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Alliance to Prevent Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

creating healthy & safe communities

Governor's Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse

2015 Municipal Alliance Volunteers of the Year

W. Cary Edwards Statewide Volunteer of the Year

Erin Lawler-Patterson
Tabernacle Municipal Alliance
Burlington County

Erin Lawler-Patterson has been an active volunteer on the Tabernacle Municipal Alliance for 10 years. During this time she founded the "Drug Squad" where over 100 students a year apply to take a drug-free pledge. The Drug Squad participants then become leaders to spread the word about substance abuse and mentor younger students in the local high school. The Drug Squad is designed to challenge students to live a better life by making an impact with powerful messages to their peers about substance free living. Erin is also responsible for organizing the Precious Gems Run/Walk to provide funds to support substance awareness programs, and also puts out a monthly newsletter to the entire school population about new trends in substance abuse. Her passion for substance abuse awareness has been a driving force behind the success of the Tabernacle Alliance.

Addiction

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Elizabeth (Moody) Avant
Pleasantville Municipal Alliance
Atlantic County

Elizabeth (Moody) Avant has served as the Pleasantville Municipal Alliance Committee chairperson for 17 years. Ms. Avant's primary occupation is Senior Probation Investigator for the Superior Court of New Jersey. Her involvement in the community began when she served as the coordinator of the Juvenile Conference Committee for Pleasantville. Elizabeth generously shares the knowledge and counsel she has gained from her many years of experience with the Alliance program with newcomers to the program. In addition to her involvement on the Pleasantville Municipal Alliance, Elizabeth has served as the president of Pleasantville High School PTA for 12 years. She was also involved with Project Prom for many years and has served as a facilitator at the Pleasantville Youth Conference. Ms. Avant is a charter member of the Pleasantville Family Center. Elizabeth's commitment to serving the community has become part of her life, and the residents of Pleasantville have benefited greatly from her energy and determination.

Chief Christopher Winters
Pine Hill Municipal Alliance
Camden County

Christopher Winters had the privilege of joining the Pine Hill Municipal Alliance in 2012 as coordinator and has worked alongside the dedicated members of the Alliance to implement programs focused on prevention of drug and alcohol abuse among community members. Mr. Winters has served as the Chief of Police of the Pine Hill Police Department since 2012, where he has implemented many community policing models with a focus on crime prevention by targeting at-risk youth, crisis intervention and drug addiction. The Pine Hill Municipal Alliance has focused many of its current programs on availability reduction of prescription medication, and prevention and intervention outreach events including community based Narcan training and education programs for residents of the Pine Hill area. The Pine Hill Municipal Alliance has joined in a collaborative effort with the police department, schools and residents to ensure the engagement of youth, families and senior citizens throughout the borough in the current fight to end heroin use in the community.

Kelli Turner
Dennis Township Municipal Alliance
Cape May County

Kelli Turner has been a Dennis Township Municipal Alliance Committee member for three years. She participates in the Alliance Community Outreach and Membership subcommittees. Kelli also volunteers her time staffing Alliance information tables at Alliance activities such as National Night Out. Kelli is instrumental in fostering collaboration between the Municipal Alliance and the NJEA PRIDE team. Kelli's professionalism and competence make her an invaluable asset to the Dennis Township Alliance program. She takes on each task with complete enthusiasm and leadership. She has tirelessly served on the Alliance Committee and is always looking for new ideas to improve the school community. Ms. Turner is a positive role model for both students and adults and is respected throughout the community.

Suzanne Broullon
Verona Municipal Alliance
Essex County

Suzanne Broullon has been an active member of the Verona Municipal Alliance Committee (VMAC) for 13 years. One of Suzanne's greatest accomplishments with the municipal Alliance has been her ability to reach out to leaders of other community groups and partner with them to bring programs to Verona. In this past year, there were two programs in particular that were made possible because of the coordination among several groups in town – a workshop dealing with heroin addiction and "Hidden in Plain Sight", which used a mockup of a teenager's room to illustrate potential warning signs to parents. Suzanne first joined VMAC as a liaison for her children's School Community Association. Ms. Broullon then became a member of the VMAC, serving as recording secretary, co-chairperson and has been chairperson of the committee for the past 2 years. Even while serving on the committee, she still served as school liaison of her children's school and regularly attended those school's SCA meetings to inform the parents of VMAC programs and events.

Captain Mark Flores
West New York Municipal Alliance
Hudson County

Captain Mark Flores is one of the founding members of the West New York Alliance Committee against Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (West New York MCADA) created in 1991. For the past 26 years, Captain Mark Flores has been a member of the West New York Police Department. During his career with the department, Captain Flores became the town's first trained DARE officer. As Commander of Administrative Services he established an annual Technique for Alcohol Management training designed to educate alcohol licensees on proper ID checking and other risk management tools. Additionally, for the past 24 years he has been an active member of the West New York MCADA where he attends and actively participates in a significant number of Alliance committee meetings and Alliance-related activities. Captain Flores' outstanding record of volunteerism with the West New York MCADA over the past two decades has made him a deserving recipient of this recognition.

Princeton Police Department's Safe Neighborhood Unit
Princeton Municipal Alliance
Mercer County

The Safe Neighborhood Unit of the Princeton Police Department has been actively involved in the Princeton Alcohol and Drug Alliance (PADA) for eight years engaging students, youth and Alliance members in significant discussions related to alcohol and drug abuse issues in Princeton. The Unit has led community discussions on topics such as: adolescent arrest trends, drugs currently being seen in the community, incidences of parties for adolescents that serve alcohol and DUI trends. The Safe Neighborhood Unit of the Princeton Police Department continually supports the PADA's programs including its elaborate Drunk Driving Re-enactment, as well as hosting a Prescription Disposal Drop Box at Police headquarters. In addition, the officers of this unit participate in many of the PADA's student leadership programs. They also provide the PADA with up to date information about current trends in alcohol and drug issues in the community among teens and adults, so the prevention program messaging can be targeted more effectively. The officers of this unit give their time and resources to develop programs and other initiatives specifically directed at engaging community involvement and have been integral to the success of the Princeton Alcohol and Drug Alliance.

Neal Gaeta
North Brunswick Municipal Alliance
Middlesex County

Neal Gaeta has been an active member of the North Brunswick Municipal Alliance Committee for the past year and a half, attending all Municipal Alliance Committee meetings throughout the year. Mr. Gaeta has been committed to participating in community service activities including assisting the senior citizens population as a member of the Youth Council. One of Neal's major accomplishments is his engagement with "Project Saturation to Defeat Underage Drinking". Neal, along with other North Brunswick Municipal Alliance Committee members, attended athletic events throughout the community passing out educational information and seat cushions with the Project Saturation theme. Neal's involvement in the Men's and Women's Leadership Conference over the years has guided underclass students in understanding the importance of healthy lifestyle choices. Neal is an outstanding role model for his peers and has made a positive difference for his community.

Mary Lynn Morris
Wall Community Alliance
Monmouth County

Mary Lynn Morris has been a member of the Wall Community Alliance for 14 years and has been chairperson of Municipal Alliance Committee for 13 years. Her commitment to the Wall Alliance program is evidenced by the fact that in all those years, she has missed only four committee meetings. Ms. Morris has served the Alliance with professionalism, dedication and compassion. One of her greatest accomplishments is leading the Alliance through many ups and downs and constantly making sure that all programs are effective and executed successfully. Mary has been a stalwart participant at Alliance events, meetings and programs, and always with a positive attitude and a smile on her face. She has helped to fund raise, educate parents and meets with school administration throughout the years in order to make sure that Project Graduation is a complete success and free for all students. She actively recruits new volunteers and ensures that everyone works together to get the job done. Ms. Morris is a true leader and continues to tirelessly help her community prevent drug and alcohol abuse.

Melissa Gibson
Morris Plains Municipal Alliance
Morris County

Melissa Gibson has been active with the Morris Plains Municipal Alliance for over eight years. Melissa's greatest contribution to the Municipal Alliance is her ability to get things done. Ms. Gibson's tireless efforts on the myriad duties related to grant administration, such as completing grant applications, forms, financial statements, required documentation, insurance certificates, and miscellaneous paperwork, cannot be overstated. She singlehandedly holds the Alliance together and performs her tasks with grace and ability. Melissa's specific jobs on the Morris Plains Municipal Alliance are varied. In addition to the invaluable service she provides in keeping the Alliance grant ship sailing right, she also is the coordinator of the Kids Helping Kids program which trains children in grades 4-8 to be mentors during various classes and activities and work alongside children in grades K-6. Melissa is also constantly searching out new programs, speakers, and information to benefit parents and children. She is a dedicated member of the municipal Alliance and an active part of the community and neighborhood.

Kris Miller Smith
Paterson Municipal Alliance
Passaic County

Kris Miller Smith has been involved with the Paterson Municipal Alliance Program for almost two years. Mr. Smith has exhibited a strong determination to make a difference in his community. He participates in programs sponsored by the Paterson Alliance which provide workshops and presentations to Paterson youth, parents and service providers on substance abuse and the negative effects it has on the individual user, family and community. He has also participated in other community-based programs, including B.U.D.S (Brothers United Development Spiritually), a male mentoring program for young men ages 13-19. Kris participates in activities three days a week and on weekends. The activities include workshops on healthy eating, leadership skills, goal setting, cultural awareness, community service and parenting. Kris has presented workshops and presentations to over 300 k-8th graders in the City of Paterson. Kris has received awards for his work with the Paterson Alliance program and has been recognized in print media. This summer he will continue promoting the Alliance prevention message as a junior counselor and mentor to 15 young men transitioning into high school. In addition to the community service and his extracurricular activities, Kris is an excellent student and plans to attend college. He exemplifies a passion for his community rarely found in young men his age and is committed to making a real change in his community.

Kelley Piel
Oldmans Township Municipal Alliance
Salem County

Kelley Piel has had many accomplishments in the past six years as chairperson of the Oldmans Township Municipal Alliance program. She served on the Oldmans Township School Board of Education and that is how she became involved with the Oldmans Alliance program. Her accomplishments include starting the Alliance's Book Club. Kelley spends a great deal of time searching for books for the children, writing a synopsis of the books she chooses, and writing dialogs to spark the children to have an open conversation. She started the hour long book club five years ago with 10 students and now it has grown to 22. Ms. Piel is also active as a Sunday school teacher, superintendent and youth group leader with the First Baptist Church of Pedricktown. Initially lacking a background in substance abuse prevention programming, through perseverance Ms. Piel and the Oldmans Municipal Alliance Committee eventually learned the necessary skills to lead successful prevention programs for the community. Kelly deserves this recognition because of her dedication, enthusiasm and passion for preventing substance abuse in Oldmans Township.

Lisa Frisbie
Sussex/Wantage Municipal Alliance
Sussex County

Lisa Frisbie has been an active member of the Sussex/Wantage Municipal Alliance since 1993 and has been an integral part of its success in providing outstanding prevention programs to the community. She currently serves as the chairperson for the Alliance Committee and is a valued and respected leader. Since the inception of the Sussex/Wantage Municipal Alliance, Ms. Frisbie has been a strong advocate for the program and brings a passion and excitement to the committee that is unmatched. In addition to her commitment to the municipal Alliance, she has also been a health educator for 11 years, a substance abuse counselor for nine years and a guidance counselor for five years. She has also taken a very active role in county anti-bullying forums, giving presentations and facilitating discussions. Lisa's leadership skills and strong commitment to the prevention of substance abuse in her community make her a deserving recipient of the recognition of Volunteer of the Year for Sussex County.

Clarissa Robles
Elizabeth Municipal Alliance
Union County

Clarissa Robles has been selected as the Union County Volunteer of the Year based on her active participation on the Elizabeth Municipal Alliance Committee and the support she has given the Elizabeth Alliance to achieve the goal of "A prevention-prepared community." Ms. Robles is the Community Relations Specialist with WellCare Health Plans of New Jersey. Clarissa has used her role at Wellcare to provide services and resources with empathy and care to an underserved population in Elizabeth. She has brought inspiration, passion, and commitment to the Alliance and to the City of Elizabeth community. Her tireless efforts have provided sustainable services that address social and economic injustices that are constant barriers to positive and healthy behaviors. The depth and scope of the services that Ms. Robles has brought to Elizabeth will continue to positively impact community members and the community as a whole in making it prevention-prepared.

Reverend Donald Gebhard
Hackettstown Municipal Alliance
Warren County

Reverend Donald Gebhard has served for seven years as the respected chairperson of the Hackettstown Municipal Alliance Committee. He conducts the Municipal Alliance Committee meetings in an open and informative manner and offers excellent ideas for discussion by its members. Reverend Gebhard's contributions to the success of the Hackettstown Alliance as chairman of the committee cannot be overstated. His absolute commitment to the betterment of the community as a whole is also evidenced by his willingness to readily volunteer for tasks that arise associated with the administration of Alliance prevention programs. One of his most outstanding contributions has been the development of "The Zone", a program held several times during the school year for 7th and 8th graders. The Zone is an alternative program that offers the young people a place to meet their peers in a safe environment. Evenings include wholesome, enjoyable drug free activities. Local businesses contribute to these evenings as well. Reverend Gebhard's extensive contributions to the success of the Hackettstown Municipal Alliance program year after year make him a deserving recipient of the Warren County Volunteer of the Year.