

Alternatives Celebrates the Best of the Year

More than 300 members of the Alternatives family came together in December to celebrate the achievements of our clients, and to recognize staff members and supportive members of the community. The Awards Dinner is the highlight of the year for many staff and clients as we recognize the important work done by the agency and its clients. Three clients were chosen by their Advisory Committee for demonstrating outstanding achievement over the past year.

Paloyna was recognized for her personal growth since receiving support. Before moving to the Franklin House Transitional Housing program with her children, she had experienced years of domestic violence. She was once vulnerable and unable to provide stability for her family. Now, with the help of Alternatives she is studying for her driver's permit, ESL and GED. She has also recently found her own apartment.

Gabriel lived in a group home for many years. Through support from Alternatives, he improved his daily living skills and was able to move into a more independent living arrangement. He is now a central part of his new home where he shares his energy and kind attitude.

Raul, who receives supported employment through Alternatives, needed an advocate with employers to express that his deafness was not a barrier. As a result of Raul's and the agency's efforts, he was recently promoted to a full-time position at work and is seen as a great asset by his employer.

The Advisory Committee awarded the prestigious Paul Manion Award to Michael Mavuro, who has been with Alternatives for 25 years. The Paul Manion Award is the highest award achievable by an Alternatives client. This award honors someone whose positive attitude and spirit have served as inspiration to others. The award also pays tribute to all clients who have made significant achievements.



"Over the years his staff and family have encouraged Mike to try new things, meet new people and persevere when he hits a roadblock. Today, he loves interacting with people in his community and is developing lots of new interests."

Alternatives also recognizes key members of our community. Pam Mastro, Mental Health Administrator with the Somerset County Department of Human Services was recognized for her advocacy on behalf of Alternatives clients and the mental health field as a whole. "Pam is 100% guided by what is in the best interest of clients no matter what challenges might exist," said Good.

Community Service Awards were presented to Union Avenue Pharmacy and the North Brunswick First Aid & Rescue Squad for their supportive partnerships with Alternatives, Inc.

The 2017 Employer of the Year award was presented to TJ Maxx of Woodbridge for the lengths that they will go to ensure that clients receive the support needed to achieve their employment goals. Also recognized, were Alternatives' Employees of the Year, Keisha Graham and Crystal Socha.

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Giving Thanks for Affinity

Because of a very generous donation from Affinity Federal Credit Union, Alternatives held an informal reception to thank some of our most dedicated supporters.

Those present enjoyed mingling with the members of Uncommon Notes, our all client chorus. The clients were thrilled to be invited and delighted to perform several songs for the guests.

"They brought down the house," said Linda Leparulo, chair, Alternatives Board of Trustees.

"Anytime I have an opportunity to see our clients doing what they enjoy most I'm filled with pride in this organization."



Alternatives' Trustees,
Mohan Tummalapalli & Ivette Michel

Another highlight of the night was watching the new Alternatives video, We Are One Community, featuring Uncommon Notes. The song was written by the band, GoodWorks who performed in the video along with the choir and Alternatives staff members.



L. to R. Jorge Diaz, VP of Finance, Carolyn Suero, Alternatives VP of Admissions and Program Development, Adam Gibbons, Asst. VP & Branch Manager, Investors Savings, Nancy Good, President, Morris Malmstrom, Trustee, Fresia Skoczypec, VP of Programs and Jacqueline Stutz, Asst. VP & Branch Manager, Investors Savings.

Thank you to Investors Savings for supporting Alternatives' efforts to develop new residences for our clients. This was the third installment of a \$30,000 pledge to Alternatives for the construction of a new group home.

"Mike was chosen as our Paul Manion Award recipient this year, not because of the challenges he has faced, but for the manner in which he met those challenges," Said Nancy Good, President, Alternatives Inc.

STAFF STARS

Alternatives has high expectations for its employees. They are asked to be compassionate, motivated and responsible on many levels. Each year, the difficult decision is made to choose just a few who inspire us.

Keisha is a case manager at Franklin House Transitional program for homeless mothers and their children. Keisha has changed the lives of so many mothers and children

over the years. She is dedicated to her job, to the success of each family and she sees every one of the mothers and children as members of her own family.

Crystal is a case manager with the permanent housing program for homeless individuals. In addition to working at Alternatives, Crystal is about to complete her Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from the Rutgers School of Health Professions and is a mentor to a student on the autism spectrum.

Motorcycles Roll for 3rd Annual Dignity Run



Alternatives, Inc. brought back the Dignity Run and it was BIGGER and BETTER than ever! The 3rd annual Dignity Run attracted more than 300 participants for a scenic 60 mile ride through the rolling hills of Somerset and Hunterdon Counties which finished at the Bridgewater Eagles for a fantastic after-party.

Many thanks for support and guidance goes to the Bridgewater Eagles Aerie 2137, Double Crossed Riding Club, Central Jersey Old Timers and the American Motorcyclist Association. Thank you to all the riders, guests, musicians, vendors and volunteers for your help in making this event a success.

Planning for 2018 is already underway. Be sure to hold Sunday, October 14, 2018 and look for information throughout the year. To join the committee or support this event contact Anita Feiner at afeiner@alternativesinc.org or (908) 685-1444 ext. 226 for more information.

Alternatives Educates About Support Coordination

In our continuing effort to educate and assist clients, Alternatives hosted several meetings where families of clients, staff and clients had an opportunity to meet one-on-one with support coordination agencies. Under the fee for service model clients must choose a support coordinator. The primary role of a support coordinator is to assist individuals with navigating services and resources and is rooted in individual choice.

Every individual receiving services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities will be required to select a support coordinator or be assigned one. Support coordinators will be assuming many of the roles and responsibilities that DDD case managers have had up until this point. Agencies that provide direct services cannot provide support coordination to the same client. Alternatives provides support coordination in Union and Morris counties; the agency does not provide support coordination in the counties where we provide direct services.



Christine DeMetro & Lisa Buckwalter present to clients & family members.

Since all of our DDD clients will choose a support coordinator and shift to fee for service by April the forums were very well received by those present. If you would like a copy of the presentation from the forum or if you have questions about what to expect in the months ahead please contact Christina DeMetro at demetroc@alternativesinc.org.

Dignity Gala

We'll have a hot time at the Alternatives, Inc. Dignity Gala "Havana Nights" on Saturday, March 24, 2018 at the Imperia in Somerset, NJ

We will pay tribute to volunteerism as we honor Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Morgan Stanley, PL Communications and Raritan, Inc. for their service to Alternatives. In addition to being recognized for their service, each will receive the Alternatives, Inc. Dignity Award.

The evening will be inspired by the glamorous nightclub evenings at the world-famous Copacabana with a nod to Lucy and Ricky's Tropicana. We will begin with a 90 minute cocktail reception followed by a delicious dinner along with an open bar of top shelf liquors throughout the evening. There will be traditional music along with our fan-favorite band, Hoi Polloi who will play selections from the 60's, 70's, 80's, 90's and today. The auction will be sure to please all with a broad assortment of fantastic items.

For additional information, please contact Anita Feiner at (908) 685-1444 ext. 226 or visit the event website at <https://alternativesinc.givezooks.com/events/dignity-gala-havana-nights>.

Take a Chance on our Cash Raffle

Buying cash raffle tickets is a great way to support the work of Alternatives. Tickets for our cash raffle are \$25 each, 5 for \$100 or 10 for \$150. Tickets are available now and the winning ticket will be drawn at the Dignity Gala on March 24th. Winner need not be present – cash prize is 50 % of total ticket sales. To purchase tickets contact terlajek@alternativesinc.org or complete the form below and send it to Karola Terlaje, Alternatives, Inc. 600 First Ave. Raritan, NJ 08869



I would like to purchase:

☐ 1 ticket @ \$25.00 ☐ 5 tickets @ \$100.00 ☐ 10 tickets @ \$150.00

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