recovery from alcoholism, drug addiction, and mental health conditions.

Earlier this year, Faces & Voices of Recovery released the first-ever nationwide survey on recovery, based on interviews of 3,228 individuals across the country who had substance use problems in the past, and no longer do.

The nationally representative survey found that, compared with when they were actively addicted, people in recovery experienced a 10-fold decrease in involvement with the criminal justice system and use of emergency departments. They experienced a 50 percent increase in participation in family activities and in paying taxes. People in recovery also report they are much more likely to vote, obtain health insurance, hold a steady job, further their education, or start

their own business. They are much less likely to be involved in domestic violence or have untreated emotional or mental health problems, compared with when they were actively addicted.

In total, recovery from alcohol and drug problems is associated with dramatic improvements in all areas of life: healthier/better financial and family life, higher civic engagement, dramatic decreases in public health and safety risks, and significant increases in employment and work.

The survey concluded that recovery is beneficial not only to the individual, but also to families, communities, and the nation's health and economy.

For further information on the survey, please visit [www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org), and for information on Recovery Month, please visit [www.recoverymonth.gov](http://www.recoverymonth.gov).

## Getting Criminal Justice Right in Illinois

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of youth do not have the same decision-making capacities as those of adults. Most young people involved in the system have not committed serious offenses. In Illinois, 63 percent of youth released from the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice during fiscal years 2005-2007 had been charged with non-violent offenses. Two thirds of those released were re-incarcerated within three years. Recent local research demonstrated that incarcerating youth makes them less likely to graduate high school and more likely to return to prison.

With a justice system filled with boys (93 percent of detained youth are male), it is critical to continue enacting policies and practices that recognize the growing body of research around cognitive development and rehabilitation. Rather than deprive communities and taxpayers of their future men and earners, Illinois should invest in our youth, and help at-risk boys safely enter adulthood.

## TASC Celebrates Recovery Month



TASC Executive VP Peter Palanca energized supporters at Governor State University's second annual Walk for Recovery, hosted by the GSU Alumni Association and the Addictions Studies Alumni Club. A number of TASC staff and family members participated in the walk to promote awareness of recovery.



In Rockford, under the leadership of Bridget Kiely and Kate Craig, TASC co-sponsored the city's 5th annual Recovery Rally on the Rock, which received local television coverage from WTVO/WQRF and WICS.



In Chicago, the Winners' Circle sponsored Outside the Walls, an annual event to celebrate recovery and the reconnection of families once broken due to incarceration. (Left to right: Pastor Robert Williams, Rev. Tommie Johnson of TASC, and IL State Rep. Arthur L. Turner)

## TASC Welcomes New Board Members

TASC welcomes the following individuals to our board of directors:

- Glenn Blackmon, Owner, Detail Construction
- Andreason Brown, Chief Financial Officer, Donors Forum
- Creasie Finney Hairston, PhD, professor and dean of the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago
- Michelle M. Montgomery, JD, James D. Montgomery & Associates, LTD.



Glenn Blackmon



Andreason Brown



Creasie Finney  
Hairston, PhD



Michelle M.  
Montgomery, JD

## December 11 Luncheon to Honor WGN's Bob Jordan, Legal Action Center's Paul Samuels

TASC's 2013 Leadership Awards Luncheon will take place Wednesday, December 11 at the Westin Michigan Avenue in Chicago. We are proud to present our 2013 Leadership Awards to:



### Dr. Robert H. Jordan, Jr., WGN-TV 2013 Public Voice Leadership Award

Robert H. Jordan Jr., PhD, is a weekend anchor on Chicago superstation WGN-TV, seen by millions of viewers nationwide. Last December, Dr. Jordan approached TASC to explore issues related to youth violence in Chicago. His keen interest and sensitivity to the complexities of violence led to an in-depth WGN cover story and hour-long CLTV special focused on health, family, community, public policy, and more. Dr. Jordan's reporting consistently explores social challenges that personally and profoundly affect local families and communities.



### Paul N. Samuels, JD, Legal Action Center 2013 Justice Leadership Award

Paul N. Samuels has dedicated his career to justice and fairness. As president and director of the Legal Action Center, a not-for-profit public interest law firm with a national scope, Mr. Samuels has worked on ground-breaking litigation defending the rights of people with alcohol and drug histories, HIV disease, and criminal records. He has been at the head of numerous campaigns to combat discrimination, expand services, reform sentencing laws, and influence other important public policy advances through Congressional testimony, state and national advisory groups, lectures, and collaborative partnerships.

To reserve your tickets, please visit us at [www.tasc.org](http://www.tasc.org) or call (312) 573-8201.



### TASC Welcomes Dr. Timothy Condon as Chief Science Advisor

Distinguished neuroscientist Timothy Condon, PhD has become chief science advisor to TASC and our Center for Health and Justice.

With rich experience at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), Dr. Condon will inform our national consulting and training services, and internal evaluation processes as well.

Among his many accomplishments, Condon guided NIDA in building its research, training infrastructure, bringing science-based findings to community treatment programs, and establishing a national communications network for information sharing and research collaboration.

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For more information on TASC services,  
locations, and program administrators across  
the state, please visit: [www.tasc.org](http://www.tasc.org).

Photo Credits: Dan Rest (p. 1), Recovery Month  
and Illinois State Capitol photos by TASC staff  
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TASC receives funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA); the Illinois Department of Corrections (DOC); the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ); and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

TASC is licensed by DASA and DCFS, and is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

# TASC

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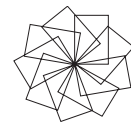
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## Governor Lauds Summits of Hope

In August, Governor Pat Quinn presented a certificate to TASC in praise of the agency's support and dedication to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) Summits of Hope, which are community expos that bring together local service providers to create a "one-stop" environment for invited individuals on parole or probation to obtain assistance with employment, housing, and other stepping stones to successful community reentry.

Organized by IDOC, and in partnership with local community service providers, volunteers, and several divisions of Illinois government, the summits help participants acquire information and assistance to begin to move past common barriers to success. Each local area forms a committee that spearheads the event, and IDOC ensures that all events are consistent throughout the state. TASC has helped plan and participate in each summit since they began.



### **TASC's 2013 Leadership Awards Luncheon**

December 11, 2013

HONORING

**Dr. Robert H. Jordan, Jr.  
WGN-TV**

**Paul N. Samuels, JD  
Legal Action Center**

*details inside*



#### **Help TASC Go Green!**

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