



**FACES & VOICES
OF RECOVERY**

• **AMERICA HONORS** •

RECOVERY

GALA DINNER

SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

www.ahr.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

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LETTER FROM CEO

Greetings friends and colleagues,

Welcome to the 2024 America Honors Recovery Gala Dinner! This is a time to remember the trailblazers who came before us who have been inspirational leaders in the recovery advocacy movement. Advocates like Lisa Mojer-Torres and Joel Hernandez made history by standing up for the dignity and rights of people with substance use disorders and challenging discriminatory policies that keep people from getting well. Tonight, we recognize leaders who are carrying the torch, inspiring us to stand up for recovery, and lighting the way for our future.

The work we do at Faces & Voices of Recovery is only possible through the generous support of our sponsors, donors and members tonight and throughout the year. Advocating and sharing our stories is the cornerstone of our mission to change the way addiction and recovery are understood and embraced through advocacy, education and leadership. As we gather here for our annual fundraiser, it's a time to unify around the values embodied by our awardees and those who came before them.

Thank you for being here tonight as we honor our incredible awardees.

Yours in recovery,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patty McCarthy". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Patty McCarthy
Chief Executive Officer

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LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR

Dear Guests and Awardees,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the America Honors Recovery Gala Dinner. Tonight, we gather to celebrate the incredible strides made in the recovery movement and to honor those whose dedication and contributions have paved the way for transformative change.

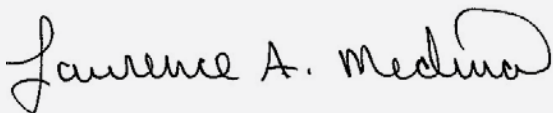
For over 27 years, I have witnessed firsthand the power of hope, healing, and the tireless efforts of individuals and organizations committed to supporting those in recovery. This evening, we celebrate not only the remarkable achievements of our awardees but also the collective progress we have made as a community. Your presence here is a testament to the strength and resilience that define our movement.

As we reflect on our shared mission to de-stigmatize addiction and champion recovery, let us be reminded of the profound impact that advocacy, education, and leadership can have on creating a more inclusive and supportive world. Together, we continue to elevate diverse voices and foster an environment where every individual affected by substance use disorder can recover with dignity and on their own terms.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to share this special evening with all of you. Your commitment to this cause is both inspiring and vital, and I look forward to celebrating our collective achievements and envisioning a future filled with hope and continued progress.

Thank you for being here, and for all that you do.

Warm regards,



Lawrence Medina
Board of Directors, Chair



MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Alonzo Bodden

A regular panel member on NPR's Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me, Alonzo Bodden has been making audiences around the country laugh for close to 30 years. Alonzo starred in his fourth stand-up special, Heavy Lightweight, which premiered exclusively on Amazon Prime Video. His first big comedy break came when he was on the "New Faces of Comedy" showcase at the Just for Laughs Festival in Montreal, but it was as the season three winner of NBC's Last Comic Standing, where Alonzo was first introduced to America. Since then, he has starred in two comedy specials for Showtime: Historically Incorrect and Who's Paying Attention.

He's also made appearances on CBS' Ghosts, ABC's Dr. Ken and Fresh Off the Boat and Californication. Movie credits include Bringing Down The House, Scary Movie 4 and The Onion Movie. Talk shows, Dr. Phil, The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Late Night with Conan O'Brien, Comedy Central's The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore.

A car and motorcycle aficionado, Bodden hosted Speed Channel's 101 Cars You Must Drive and has joined Jay Leno for several off-road trips on his CNBC series Leno's Garage. He was also a field correspondent on Animal Nation with Anthony Anderson, and a contributor on the Science Channel's How to Build Everything. Alonzo released his fifth comedy CD titled Man Overboard. Alonzo has been performing on Jazz Cruises and hosted the Capital Jazz Festival. His comedy riffs have been compared to jazz solos by some of the greatest jazz artists from Marcus Miller to Robert Glasper to Dee Dee Bridgewater.



FEATURED SPEAKERS & PRESENTERS

Tom Coderre

With decades of public, private, and non-profit service, Mr. Coderre is the first person in recovery to lead SAMHSA. Mr. Coderre's career has been significantly influenced by his personal journey and a philosophy that acknowledges the essential role peer recovery support services play in helping people with mental and substance use disorders rebuild their lives.

In his role as SAMHSA's Region 1 Administrator, Mr. Coderre led the prioritization of prevention, treatment and recovery services under the strain of COVID-19. He reconvened the Federal Interagency Workgroup on Opioids and as overdoses spiked throughout 2020, he brought the region together to identify programmatic and policy solutions to respond. He also formed a collaborative to unite federal agencies on serious mental illness and serious emotional disturbance to leverage partnerships to increase services and provide hope for people suffering. In an effort to address structural racism, Mr. Coderre launched the Diversity Inclusion Project Showcase to ensure equity in the distribution of resources across New England by introducing organizations who work in BIPOC communities to funders. He has supported federally recognized tribes and has been working with tribal leaders to open the first indigenous wellness center east of the Mississippi River.



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Dr. Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP

Dr. Rahul Gupta is the first medical doctor to serve as the Director of National Drug Control Policy and lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), a component of the Executive Office of the President. ONDCP coordinates the nation's \$43 billion drug budget and federal policies, including prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery support, and supply reduction.

Through his work as a physician, a state and local leader, an educator, and a senior leader of a national nonprofit organization, Dr. Gupta has dedicated his career to improving public health and public safety.

A board-certified internist, Dr. Gupta has been a practicing primary care physician for more than 25 years, and has served in private practice and public health in towns as small as 1,900 residents and cities as large as 25 million. He has served as a local public health official and as the West Virginia Health Commissioner under two governors, where he brought together public health, law enforcement, healthcare, faith-based, business, and other community partners to solve local problems in novel and innovative ways.

As the state's Chief Health Officer, he led the opioid crisis response and launched a number of pioneering public health initiatives, including the Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Birthscore program to identify high-risk infants, and the groundbreaking statewide Social Autopsy, which examined the lives of overdose victims to determine the factors that led to their deaths and what services could have prevented their deaths. This led the state to expand access to naloxone as well as treatment services including those for incarcerated individuals in order to save lives and help people transition back into society. He supported the expansion of harm reduction programs to more than a dozen sites across the state. He was also instrumental in expanding state-of-the-art, comprehensive and integrative medical and behavioral health programs for pregnant and postpartum women.

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Elizabeth Edwards

Considered a thought leader in the recovery movement, Elizabeth Edwards is a singer songwriter, recording artist and a person in long-term recovery from substance use disorder. She is a speaker and advocate for recovery causes and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Faces & Voices of Recovery. Her message of hope, healing, and transformation in songs like House of Mirrors, Child of Light and Clean have garnered her a loyal fan base. Elizabeth co-wrote You'll Always Be My Hero, a song dedicated to the families and friends of those lost but not forgotten to the opioid crisis which she sang on National Overdose Awareness Day at the White House Ellipse in 2018.

Elizabeth is the Host of www.GivingVoicetoRecovery.com, a podcast and YouTube Channel that celebrates those who have found purpose in using their voice to change perceptions and challenge stereotypes while inspiring hope and providing awareness to those still seeking solutions.

For more information about Elizabeth Edwards please visit givingvoicetorecovery.com.



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Ashton Marra

Ashton Marra is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of Reporting on Addiction, a collaborative project working to train professional and student journalists in solutions-focused journalism methods that help break cycles of stigma often perpetuated through media coverage of our communities.

Ashton is also a teaching associate professor in the West Virginia University Reed School of Media and Communications, where she teaches broadcast, writing, investigative and community-engaged journalism courses, and is the executive editor of 100 Days in Appalachia, a national Edward R. Murrow award-winning publication. There, she oversees the work of a team of editors, contributors and reporters across Appalachia to create content by Appalachians for Appalachians.



Jonathan JK Stoltman, PhD

Jonathan JK Stoltman, PhD is Co-Director of Reporting on Addiction, an effort to improve the accuracy and empathy of news coverage about addiction and Director of the Opioid Policy Institute, a research think tank that uses multi-pronged approaches to better understand gaps in treatment and recovery services.

In 2019, he completed his PhD in Lifespan Developmental Psychology from West Virginia University and has worked as a researcher focusing on opioid addiction treatment and recovery since 2013. During this time, Jonathan's academic work has appeared in leading journals, conferences, and media outlets.





OUR AWARDS

DISTINGUISHED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Distinguished Lifetime Achievement in honor of William L. White, recognizes significant contributions made to the recovery movement through outstanding advocacy, research, or policy reform. William L. White, renowned recovery historian and author, made sustained contributions to the field since 1969 and has inspired countless individuals to learn from our history while mobilizing advocates and advancing the New Recovery Advocacy Movement (NRAM) with integrity, authenticity, and servant leadership.

EXCELLENCE IN RECOVERY JOURNALISM AWARD

The Excellence in Recovery Journalism Award, presented in partnership with Reporting on Addiction, honors journalists who courageously illuminate stories of addiction and recovery, shedding light on the challenges and triumphs of individuals battling adversity. This prestigious accolade recognizes their dedication to investigative news journalism and compassionate, fact-based storytelling, inspiring empathy, challenging stigmas, and catalyzing positive change.

FEDERAL CHAMPION AWARD

Many agencies across the Federal government have an incredibly important role in leading public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation and to improve the lives of individuals living with mental and substance use disorders, and their families. Addiction crosses to many agencies to mention. The Federal Champion Award recognizes individuals within the Federal government who have demonstrated outstanding, transformational leadership.

ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Advocate of the Year Award recognize outstanding advocacy leadership. This award is presented in honor of the legacies of Lisa Mojer-Torres and Joel Hernandez, who stood up for the dignity and rights of all people impacted by substance use disorders.

Lisa Mojer-Torres was instrumental in the founding of Faces & Voices of Recovery as the first board chair. Her inquiring and challenging mind offered new insights, and, by example, she encouraged us to stand up and speak out on behalf of all pathways to recovery, including the use of medications. Her leadership contributed to a significant shift in understanding addiction recovery and the need to end discriminatory policies and practices.

Joel Hernandez was a champion whose protest in the face of discrimination in the Hernandez v Raytheon legal case inspired us all. This historic case has had a profound impact on employment laws for people with substance use disorder histories.

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AWARD RECIPIENTS



Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award
Sis Wenger



Federal Champion Award
Peter Gaumond



Excellence in Recovery Journalism Award
Elyse Wild



Advocate of the Year Award
Rhonda L. Johnson



Advocate of the Year Award
Kristina Padilla

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Sis Wenger

For over 34 years Sis Wenger was at the helm of the National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA). Her tireless advocacy on behalf of children growing up in families hurt by addiction has put a spotlight on NACoA's mission in powerful ways. Her work with the White House Office on National Drug Control Policy, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Addiction Policy Forum, Faces and Voices of Recovery, and the Police, Treatment and Community Collaborative, to name a few, helped to remind all about the challenges and needs of children and families.

Bringing a wealth of experience, insight and wisdom, Sis excelled in her various roles as Board Member, Board Chair, and finally the Executive Director, President and CEO (1996-2022). Sis spearheaded partnerships with system specific leaders to identify core competencies for primary care doctors, clergy, early childhood educators and social workers. Together they established guidelines for professional training and support materials, including manuals, handbooks and curriculum in each area. This empowered professionals to be more effective in supporting the people they serve who are impacted by alcohol and drug use. One shining example approach is the Clergy Education and Training Program.

Under her leadership, Sis oversaw the development and updated versions of the Children's Program Kit and guided the management of Celebrating Families. These two programs are offered both nationwide and in other parts of the world. Countless hurting children and their families have been immensely helped by these powerful models of healing and hope. These evidence-based programs and proven products are the heartbeat of NACoA.

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Peter Gaumond

Peter Gaumond joined the Office of National Drug Control (ONDCP) in October 2010 as the Chief of the Recovery Branch. He currently serves as a Senior Policy Analyst supporting the National Cocaine Coordination Group (NCCG) and helps coordinate the activities of the NCCG and the ONDCP Public Health, Education, and Treatment Group. In this capacity, Peter provides expertise on a wide range of public health policy and regulatory issues. As Chief of the Recovery Branch, Peter helped frame the federal government's approach to improving long-term recovery outcomes, assisting in the development of national policy goals and objectives and creating and implementing plans to achieve them. Peter has more than 25 years' experience in the substance use disorder treatment and recovery field.



Prior to joining ONDCP, Mr. Gaumond served as a Senior Associate at Altarum Institute, where he provided technical assistance to states and tribes implementing initiatives funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Access to Recovery Program, and at Abt Associates, where he served as Project Manager for the SAMHSA Partners for Recovery Initiative. Before moving to the Washington, DC area, Peter served as the Administrator of Program Development for the Illinois Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA). In that role, he was charged with improving systems and services, and overseeing a wide range of initiatives, programs and projects budgeted at approximately \$30 million annually. He led a team of 10 who applied for and managed federal grants and who implemented and managed innovative projects funded by the state, such as the development of co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder treatment networks, compulsive gambling treatment, and cross-system, cross-agency teams to serve homeless people with substance use, mental health, or co-occurring disorders. He also represented DASA on the Executive Committee of the Chicago Continuum of Care.

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Elyse Wild

Elyse Wild is a Senior Editor for Native News Online. She covers health equity in Indian Country through a solutions-focused lens, with an emphasis on the overdose epidemic and Missing and Murdered Indigenous People. Her work has been published in The Guardian, Tribal Business News, McClatchy and NPR’s Washington State affiliate station. She is currently working on a Pulitzer Center for Journalism-funded series examining how culture affects addiction treatment in Native communities, from prevention to harm reduction to recovery.



Who We Are

Community Bridges, Inc. is the premiere fully integrated healthcare provider of behavioral health services.

Our Mission

To Maintain the Dignity of Human Life

Our Values

Service, Humility, Empowerment

Our Purpose

To be an Agent of Positive Change in Our Communities

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Rhonda L. Johnson

Rhonda L. Johnson, a native Washingtonian, serves as the CEO, Recovery Coach, and Certified Peer Specialist Consultant at Now Hope 2 Reality, LLC, a Certified Business Enterprise in Washington, DC.

Rhonda is a proud mother of six adult children, three of whom are by marriage, and is blessed with 13 grandchildren, as well as her 'Bamn Bamn.' She is affectionately known as 'G.G.' (Gorgeous Grandma), Her personal journey of overcoming depression, addiction, and despair has been profoundly supported by the unwavering belief and love of her three children, Jeffrey, Jamar, and Jasmine. Their support inspires her mantra: Never give up; there is help, hope, and treatment out there. You are not alone.



As a published author, her works include *Memoirs of an Addict: Fact or Fiction*, *Mary/Pumpkin Recovery Girl*, *The H.O.P.E. INFLUENCER'S Diary*, and *The Neuroplasticity, Implicit Bias Theory Explained*. Each book acts as a catalyst for initiating essential conversations about co-occurring disorders and the generational and historical trauma from the crack cocaine epidemic, including its ongoing effects on today's youth, from a peer's perspective.

Rhonda founded the DC Walk 4 ReCoverY in 2018 to raise awareness of co-occurring disorders and advocate for integrative treatment. Held near the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall in 2018, 2019, 2023, and 2024. This event brings together advocates and organizations from the DMV area to promote awareness, education, hope and thinking-outside-the box solutions. With significant media coverage from *The Washington Post* and *The Washington Informer*, the walk highlights that recovery involves more than just overcoming addiction—it also addresses the root causes and offers hope for those facing trauma, grief, and mental health challenges.

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Kristina Padilla

Kristina Padilla is world-renowned as a national speaker, author, educator, and advisor, advocating the principle of “living out loud.” They foster safer environments nationwide by conducting 2S/LGBTQIA+ educational talks and training sessions globally. They are also the Vice President of Education and Strategic Development for CCAPP and NBHAP.

Mx. Padilla has a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice Administration, and a Master’s Degree in Counseling Psychology with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy. They are a Licensed Advanced Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor (LAADC) and graduated from the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGIU) in 2023. Mx. Padilla is a Doctoral student working toward a Ph.D. in Psychology, specializing in the Psychology of Gender & Sexual Fluidity.



Mx. Padilla is on multiple Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Peer Support, and LGBTQIA2+ boards nationwide and profoundly impacts providing Training, Advocacy, and Education to all professionals. Mx. Padilla obtained their “Higher Education Teaching Certificate ” at Harvard, The Derek Bok Center For Teaching and Learning in July 2020, and their Women Leadership Program (WLP) Certificate from Yale University School of Management in 2022.

Mx. Padilla owns two businesses, www.Rainbow Global Collective.com and www.Native American 2 spirit Sacred Circle.com, which provide consulting and training worldwide. Kristina is a parent of a beautiful girl named Karisma who is 8 years old. They are Indigenous, Western Apache, Zuni, Hopi, Cherokee, Aztec, 2Spirit-Transgender, Gender-Fluid, non-binary, same-gender-loving person. Kristina’s pronouns are They/Them & Ze/Zir, and they go by the prefix Mx. Padilla.

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HILL DAY June 11, 2025
Meet with elected officials
and their staffers.



JUNE
8 - 11

WASHINGTON, DC

2025



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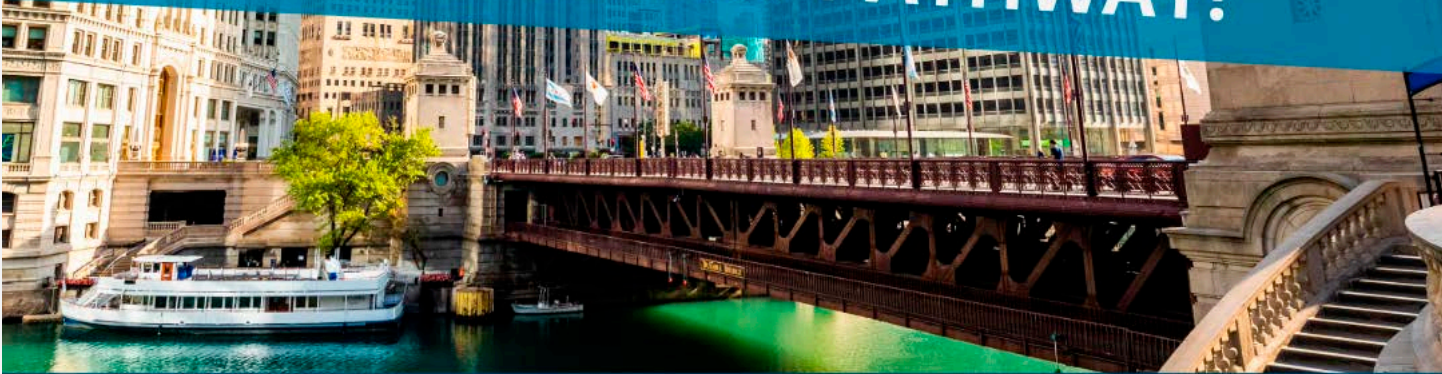
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SEPTEMBER 21
CHICAGO, IL

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TURNING THE HEROIN HIGHWAY INTO
THE RECOVERY PATHWAY!



For More info: chicagorecovery.org/national-rally-for-recovery-hub-event



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