



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman

CELINA LEVY
Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

December 13, 2022

Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), John Armato (Public Member), Betty Ann Cowling-Carson (Public Member), Donna DeStefano (Public Member), Eileen Fishman (Public Member), Moira Nelson (Public Member), Michelle Graham-Lyons (DCA), Herbert Kaldany (DOC), Lu Pereira (DOE), Lashunda Harden (DOH), Annette Riordan (DHS), Rebecca Glinn (DOL), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Chuck Robbins (DMAVA)

Call to Order

The three hundred and sixty sixth regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Acting Chairman Neil Van Ess.

Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Mr. Van Ess announced that notice of this meeting was provided in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21). In addition, Mr. Van Ess stated that public comments were to be provided electronically, through the GCADA website contact portal between the hours of 10am and 1pm on the day of the meeting.

Roll Call

Katelyn Assenheimer called the roll. Members present and absent were noted for the record.

Approval of Minutes

After a brief discussion, the minutes for October were approved. (Y-9; N-0; ABS-5)

Chairman's Report

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting and shared that the Volunteer of the Year Awards is his favorite meeting of the year. He stated that although we would be holding the

ceremony via Zoom, he was glad to be able to recognize the work done by the GCADA Municipal Alliance volunteers. He said he was truly grateful that there are individuals such as the ones being honored today along with many others who are part of this great program, helping build healthy and safe communities.

Presentation: “2022 Volunteer of the Year Awards Ceremony”

Sara Thode, Director of Prevention and Planning shared with everyone that the Alliances represent the largest network of community-based anti-drug coalitions in the nation with over 320 Alliances encompassing over 425 municipalities statewide. Ms. Thode stated that these volunteers being honored today have worked to change and save lives within their communities and throughout New Jersey and have tirelessly worked to make their programs meet the challenges of this difficult year. GCADA State Alliance Coordinators, Kristin Boniface and Kim Rodriguez, introduced the County Volunteers of the Year, and each volunteer will be mailed a framed certificate in recognition of their service.

Ms. Thode announced that Detective Lieutenant Michael Padilla had been awarded as the 2022 W. Cary Edwards Statewide Volunteer of the Year. Nutley Police Detective Lieutenant Padilla has been a member of the Nutley Municipal Alliance in Essex County for fourteen years while also volunteering with the Essex County Regional Alcohol and Drug Prevention Team (ADAPT), the Partnership for Children of Essex and the Nutley Family Services Bureau as Board President. He developed the Nutley Junior Police Academy and the Police at Lunch with Students Program (PALS). Det. Lt. Padilla introduced and directed the LEAD school-based prevention program in the Nutley school system and was named the LEAD Administrator of the Year in 2017 by the NJ Law Enforcement Against Drugs (LEAD) program. He is one of 30 LEAD trainers who assist other municipal police administrators to implement LEAD programs across NJ. Det. Lt. Padilla works to prevent opioid misuse by student athletes through his role as the Assistant Football Coach at Nutley High School. Coordinating with the Nutley Municipal Alliance and the Nutley High School Athletic Department, he has organized student participation in the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey (PDFNJ) Knock Out Opioid Day program. Det. Lt. Padilla’s unwavering commitment to the health and wellbeing of the Nutley community makes him a deserving recipient of the 2022 W. Cary Edwards Statewide Volunteer of the Year Award.

Det. Lt. Padilla was also presented with a municipal proclamation from Nutley Police Chief Tom Strumolo.

Ms. Thode acknowledged Essex County Coordinator, Elizabeth Marques.

After the awards presentation, Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro introduced the First Place Winner of the New Jersey Shouts Down Drugs Prevention Concert (held virtually for 2022), Keyoni Lee to share a video performance of her song “Never Too Late”.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Celina Levy thanked PDFNJ Shout Down Drugs contest winner Keyoni for her moving performance and expressed her admiration and gratitude to the W. Cary Edwards award winner, Det. Lt. Padilla for his selfless dedication to his community. Ms. Levy also thanked Det. Lt. Padilla's family, friends, colleagues, and dignitaries for joining GCADA to honor him for his outstanding accomplishments and shared her appreciation to all the volunteers honored at the 2022 VOY ceremony as well as all Municipal Alliance volunteers across the state.

Ms. Levy shared that GCADA remains fully engaged in efforts to alternate funding sources for the Alliance program to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Ms. Levy attended a "Best Practices in Overdose Prevention: Leveraging Strategic Partners" conference part of the Overdose Prevention Project, presented by CAI and DOH. She acknowledged DOH designee, Lashunda Harden and DOH Director of Opioid Response, Michele Calvo, for their role in making this event possible, and shared GCADA's commitment to the partnership between DOH and GCADA for prevention efforts that focus on harm reduction, mental health, and trauma informed approaches.

GCADA will also be embarking on a new strategic partnership with NJCAAR-BH (formerly known as NCAAD) to explore collaborative opportunities with the recovery community and will continue to build upon existing partnerships with both the departments represented on the GCADA, and its Public members.

Ms. Levy wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and thanked the Council Members, County Coordinators, volunteers, and GCADA staff for their continued steadfast commitment to the GCADA's prevention efforts, despite ongoing challenges. She thanked Chairman Van Ess as well for his support and strong leadership.

Adjournment

Mr. Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:21.

Public Comment

**** FROM ****

Ms. Ebony J Torres

County: Somerset

**** MESSAGE ****

SUBJECT: Public Comment for GCADA

Good morning! I am Ebony J. Torres, serving as Somerset County's new Municipal Alliance Coordinator. If you'd like to learn more about me, I can be reached at etorres@co.somerset.nj.us or 908-7046305. I look forward to working together in the future.