

Meet Drug-Free Task Force Member Rocky Schwartz

Family Support Coordinator,
Sharing the Hope Family Support Center



rschwartz@njprevent.com



CAREER OVERVIEW

Rocky has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and is a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist. She is also certified in CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training), Wellness Coaching, Smart Recovery for Family and Friends and Yoga. Rocky is a staunch behavioral health advocate, fueled by lessons learned through personal experience and success in navigating the system. She has testified three times before the New Jersey Assembly, once on Capitol Hill, met with the NJ Attorney General's staff and testified to the President's Commission on Combatting Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis.

SERVICE TO THE TASK FORCE

As the Family Support Coordinator for the Sharing the Hope Family Support Center, Rocky is dedicated to providing support & resources for family members who have a loved one with a substance use disorder. It's her contribution to the Drug-Free Task Force, however, that is unmatched when discussing strategies in prevention and projected effectiveness of initiatives. Rocky's voice is our connection to both those in recovery and the families of those battling substance use disorder. Her feedback on action plan ideas, implementation methods as well as her immeasurable consideration and empathy for youth and their families, is essential to the pulse of our vision and mission.



HUNTERDON
COUNTY'S
HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES
INITIATIVE



Our 5 Key Questions with Rocky Schwartz

1

DO YOU HAVE ANY HOBBIES OR FAVORITE TRAVEL DESTINATIONS? IF SO, WHAT/WHERE ARE THEY?

Digging in the dirt in my vegetable and flower garden from Spring to Fall fills my soul. I love to cook vegetarian meals and there is nothing more satisfying than picking my own herbs and vegetables in my backyard. I also love to plant different types of sunflowers from seeds I purchase from specialty catalogs. I enjoy giving fresh bouquets to my friends, colleagues and neighbors. I also love to bake and tend to "stress bake" when the going gets tough.

2

WHAT IS AN INTERESTING FACT ABOUT YOU?

I grew up in Dallas, Texas and attended college in Colorado and Austin, Texas. I moved to New Jersey because the treatment center I was a patient in knew I would not stay in recovery if I did not move far away from my family. An intern from NJ was working in Texas and told the staff about a halfway house in Morristown. Thus, I moved to New Jersey in 1982 with the intention of staying 3 months. The rest is history.

3

IF YOU COULD EAT A MEAL WITH SOMEONE PAST OR PRESENT, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

My beloved Granny, Mom, Dad and sister – I miss them all so much and think of them every day. My grandmother lived in Texas for 94 years and loved to cook yummy Southern food. My sister was a sushi chef and owned a restaurant in Salt Lake City and my Mom was a gourmet cook. We loved to eat and talk about food.

4

WHY ARE YOU INVOLVED IN OUR COALITION? WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

I'm passionate about recovery and the reduction of stigma. I am a woman in recovery for 40 years and also a family member in recovery. There is a saying that "addiction runs in families". However, I believe that "recovery runs in families too". I am grateful to be in recovery and sadly lost my beloved sister to an overdose at the age of 39, my best childhood friend 11 months later and my cousin from suicide.

Specifically, I want to reduce barriers to treatment in our county and eliminate the stigma of substance use disorder. In my opinion, the COVID-19 pandemic reduced some of the stigma of mental health disorders because it became "normalized". We have a long way to go with SUD.

5

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE OUR COALITION MORE EFFECTIVE AND CONTINUE TO GROW?

I think more middle school involvement would be helpful. I started using at the age of 12 and that is very typical among people in recovery. We need more prevention in the younger grades because high school is almost too late. I also think it would be helpful to have local town council and recreation department members. We need to create more recreational opportunities for kids to have fun (not sports-related). We need recreation centers and safe hangout places.