

2017 NAMI-NYS Award Recipients

LEADER IN MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS **Ron Powers**

In his book, No One Cares About Crazy People: The Chaos and Heartbreak of Mental Health in America, Pulitzer Prize winning author Ron Powers has candidly detailed how serious mental illness has impacted his family along with providing an in depth journalistic look at America's history of failing to provide adequate mental health care. Since the book's release, Mr. Powers has continued to project both his journalistic and advocacy voice to demonstrate how the lack of appropriate psychiatric services and the overpopulation of people with mental illness in the correctional system is one of the greatest social injustices of our time.

This award will be presented during dinner on Friday.

LEADER IN MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS **Keith O'Neil**

The special teams captain of the Super Bowl champion Indianapolis Colts is the author of the new book Under My Helmet: A Football Player's Lifelong Battle with Bipolar Disorder. The book demonstrates that mental illnesses can affect even the strongest of people. Along with writing the book, Keith has told his story in schools throughout western New York, letting kids know that mental health issues impact everybody and that it is ok to talk about them and ask for help. Keith has also become a good friend to NAMI-NYS, serving as the Grand Marshal of the inaugural NAMIWalks NYS and working with NAMI Buffalo.

This award will be presented during dinner on Friday.

LEADER IN MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS **Matt Butler**

Weaving personal experience with a timeless style, Matt Butler brings honesty and openness to his classic approach to songwriting. His critically acclaimed album Reckless Son chronicles his experience with mental health and substance abuse issues and many of the songs are achingly honest depictions of how his illness impacted not just him but members of his family as well. His songs give a voice to the experiences of many NAMI-NYS members. Matt has also committed himself to reaching the audiences who need to hear these songs of recovery the most, as his Recovery Tour has led him to performing inside correctional institutions, rehab facilities and psychiatric centers.

This award will be presented during dinner on Friday.

AFFILIATE of the YEAR AWARD
NAMI NYC Staten Island

This award recognizes the tremendous work NAMI NYC Staten Island has done for decades, providing NAMI Signature Programming, as well as raising the awareness of mental health issues throughout Staten Island. NAMI NYC Staten Island has also consistently projected a strong advocacy voice as many of their members travel a great distance to participate in our annual Legislative Advoacy Day. More recently, NAMI NYC Staten Island has also done a great deal of work to reform the criminal justice-mental illness interface. This includes partnering with local police stations and engaging them in the Ribbon Awareness Campaign as well as speaking up on the need for increased CIT trained officers throughout New York City.

This award will presented during dinner on Saturday.

OUTSTANDING SMALL AFFILIATE AWARD
NAMI Orange County NY

This award recognizes the outstanding work NAMI Orange County, NY does to provide NAMI programming as well as raise awareness of mental health issues throughout Orange County. The advancements that NAMI Orange County, NY has made clearly demonstrate that you do not need to be a large affiliate to have a huge impact on your community. Along with the tremendous amount of educational and support programs the affiliate offers, they have also made great inroads in the criminal justice system, including having an office inside the Mid-Hudson Forensic facility, ensuring that "forensic families" also receive the support they need.

This award will be presented during lunch on Saturday.

Legislative Champion Award
United States Representative John Katko (R-NY-24)

Congressman John Katko has been a true friend to NAMI-NYS, NAMI Syracuse and has constantly provided a passionate voice on behalf of individuals and families impacted by mental illness in Washington. His commitment to addressing the failures of the mental health system is personal for Congressman Katko, as his family has been a victim of such failures. Congressman Katko lost his niece to suicide, and since taking office he has partnered with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to address the fractures in mental health service delivery. Congressman Katko has included NAMI Syracuse in his efforts. In 2016, he formed a federal and state task force on improving adolescent mental health services with Assemblyman William Magnarelli (D-129) and involved NAMI Syracuse in task force activities. The task force worked for two years and produced an extensive report on this issue. This past summer, Representative Katko met twice with members of NAMI-NYS in his Washington office. Congressman Katko voted against the American Health Care Act (AHCA) citing the negative impact it would have on people with mental illness and other pre-existing conditions.

This award will be presented during dinner on Friday.

MULTICULTURAL AWARD
Sidney Hankerson, MD, New York State Psychiatric Institute

Dr. Hankerson is a true leader in raising mental health awareness within and bringing psychiatric services to multicultural communities throughout the world. As an Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons and the New York State Psychiatric Institute, Dr. Hankerson conducts research to train clergy how to counsel depressed community members. Dr. Hankerson has become an active member of The Journey Church and has traveled to East London and South Africa on multiple occasions to help children impacted by HIV/AIDS. He is also instrumental in bringing the Community Conversations series which feature mental health and community leaders discussing mental health topics in churches and community centers in Harlem.

This award will be presented during dinner on Saturday.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AWARD
LT. Willie Flack III, Albany Police Department

Lt. Flack has served the Albany Police Department for more than twenty years. He is currently the department's Crisis Intervention Team administrator, where he is constantly striving to increase the understanding of psychiatric issues within the department and improve the way police interact with people with mental health and substance abuse issues. One of his initiatives was incorporating mental health awareness training in the Albany Police Academy. Lt. Flack also works with Albany County as the co-director of the county's CIT efforts, which conduct training for police and correction officers from departments throughout the county twice a year. Lt. Flack has constantly involved NAMI-NYS in both the academy and county wide trainings.

This award will be presented during lunch on Friday.

MEDIA AWARD
Erin Billups, NY1 News

Ms. Billups is the health reporter for NY1 News in New York City. Prior to her current role, Ms. Billups served as host of the weekly "City Health Beat" program. In both roles, Ms. Billups has consistently provided accurate and honest accounts of the insufficient amount of mental health programs, the experiences of those living with a mental illness and the progress made by the NYC Thrive initiative. She has also moderated mental health symposiums held by the Manhattan Institute, including a recent one with Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz, Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, U.S. Department Of Health And Human Services

This award will be presented during dinner on Friday.

MAX GABRIEL VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH AWARD
Sean Tuckey, Stratton VA

Sean Tuckey currently works as the Health Science Specialist at the Albany VA Behavioral VA Care (BVAC) Line. Mr. Tuckey has been with the Stratton VA since 2010. He works with the OEF/OIF/OND (Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn) program, Chemical Dependence Rehab Program, Outpatient Behavioral Health clinic, and Emergency Room as well as providing coverage for the Veterans Justice Outreach Program. Mr. Tuckey, a veteran himself, was in the Marine Reserves from 2000-2008, serving with Bravo Co.-8th Tank Battalion and Echo Co.-4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. Tuckey deployed in 2003 with Delta Co.-2nd Tank battalion as part of the 5th Marine Regimental Combat team during the initial combat operations of Operation Iraqi Freedom, which participated in the longest mechanized assault in Marine history. From 2006 to 2008 he functioned as a Platoon Sergeant for 45 Marines.

This award will be presented during lunch on Friday.

MURIEL SHEPHERD AWARD
Paul Klein, NAMI Rensselaer

This award recognizes Paul's longtime dedication to NAMI-NYS and his efforts in providing education and support services to countless individuals and families in the upper Hudson Valley. Paul's commitment to the NAMI-NYS mission has led him to leading two separate affiliates: NAMI Green and NAMI Rensselaer at various times. Both affiliates expanded their membership and program offering under Paul's leadership. Paul is also a teacher and state trainer for several programs assisting both individuals and families. Paul also previously served as the Program Director for NAMI-NYS.

This award will presented during dinner on Saturday.

YOUNG ADULT LEADER AWARD
Stella Lemel, NAMI Westchester

Stella Lemel is a shining example of how young adults can be an impactful voice in their community. Stella served as the president of the NAMI on Campus Club at Westchester Community College. She constantly made her mark on the campus community through not only her passion for mental health but through her innovative and creative programs and outreach. As the club's advisor said of her, "Stella is always thinking of ways to reach our community and include them in the conversation and movement towards destigmatizing mental illness." Stella graduated from Westchester Community College's rigorous nursing program in May 2017 and is now continuing her studies at Oswego University.

This award will presented during lunch on Saturday.

PROGRAM AWARD
Christine Vanasse, NAMI Rockland

Christine Vanasse has been a dedicated volunteer for NAMI Rockland for more than 17 years, where she has been steadfastly committed to developing and implementing Signature Programs. She currently serves as the chair of the affiliate's Family-to-Family committee, where she oversees and monitors the program. Chris spends many hours meeting with teachers to assist them in preparing for the course, helping with printing and assembling course materials and subsequently, discussing any problems that may arise. She also promotes and explains the course to potential students. Her work has led to Family-to-Family being offered every Saturday at the Rockland Psychiatric Center. Chris is also a widow of a veteran and has now begun offering the NAMI Homefront program.

This award will presented during lunch on Saturday.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
Ceceile McIntosh Green

This award recognizes Ceceile McIntosh Green's dedication to the NAMI-NYS mission upon the completion of two consecutive terms on the NAMI-NYS Board of Directors. Ceceile has been an officer of the board in her role as Secretary. In her time on the board, Ceceile has helped NAMI-NYS expand our outreach to multicultural communities as chair of the Multicultural Committee. She also started and chaired the Managed Care Committee. Additionally, Ceceile has served as the Education Conference Committee Chair for several years.

This award will presented during dinner on Saturday.

NAMI-NYS expresses our deepest gratitude to all of this year's awardees. Thank you for all you do to help better the lives of individuals and families impacted by mental illness.

HOPE STARTS WITH YOU!