

## The President's Corner:

## Stand Up Advocacy Day 2019 Exponents Strong - Speaking Truth to Power!



On Tuesday, March 19, 2019, the Exponents Family boarded a bus at 6:00AM and traveled to our state's capital in Albany to bring the message of increased funding for substance use disorder treatment services. Fifty three Exponents participants from several of our programs and guests boarded a bus hosted by FOR-NY with Joe Turner, President & CEO at the helm "This was our opportunity to get a seat at the legislative table where decisions are made. Our motto throughout the day was "Nothing About Us, Without Us"! In addition to Joe, the Exponents staff

included Victor Velasquez, Kyla Williams, Yvonne Soto and Rafael Acosta.

After an initial rally at the State Convention Center, the Exponents Delegation made legislative informational appointments at the offices of NYS Assemblyman Marcos Crespo and Assemblyman Pichardo, both of the Bronx. During the meetings, our Exponents participants articulated the need for increased access to treatment, funding for housing services and the need to provide Medicated Assisted Treatment in both jails and prison.

"My name is Jose H, I live in your Assembly District, and I am urging you to provide for funding for substance use services to save lives, like mine" - Jose H - Exponents GED participant, addressing

staff of Assemblyman Pichardo.

"I find hope, recovery and love at Exponents when I am there every day. But then I have to go to sleep in a shelter at night, where it is unsafe and filled with drug use...All because we don't have adequate funding for housing vouchers. Those shelters are in your District, Assemblyman Crespo, and we need you to increase housing subsidies". - Patricia K - Exponents CASAC student.

Exponents continues to advance advocacy for compassionate treatment services and racial justice in the provision of health care services as the key ingredients to recovery and life transformation.

Joseph Turner, JD  
President/CEO



# Great News @ Exponents!

## *Evidence that Passion = Interest = Learning = Success From intern to CASAC to MSW: Reaching For The Stars*

Exponents' takes a personal interest in the growth and development of all participants, peers, students and staff. Many former participants have gone on to employment within the organization and many members of the Exponents family have entered supportive and management roles.

Additionally, Exponents Center has provided exceptional training and learning services/opportunities for individuals from all over New York City. Shaniqua Viola Varner came to Exponents with a deep seeded passion to help individuals suffering from addiction. She excelled in her CASAC training courses and expressed a "hunger" for learning how to support and guide individuals in making significant changes in their lives. She applied for and received the opportunity to gain experience as an Intern/Volunteer with Exponents' Outpatient Treatment Program. During her time as an intern, Viola demonstrated the ability: to help participants move towards positive change, express compassion and empathy for participant's problems, refrained from judgment and communicated positive regard, remained current on research and innovative clinical interventions needed to help her clients and remained authentic and genuine in her work with clients.

Viola then made the life changing decision to return to school to pursue a college degree. She then began her educational journey in Human Services. Within 3 months, Viola was offered and accepted a part time position as a counselor for the program. 8 months later, she had earned a full time position. In 18 months, Viola achieved an Associates Degree in Human Services and went on to obtain her Bachelor's degree. She was able to utilize her experience working with our client population to enhance her studies, and utilized her education to enhance her clinical skills.

In no time, Viola had achieved her Bachelor's degree and wasted no time in enrolling in the Master's Program for Social Work at Hunter College. Struggling with full time employment, full time graduate program participation and motherhood, Viola surpassed expectations and never wavered in her caring demeanor at work going above and beyond to support program participants and her fellow treatment team members. Viola also diligently worked on studying for her CASAC exam, passing with flying colors. In May 2019, Viola achieved her Master's Degree in Social Work and is now the Assistant Director of Treatment Services. We are fortunate to have Ms. Varner on our team.



## *Volunteer Shout Outs!*

- My name is Leslie Aguilar, I am a photographer who loves to shoot real and raw photography. I believe that every picture represents people's inner beauty, and even through a bad situation, there is light. I myself have struggled with a lot of medical issues with my family and myself, but see this as an opportunity to expose that we are all human, and we should strive to live to the fullest.

- I am currently in college pursuing a career in healthcare. I got into photography because I suffer from anxiety, and I'm not afraid to say it. Photography helped me express myself. I love traveling and meeting new people; with my photography comes my story, as is such with every photo.

- During the course of several months, I've interned at Exponents. The faculty is inspiring and riveting; they are helping their clients have a better future, and focus on their goals. I went on a trip with Exponents to promote "Advocacy Day", and at first I was nervous, but the people I met--from faculty to everyday people--were so amazing and friendly; each person was willing to tell their story to encourage each other that there is a better future. I would also like to give a big thanks to Patrice Bocci who gave me the opportunity to join her team as a volunteer photographer!



Contact Leslie at  
[leslievictoria99@gmail.com](mailto:leslievictoria99@gmail.com)  
and find her on  
Instagram @leslies\_lenz!

## OUR MISSION

*We are a nonprofit organization located in the heart of New York City compassionately dedicated to serving those impacted by HIV/AIDS, substance use, incarceration and behavioral health challenges. We deliver these services through a client-centered, strength-based approach which greatly improves health outcomes and promotes overall wellness in our communities.*

# What's Going On!

## Womyn's Her-story Event

On March 29th, Exponents culminated a month-long celebration of Womyn's Herstory month. A networking and panel discussion took place. We were honored to have our very own LGBT Coordinator, Nicole S. Bowles, International HIV Activist, Michelle Lopez, and the Assistant Commissioner-Bureau of HIV Prevention and Control/NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene participate and share their insights and perspectives on womyn finding, building and sharing power. The discussion was moderated by our Executive Vice-President/COO, Samantha Lopez-Fernandez, a powerful woman of color herself. Other events during the course of the month included targeted, gender-specific HIV/HCV testing, raffles, and a viewing and powerful discussion of the film, For Colored Girls.

Donald Powell,  
Sr. Director of Policy & Development

## The Third Way!

Third Way is a 90 day pre treatment track following a harm reduction model. Participants engage in classroom style groups covering topics including but not limited to communication, family, mental health & addiction. Throughout this time participants engage in a journey of self discovery while developing bonds within their peers. Upon successful completion participants are honored in a graduation ceremony where they present their recovery stories in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. Third Way continues with post graduate groups and Outpatient Drug Treatment programming. Cycle 9 is now underway set to graduate August 2019. We are extremely proud of Cycle 8 & all previous graduates who are now and forever Exponents' Family!



Viola Varner  
Assistant Director, Drug Treatment  
Outpatient Program

## Expanding to Bring Change!

The response to address the opioid epidemic in the US thus far has been inadequate. Effective treatments are underutilized and access to services limited, resulting in the ongoing cycle of drug use, overdose and in some cases even death. Chipping away to break this cycle requires integrative efforts.

As a fortunate grantee of SAMHSA, Exponents has been able to expand our efforts to bring about change by providing integrated and comprehensive services. The use of medication-assisted treatments (MATs) is an extremely effective intervention used in treating opioid abuse. Exponents makes MAT options available to individuals struggling with opioid use disorder. Medications available to treat opioid abuse include bu-

prenorphine and extended-release naltrexone. These meds work to block euphoria created by opiates, reducing opioid cravings and withdrawal symptoms giving the individual's brain the opportunity to recover from their addiction.

We recognize the additional challenges experienced by individuals being released from jails and prisons. Formerly incarcerated individuals are at greater risk for relapse after being detained in a controlled environment, with drug overdose being the leading cause of death in this population.

Research suggests that the risk of death from drug overdose is 129 times higher in the 2 weeks after release compared to the general

public. Exponents have been providing evidence-based services to formerly incarcerated individuals since its inception and will continue to target this vulnerable population through its work with MAT and SAMHSA.

Exponents is dedicated to helping our participants address the residue left by active addiction including poor social support systems, inadequate resources, criminal justice history, family and parenting dysfunction, mental illness, gender related discrimination stigmatization, marginalization, and restrictive drug and healthcare policies.

Melissa Rios,  
Sr. Clinical Director of  
Drug Treatment

## Funders & Supporters

US Health Resources  
Services Administration,  
HIV Care Services

US Center for Disease Control (CDC)

NYS Office of Alcoholism  
and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS)

Department of Health and Human  
Services

Various Corporate Partners

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, Inc.

NYS Department of Health,  
AIDS Institute

The Council of the City of  
New York

Judith L. Chiara  
Charitable Fund

Various Individual Donors

To Our Generous  
Supporters

Thank you for helping us bring  
hope to those in need. Because  
of you our work will continue.

# Donor Appreciation Party

## Let's Dance!

On April 11th, Exponents hosted our 2nd Donor Appreciation Party at Pier A Harbor House in honor of our donors and business partners. This was an opportunity for them to meet staff and board members, and to network with other Exponents supporters.

With the help of our volunteers, we were able to promote an atmosphere of heart-felt thankfulness from Exponents' staff and clients throughout the evening. Our President and CEO Joseph R. Turner, J.D. shared the stage with Executive Vice President and CFO, Regina Edwards to express their gratitude as well as highlighting the agency's 2018 accomplishments.

To those that attended, we thank you for spending a memorable night that will move us forward in continuing our mission in this upcoming year. To the rest of our generous donors, we thank you for your continued support and look forward to seeing you this Fall, for Exponents 2nd Annual Benefit to be held on November 21st. Our goal is to make it twice as successful as the first and we look to you to help us accomplish it.

Patrice Bocci  
Fundraising and Events Manager

