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Gov. Christie: John Sette Has Been Speaking Out For 25 Years On This Epidemic

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Gov. Christie: John Sette Has Been Speaking Out For 25 Ye... [video player]

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Transcript:

Governor Christie: I'm honored to be up here tonight to introduce the person who introduced me to this cause. In 1995, I was a 32-year-old brand new Freeholder in Morris County, and one of the folks who had been a promoter of my candidacy and encouraged me to go on the Freeholder board then told me here's what you need to do once you get there. You need to go up to Daytop Village and you need to go see Father Joe Hennen. I went up and I saw Father Joe and I've told this story all over this country, from one end of the country to the other, from the White House to treatment centers all over America, that when I went up to Daytop that day and it looks significantly different today than it did then. I see Anthony Bucco smiling, we both remember the leaky roofs, and the disrepair that the place was in back in the mid-1990s and there were moments where but for the grace of people like John Crimi and the Ferguson family that we would not have been able to keep the doors open. And I went there to see Father Joe Hennen and I took the tour of the place and at the end of the tour he said to me, "Chris, you're going to want to be involved in this place for the rest of your life." Now at 32-years old you're thinking to yourself, "How could he possibly know and how could I know?" And I said to him, "Father, with all due respect, why do you think I'm going to want to be involved in this place for the rest of my life?" And he said, "Because you're going to learn that Daytop is where God makes miracles happen on Earth." And if you listen to the young lady who spoke to us tonight and the mother who spoke to us tonight, you know that what Father Hennen told me 22 years ago is even more true today. Daytop is a place where miracles happen each and every day and we see God's hand and his work every day at Daytop saving lives and changing lives for people. I would've never had the experience of knowing that and had the cause that I've had for the last 22 years if it wasn't for the persistence and the passion of my friend and tonight's Silver Star honoree, John Sette. The chairman of the board at Daytop Village. John Bramnick mentioned before when he was discussing John he mentioned his loyalty, and I think for anybody who knows John well and they've been lucky enough to become his friend as Mary Pat

and I have been lucky enough to become friends with he and Kathy over the last, over 25 years. We feel incredibly fortunate to have that relationship in our lives and the literally thousands of families who have come through Daytop during that period of time may not know it, but the reason that place is still there—and has grown to the size it has become is because of the passion and the loyalty of people like John. And so, there's no silver bullet to fix this problem. Sixty-four thousand people died in the United States last year died from an overdose, more than all those who died from handgun violence and automobile accidents combined. We have a death toll in this country that equals September 11th every two and a half weeks. A hundred and seventy-five people in America are dying a day of overdose. I see all of those hearts flashing and it represents the money that you've all contributed, how much do you think you would pay if a terrorist organization was coming into country and killing 175 Americans a day on our own soil? This country would say we would never permit it and we would spend and do whatever we needed to do. That's what's happening. We're doing it to ourselves every day and our country needs to come to grips with that and the way people are going to know it is if we all start speaking out and marching and demanding that treatment become available for everyone who needs it and that we clamp down on the people who are profiting from poisoning and killing our fellow citizens. John Sette's been speaking out for 25 years on this problem; 25 years ago when very few people were saying anything, John was saying it. And I know John knows this because he got the same talks from Father Hen that I did and the first thing I thought about when I saw him go up on the video I turned to Mary Pat and I said, he's hitting people up for money cause he's got the collar on. Father Joe would almost never wear his collar. Almost every time I saw him he was in some other type of casual attire. But when I would drive up to Daytop and he had the collar on, I knew it was over. It was just like take your wallet out and he's going to be asking you for money. And I see a whole bunch of folks who served on the Daytop board with me when I was on the board, others who have joined since then, you know that I'm telling you the truth those folks who have been with this for a long time. When Father Joe puts the collar on, Father Joe's getting your wallet and he's doing it because of the young men and women he wanted to save. And John Sette has been at the forefront of that for the last 25 years. Daytop village is there today because of John and the people that John has recruited to the cause and we owe him, as do families all over this state, an enormous debt of gratitude. There's no one that I've met at Daytop over the last 22 years that is more deserving of this award tonight than my good friend and the chairman of the board at Daytop Village, John Sette.

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Press Contact:

Brian Murray
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000