

# SUMMARY REPORT

FRIENDS OF  
RECOVERY  
New York

ONE COMMUNITY  
ONE VOICE

**EVENT:** Recovery Talks: Community Listening Forum

**DATE:** 05.30.2018

**LOCATION:** Lincoln Hospital, Bronx, New York

**ACTIVITY:** Forum for individuals and family members  
on alcoholism/drug addiction

**COORDINATOR:** Allison Weingarten, LMSW, FOR-NY Policy Director

**CONTACT:** 518-487-4395 x 22      **LOCAL CONTACT:** Luis Laboy, MPA, CASAC-G, CRPA

## About Our Event Activity...

### Executive Summary

The Bronx Council on Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders, the Alumni Association of New York State, the Coalition for Behavioral Health and Friends of Recovery - New York co-sponsored the FOR-NY Recovery Talks Community Listening Forum. It was the 20th in a series of local forums being held across New York State to provide community members the opportunity to share their personal experiences with legislators, law enforcement and other leaders in dealing with alcohol and drug addiction, the loss of a family member or friend, as well as recovery from addiction.

**Category** Public Policy      **Number of participants** 58

### Purpose

- Provide a safe space for individuals and families in recovery to voice their experiences around addiction, loss and recovery.
- Help individuals and families overcome the stigma that prevents many people from seeking help.
- Engage the community in a productive discussion with local leaders that allows for more effective policies on addiction/recovery.

**Satisfaction Summary** (Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent...)

**Overall ease of event:** 3

**Overall satisfaction with outcome:** 5

**Value to Recovery Community:** 5

**Recommend Repeat of Event (Y/N):** Y

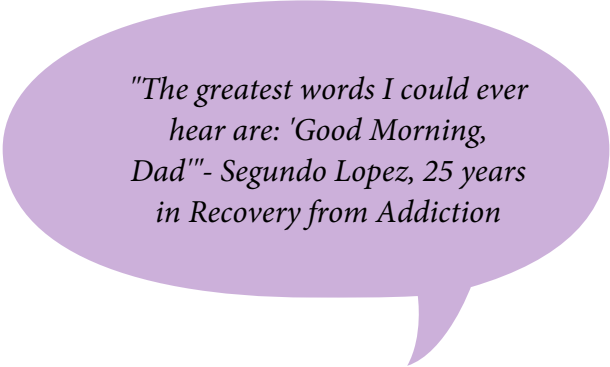
## Highlights

- Diverse group of recovery speakers included young people, LGBTQ community, people of color, recovery elders and members of the Latinx community.
- Speakers shared strong support for harm reduction and medication assisted treatment options.
- Speakers expressed need for 24 hour services for a disease that is not “9 to 5.” Listening panelist from NYS OASAS was able to respond with services that are 24/7. This is exactly one of the main purposes of these talks—to identify needs and also to connect with resources that are already available.

## What we Discovered

### Findings

- Long term recovery is possible. Four speakers had over 25 years of recovery.
- Pathways to recovery among speakers include art, parenthood, medication assisted treatment, harm reduction, telling our stories, mutual aide support groups, and education.
- Childhood trauma including physical and sexual abuse was a common experience for speakers in recovery.
- Housing is a major need for people in recovery. Most people who shared their stories of addiction shared that they were homeless during the time that they were using drugs.
- There are 24/7 services available for people who need help with their addiction in the Bronx.
- Young people and especially members of the LGBTQ community need support in order to feel empowered.
- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is working to “reduce the stigma” by advertising real stories about Naloxone saving lives in NYC Subways



*"The greatest words I could ever hear are: 'Good Morning, Dad'" - Segundo Lopez, 25 years in Recovery from Addiction*

## Recommendations

*"I want to bring recovery out and make it regular to talk about. We need to share our stories of triumph!" - Rachelle Brown, Family Member in Recovery and Ally*

- People in recovery need to be sharing their stories and saying what they want and need. People in recovery are the real experts. The treatment community needs to be asking people who are seeking help what they need in order to find recovery.
- Volunteerism in the Recovery Community is extremely beneficial to the person in recovery (helping others can be a part of a person's recovery) and to the recovery movement itself.
- There is a tremendous need for 24 hour assistance for people seeking recovery. There is a small window of time in which a person is willing to receive help. OASAS actually operates a 24 hour service in the Bronx, but this service must be better advertised in the Bronx community so that people actually know about it and how to access it. More 24 hour services are needed, including services that are not just emergency services. People need a place to socialize with peers in order to help them avoid drug use.
- Certified Recovery Peer Advocates (CRPAs) need more opportunities for employment. CRPAs are extremely important to supporting people finding their pathway to recovery. CRPAs are needed in Emergency Departments and in community based settings.
- Government officials need more opportunities to hear from "boots on the ground." Government officials can learn from people in recovery and apply that knowledge to the decisions they make on a daily basis.
- More research and resources need to be put into how trauma impacts addiction.
- Rather than calling someone an "addict," people are people first—people should be called "people who use substances" or "people with addiction" or "people in recovery." This change in terminology will help to reverse the negative public perception of people with addiction.
- NYC should be flooded with Naloxone (Narcan) in order to save lives.
- Housing services are needed for people with addiction, especially for those who are members of the LGBTQ community. The LGBTQ community often feels unwelcome in the current housing options that are available to people with addiction and people seeking recovery.

## Agenda and Participants

- 3:00 pm**      **Welcome:**    Luis Laboy, Director, Bronx Council on Alcohol and Substance Use Services  
Stephanie Campbell, Executive Director, FOR-NY
- 3:10 pm**      **Moderator:** Allison Weingarten, Director of Policy, FOR-NY
- Panelists:** Michael Bosket, Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Social Services; Kenneth Brown, District Manager, Community Board 5; Mariel De La Cruz, Bronx Representative for NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer; Zoraida Diaz (NYC Regional Director) and Gideon Rabino (NYC Regional Coordinator), NYS OASAS Regional Office; Roy Kearse, VP of Recovery Services, Samaritan Daytop Village; Dr. Hillary Kunins, Assistant Commissioner, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Matthew Main, Staff Attorney, Mobilization for Justice, Inc.; Christy Parque, President & CEO, The Coalition for Behavioral Health
- 4:20 pm**      **Speakers:**    Community Members
- 4:40 pm**      **Comments:**    Listening Panel
- 4:55 pm**      **Wrap Up:**      Stephanie Campbell

## Co-Sponsor

BRONX COUNCIL ON  
ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF New York



The  
**Coalition**  
for Behavioral Health

SPONSORED BY:



# RECOVERY TALKS:

## Community Listening Forum on Addiction and Recovery

This is a series of local forums being held across New York State to provide community members the opportunity to share personal experiences in dealing with alcohol and drug addiction, loss of a family member or friend, as well as recovery from addiction.

The Listening Forums will engage the community in discussion with local leaders and result in a report titled, The State of Addiction Recovery in New York to better inform the public and policy makers.

**CO-SPONSORED BY:**

BRONX COUNCIL ON ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF New York



**Wednesday, May 30, 2018**

**3:00 PM to 6:00 PM**

**Lincoln Hospital  
234 E 149th St  
Bronx, New York 10451**

To register: <https://app.donorview.com/J13n>

Speaker's remarks will be limited to 3 minutes in order to allow as many people as possible to speak

For more information contact:

**Albert Aponte**  
347-226-1569  
[aaponte488@icloud.com](mailto:aaponte488@icloud.com)

**Luis Laboy**  
718-598-1390  
[Luis.Laboy@samaritanvillage.org](mailto:Luis.Laboy@samaritanvillage.org)