

AwareNews

The Prevention Council of Erie County

Substance use prevention, education and intervention since 1948

Volume 12, Issue 1

Winter 2024

Celebrating **75** Years of Commitment

“Building the Best Tomorrow Together.” The key to our brightest future is creating a solid foundation of public health, education, and safety. Over the last 75 years, The Prevention Council of Erie County has worked towards that very mission. During this diamond celebration, The Council welcomes a new tomorrow in our continued effort to create positive change in public health and wellness. Prevention services are needed now more than ever, as the overdose and addiction crisis continues to take far too many lives.

As we look back at our history and celebrate our anniversary, we commemorate past victories and find joy in the coming opportunities to implement services.

Our prevention journey began in 1948 when the Western New York Committee for Education on Alcoholism, Inc. opened its doors. The WNY Committee quickly became a necessary resource for the community and was founded on several core principles The Council still upholds today.

In 1965 our new name was unveiled as the Buffalo Area Council on Alcoholism Inc. (BACA). Constantly adapting and providing prevention services wherever needed, BACA began instituting awareness for other drug dependency disorders alongside that of alcohol misuse.

In 1988, the Council once again evolved into the Greater Buffalo Council on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse, Inc. (GBCASA). The agency aligned its focus to early diagnosis and the importance of linking those suffering to treatment services. This focused effort emboldened our agency’s mission to help identify individual and communal needs related to alcohol and other drug dependency.

In 1997 GBCASA merged with Community Prevention Network of Western New York, Inc. (CPN) and became The Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol & Substance Abuse, Inc. (ECCPASA).

Finally in December of 2020, The Prevention Council of Erie County was announced, and the agency continued to uphold excellence in the fight against stigma associated with addiction through public education, policy awareness, liaison with health professionals and recovering communities, and by providing objective information, referral, and linkages to those in need. Annually The Council serves over 10,000 individuals in our community, and our outreach efforts extend to 239,500 individuals.

Our programs are research-driven and support the health and wellness of individuals by focusing on solutions to substance misuse and addiction. We strive to offer a range of

Continued on page 3

Inside this issue:

Celebrating 75 Years of Commitment	1 & 3
Letter from the Executive Director	2
Welcome New Staff	2
Crisis Services Hotline	2
Congratulations Mary Carroll	3 & 4
Thank You to Our Sponsors	5
Celebrating 75 Years of Commitment	6, 7, 8, 9
Coming Soon in 2024	10
Dry January	11
Support The Prevention Council	12

Check Us Out



thepreventioncouncil.ec.org



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President – Renee Harns
Vice President – Dr. Mark Fisher
Treasurer – Catherine Roberts
Secretary – Daniel Bobbett

BOARD MEMBERS

Jennifer Boyce
Andrew Cheatom
Desmond Johnson
Barbara Lark
Catherine Roberts
Keith Scott
Bill Thomas
Dr. Robert Whitney
Maureen Wilk

ADMINISTRATION

Executive Director – Robin Mann
Office Manager – Darlene Zwifka

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

Vanita Jamison (community based)
Ann Rossetti (school based)

**AN APPLE A DAY &
TOO GOOD PROGRAMMING**

Lamont Pugh
Lauren Swanson
Joshua Vacanti

**FOCUS ON CONSEQUENCES
FOR ADOLESCENTS**

Jan Burns

**MINDFULNESS ENHANCEMENT
PROGRAM**

Jan Burns

**POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAM
(TRIPLE P)**

Karen Owens
Carol Smith

PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS

Vanita Jamison

**PUBLIC EDUCATION
AND ADVOCACY**

Vanita Jamison
Joshua Vacanti

SKILLS FOR TOMORROW

Mark Fenz

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Karen Owens

**STUDENT ASSISTANCE /
PREVENTION COUNSELING**

Marie Kwietniewski
Ann Rossetti
Paula Scaglione
Lauren Swanson

TEEN INTERVENE COMMUNITY

Jan Burns

MEDIA

Joshua Vacanti

Letter from the Executive Director

Robin Mann



It is an honor and a privilege to be at the helm of an organization that has provided substance abuse prevention education, programs, and services to individuals, families, and communities in our county for these past 75 years!

This past year has been amazing! We started with the announcement of The Council's 75th anniversary utilizing billboards throughout the county that displayed our dedicated staff. We then hosted a community concert featuring our very own Joshua Vacanti, a former contestant on the VOICE, while also showcasing some of our local talent; followed by a celebratory breakfast with some of The Council's closest friends and partners in prevention listening to the profound words of Carlton Hall, international speaker, encouraging us to Prioritize Prevention to Address the Fierce Urgencies of Now! And we ended the year with an anti-vaping campaign contest among local youth. The winner's artwork will be displayed on several NFTA bus tails and billboards throughout the city.

I am filled with sincere gratitude to our sponsors who made the 75th anniversary year possible by their support: Buffalo Bills, Coca Cola, Key Bank, North Park Academy, Park Edge Sweet Shoppe, Tops Markets and Verizon Wireless. And a special thank you to the 75th planning committee and my staff for their dedication and commitment to making the celebratory activities a success.

Additionally, I had an opportunity to learn more about The Prevention Council's rich history and its influence and connection to the field, local agencies and services that are currently being offered. The reach of The Council spans deep within the field. I am looking forward to sharing that information with you in the near future.

The year 2023 was a Celebration of Commitment, and yet, our work is not finished... we will continue to Prioritize Prevention! Make sure you stay tuned for what The Prevention Council will be doing next, you won't want to miss it.

Wishing you a very Happy & Healthy New Year

Robin

Welcome new staff!

The Council welcomes Lamont Pugh

Lamont Pugh joined The Prevention Council of Erie County in February 2023 after completing a six month internship program with The Council; he presently serves as a Prevention Educator. He recently completed a military career serving over 41 years in the New York Army National Guard as an Active Duty Soldier. Lamont has vast experience in community collaborative programming, supervision, and Instruction/Training programs. He is excited to continue working in the area of "building healthier communities," and looks forward to being a part of the Council family.

24-Hour Hotline:

716-834-3131

Text Line: 716-300-2338*

Live Chat: www.crisisservices.org*

*Evenings Until 11PM



CRISISservices
this moment forward

student, parent, and family programs that foster positive behaviors and healthy decision-making. It is our mission to inform members of the community across the life span about the importance and benefits of our available substance misuse/abuse education, prevention and early intervention programs and services.

During our celebratory year, we have had amazing instances of community collaboration and anniversary-themed fun. We held a free concert featuring staff member, and former NBC's The Voice contestant, Joshua Vacanti at North Park Academy. We also hosted a Celebration Breakfast at Templeton Landing. The morning included an awards ceremony, the unveiling of our new Prevention Council Celebration video, and an amazing presentation by renowned prevention speaker, Carlton Hall. Lastly there was a media campaign that included billboards that featured our anniversary theme, "Building The Best Tomorrow Together." Hopefully you had a chance to see one in the community.

Although 2023 has come to a close, the fun and celebrations are sure to continue. We encourage you to join our email list and follow our social media pages, so you won't miss out on any of the upcoming festivities. 2024 is already looking to be full of exciting new ventures for The Council, and we would love to take you along on the journey!

In conclusion, The Prevention Council extends gratitude to all WNY, especially to those who have supported our efforts over the past 75 years. It is because of you that we can make a difference in the lives of those in need. Thank you.

Congratulations Mary Carroll

The Prevention Council of Erie County congratulates Mary Carroll on her tremendous career in prevention education and support. Mary has been such a special part of The Council family over her career spanning 28 years and her compassion and commitment have made lasting positive impacts on individuals and families across WNY. The Council wishes Mary endless happiness as she continues to step into her well-deserved retirement from her role as Strengthening Families Program Director.

Mary joined the agency on January 3rd, 1995. Her journey started while working at ECMC providing drug and alcohol screening assessments. Mary also aided efforts of support and education for fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) and other drug-related diagnoses. Her work spanned across Erie County, as well as into the Seneca Nation's health clinic and women's support group. Mary has fond memories of her time spent at the Robert Warner Center with Dr. Luther Robinson guiding parents and families through FAS services and interventions. Mary is proud of her efforts, alongside Bob Conatta, spearheading this support group for parents of individuals with FAS.

In 1998, Mary attended a presentation regarding the Strengthening Families Program (SFP). After this training, a grant was written by The Council in hopes of gaining full funding for this new opportunity. On August 5th, Mary's birthday, The Council's request was awarded, and the program officially kicked off in early September of that same year. SFP originally began as a six-cohort program for families with children aged eight to ten years old. Two years after its inception, the program was extended to include children from ages ten to fourteen. Mary shared that SFP ran its first ten years at Saint James School in Buffalo, until eventually SFP found its home at Saint Mary's School for the Deaf.

Mary and others involved in SFP saw that clients' basic needs (such as clothing) were not being met. The Council reached out to Fleet Bank who graciously assisted with clothing donations and aided in the start of The Council's Free Clothing Boutique. This collaboration later extended to a partnership with K-Mart, providing families with new socks, underwear, etc. The Boutique, which is still active today, acted as a wonderful resource during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Mary attending a Prevention Council Luncheon during 2011.



Congratulations Mary Carroll

Continued from page 3

During this time Mary and Karen Owens were able to distribute clothing items to families across WNY. Food boxes, donated from True Bethel Church's pantry, were also gifted through the Boutique to support families with the highest need. Thankfully this collaboration has been able to continue over the last three years.

Mary and those involved with the SFP realized the need to further support women involved in the program after its completion. Thus, the Women's Support group was created. This group provides a space of encouragement, growth, and companionship, and has been a huge success since the start. Mary is honored to have been able to provide such a safe and positive support setting for all the women who have attended the group.

Looking back on her career, Mary couldn't select a specific favorite memory, rather, she shared that what she cherished most was seeing individuals and families have their "ah ha" moment. Witnessing and uplifting a participant as they realize the changes necessary for their family's success meant the world to her.

As Mary closes this chapter, she looks forward to spending more time with her family and spoiling her new grandchild. She is also excited to travel more, and to connect with old friends. Although Mary is stepping back from her position as Program Director, she will continue to work with The Council's Positive Parenting Program until that grant comes to an end.

Mary hopes that in her absence SFP will continue to receive funding and grow, despite the hard financial times we all currently face across every service field. She emphasized that this proven program is a necessary support. SFP has visible and measurable positive outcomes for our generation and the next.

Again, The Council wishes Mary happiness. The Council thanks Mary for her dedication and love of community. Through Mary's heart and determination, lives throughout WNY have been forever changed.

It has truly been an honor to work alongside you, Mary. Your Council family will always root for your success.



Mary leading programming at The Council's Tomorrow's Leaders Camp.



Mary and The Prevention Council Staff at their annual meeting in 2014.



Mary delivering Christmas gifts to clients and families.

Thank you!

Thanking Our Generous 2023 Sponsors

WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU.

We are grateful for your support and contributions. Your generosity has allowed us to make a real difference in the community.

Thank you for believing in us!



WE APPRECIATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO OUR CAUSE.

Sponsorship helps to ensure that our events and initiatives are successful and impactful. Contact us to learn more about how you and your business can join the fight against substance misuse.



“Celebrating 75 Years of Commitment”

Since our last publication, The Council has been busy working out in WNY!

We have loved connecting with and meeting so many amazing community members during our recent prevention efforts. Check out all the fun below and keep an eye out for more upcoming community events!

COMMUNITY RESOURCE DAY AT JOHNIE B. WILEY PAVILION



Our Student Assistance Program staff member Marie Kwietniewski gave out prevention goodie bags at our summer food giveaway.

Executive Director Robin Mann, board member Bill Thomas and other volunteers prepped delicious meals to give away at our Community Day event.



THANKSGIVING MEAL GIVEAWAY WITH APS FORECLOSURE



Executive director Robin Mann and Community Program Director Vanita Jamison graciously presented our social media raffle winner with their prize.



Prevention Staff and Daytime Buffalo's host Chelsea Lovell prepared turkey dinners alongside community volunteers.



Executive director Robin Mann, Board Member Bill Thomas, Damali Thomas, and Chelsea Lovell photographed at the APS Foreclosure Turkey Dinner Giveaway event.

SENIOR MINDFULNESS AND ART WITH THE COUNCIL



Council staff Jan Burns, and mindfulness team member Monica Zucco lead mindfulness practices for senior residents on Hertel Ave.



PREVENTION CONCERT

The Council was overjoyed to have had the opportunity to put on a free community concert this past September. The concert featured several wonderful community performers, as well as Joshua Vacanti from NBC's the Voice. The event's success was in large part through the efforts of our awesome staff, and the kindness of the event's sponsors: KeyBank, Verizon, Tops Friendly Markets, Coca Cola, and the Buffalo Bills.



The Council was grateful to have the opportunity to raffle off a signed football donated through the Buffalo Bills.



Pictured are some of the amazing Prevention Council staff and community volunteers who made the concert a success!



Experienced Music Teacher, Karen Saxon began the event with a beautiful rendition of the National anthem.

PROJECT STICKER SHOCK



Director of Community-Based Programs Vanita Jamison and Council staff Lamont Pugh ran Project Sticker Shock at Tops Friendly Markets on Main and Union. This program involves providing community partners with stickers, posters, and other media warning purchasers about the penalties for furnishing alcohol to minors. These stickers are then placed on all multi-packs of beer, wine coolers, and other alcohol products that might appeal to underage drinkers.

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH JOB FAIR

Director of School-Based Programs, Ann Rossetti connected with potential applicants at the Erie County Department of Health's Job Fair.



Community members gathered on the lawn of North Park Academy in preparation for the concert.



Joshua Vacanti and his wife Sam Olewnik created beautiful music for those that attended the event.



Dancers from Studio J Dance Company entertained the crowd with their wonderful talent.



The Council thanks Meccah Gibson for sharing a beautiful spoken word during the afternoon's ceremony.

Celebrating **75** Years of Commitment

THE PREVENTION CELEBRATION BREAKFAST

On October 20th the Council held an anniversary breakfast at Templeton Landing to mark 75 years of prevention service in WNY. Partner agencies, program participants, family members and Council supporters came to acknowledge the incredible work our agency has done and continues to do. During the event The Council awarded Barbara Burns the Bill MacVicar Award for her dedication to the field. The Council also acknowledged ITAC's support in granting the coalition our Community Partner Award. The lauded prevention speaker, Carlton Hall ended the ceremony with an inspiring presentation on the importance of prevention services. See images of the morning below:



Carlton Hall captivated the morning attendees.



Congratulations to Barbara Burns on receiving the Bill MacVicar Award.



Congratulations to our friends at ITAC (It Takes a Community) Drug & Alcohol Prevention Coalition on receiving the Community Partner Award.



We are so grateful that our friends at PCA Technology came to support the hard work of The Council.



Thank you to all the incredible Prevention Council staff!

HALLOWEEN SHOP AND STROLL



Director of School-Based Programs, Ann Rossetti and prevention staff (Lamont Pugh, Karen Owens and Marie Kwietniewski) volunteered to hand out candy to trick-or-treaters during Hertel Business Association's Halloween Stroll.

Celebrating 75 Years of Commitment

2023 HOLIDAY COMMUNITY EVENTS



Left: Our Executive Director and Director of Community-Based Programs facilitating an ornament craft at the Em Tea Coffee Cup Café and the Hamlin Park Community Taxpayer's Association's Café Classic Holiday event. Right: The Buffalo Funk Fest Foundation Christmas Party For The Community.

The Council sends gratitude to all who attended our events. Thank you for being a part of our prevention family.



Prevention staff Marie Kwietniewski tabling the West Seneca National Night Out.



The Prevention Council and FBI Day at Delavan Grider Summer Camp.



The Council at the Buffalo PD District B Community Day.



Joshua Vacanti and Vanita Jamison on Daytime Buffalo with Chelsea Lovell.



The Prevention Council at The Amherst Youth and Community Coalition Data Walk.



We are going paperless in 2024!

Join our email list today and stay up-to-date with your friends at The Council.



Register via our website or email jvacanti@thepreventioncouncilec.org

STAY TUNED FOR EXCITING COMMUNITY
EVENTS AND COLLABORATIONS

COMING SOON 2024



WAYS TO STAY UP TO DATE

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR EMAILS + FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Dry January

Dry January, a growing global trend with nearly 200 million views on platforms like TikTok, involves alcohol abstinence during the month of January. The movement grants participants the opportunity to hit the reset button as they enter the New Year. The month-long challenge can present wonderful benefits to a person's health (and even finances) while serving as a reminder that alcohol doesn't have to be the default beverage when celebrating.

According to a 2022 Morning Consult poll, 1 in 5 U.S. adults said they planned to participate in Dry January. This is a 13% increase when compared to the over 2,000 legal aged Americans polled the year prior. Some alcohol alternative drink companies have even offered to reward individuals who participate in Dry January.

Not drinking alcohol even for one month can cause positive health effects. A study recently shared in BMJ Open found that abstinence from alcohol in moderate to heavy drinkers can improve insulin resistance, weight loss, sleep, and inhibit cancer-related growth factors. Past Dry January participants express that the break from alcohol also gave them insight and perspective on their habits and helped to inform any future consumption choices.

Below are some tips to help you join the movement:

- Make it visual! Create a paper chain, make a calendar, or draw a chart to mark your progress through the month. Having a small moment to acknowledge the fulfillment of each day can be a helpful push to stay motivated.
- Involve your friends! Share the challenge with your loved ones and have them join the month-long movement with you!
- Find support in the community. Lean on partners, like The Prevention Council, to give you the tools for success!
- Go at your own pace! Maybe you missed the beginning of January, is it too late to participate? No, it's never too late or too early to start making healthy choices.
- Find alternatives! Try a mocktail, or non-alcoholic beer. These options can be great ways to curb temptation. Check out the mocktail we have listed to help kick-start your Dry January!

Sparkling Cranberry Apple Cider Mocktail

Recipe:

Apple cider
Cranberry juice
Soda water
Lemon juice
Sugar in a dish (for the rim)
Lemon slice or peel (optional)

Directions: Dip the top of the flute in water and then immediately dip into sugar dish. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of apple cider to the flute. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cranberry juice to the flute. Add a splash of soda water for bubbles. Top with 1 tablespoon of lemon juice. Garnish with a lemon slice or peel (optional).

From Sunriver Resort in Sunriver, Oregon

When planning holiday festivities, celebrations and other social events, be sure to consider those who may be struggling with sobriety or participating in Dry January and offer alcohol-free alternatives and mocktails. These tasty options create a positive space for ALL of your guests to safely and comfortably participate in the fun.



1625 Hertel Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14216



OR CURRENT RESIDENT

THE PREVENTION COUNCIL OF ERIE COUNTY

The Prevention Council will deliver research driven education, prevention, intervention programs and services to promote and support the health and wellness of individuals, families and communities by focusing on solutions to alcohol and other drug misuse, addiction and unhealthy behaviors.

The Prevention Council will provide leadership to fight the stigma associated with addiction through public education, policy awareness, liaison with health professionals and recovering communities, by providing objective information, referral, and linkages to those in need.

Support The Council

As we continue to serve the community, please become an official "supporter" of our mission!

Your tax deductible contribution can be made at any time of the year:

- \$ 10.00
- \$ 25.00
- \$ 50.00
- \$ 75.00
- \$100.00
- Other \$_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____



Thank you for supporting The Prevention Council community efforts!

Please mail your tax deductible contribution to: The Prevention Council, 1625 Hertel Ave., Buffalo, N.Y. 14216

Under contract with the Erie County Department of Mental Health. Funded by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, school districts and municipalities throughout Erie County, individuals, corporations and community service organizations. Member agency of the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County.

