



Fall 2010 ♦ New York Therapeutic Communities, Inc.

BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES: QUEENS OUT-PATIENT PROGRAM EXPANDS BEYOND ITS FOUNDATION IN NYC PROBATION

*Ms. Serendipity
Ron's Global Award
Twentieth Graduation
In Memoriam*

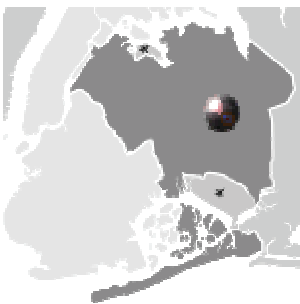


The staff of the Queens Out-Patient Program engaged in a case conference: (from left, standing) Counselor Luis Ventura, Program Director Cesar Sosa, Dr. Gloria Ellis (Supervising Psychiatrist), Social Worker Stacy Lucas, interns Alina Quesada Brown, Cassandra Nunn and John Grillo, and Counselor Theron Holmes-Clarke.

The *Herman Williams Probation Ambulatory Program* in Queens, New York City, which opened in 2006 within the offices of the city's Department of Probation, has now graduated into its own larger space and been renamed the *Herman Williams Queens Out-Patient Program*. It will continue to serve probationers, but now will be able to expand to 200 or more slots and offer evening and weekend hours. This will allow for referrals from other agencies such as New York State Parole, the city's public assistance agency, Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities, Federal Probation and the Cornerstone detoxification program. Cesar Sosa, the Program Director, expects that eventually 75% of his clients will be mandated by the criminal justice

system, with most of the rest coming from the immediate Jamaica community. The new offices are located on a lower floor of the building housing NYC Probation to ensure a continued close working relationship with the city agency. The *NYTC Louis Concepcion Probation Ambulatory Program* in Brooklyn will be making a similar move in 2011, when it moves into the new home of *Serendipity I* on Fulton Street in East New York.

Like the *Probation Ambulatory Programs*, the Queens program will be funded almost entirely by Medicaid reimbursements, as will any expansion in the number of people it serves. Unlike the *Probation Ambulatory Programs*, office space will no longer be free of charge, as had been the case with NYC Probation. Therefore the program needs to serve a larger number of clients in order to cover expenses. On the other hand, being based in the community rather than within Probation means that the *Queens Out-Patient Program* will likely be integrated into the local community in a way that even the residential *Serendipity* programs have not been. The latter serve persons from all five boroughs.



The fourth graduation of the Queens program, though the first under its new name, will take place October 29 in the Probation offices, with State Senator Shirley Huntley as guest speaker. ♦

DID YOU KNOW?
That Queens has **2.3 million people**, 48% of whom are **immigrants**, and 55% speak a language **other than English** at home, for a total of **138 languages?**

DID YOU KNOW?
That Queens **out-patient treatment programs** are able to provide **only 60% of the need** for such services by Queens residents?

Sources on inside back page



A Message from the President

When you are honored for your life's work, as I just was in Genoa, it gives you pause to remember all those many people who have mentored and been role models for you, like Tom White Jr., who passed away in August. Then there are all the thousands with whom I've been fortunate enough to be a part of their individual journeys of recovery, people such as Ruth Scott, who died shortly after graduating from Serendipity and completing a remarkable journey of her own. And there are those like Hazel Craig, our Alumnus of the Year, who continues to make her mark on the world. A person's life work, I believe, is not a single strand, but the interweaving of a whole fabric of many, many lives through which your own life shines brighter.

Ron

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR HAZEL CRAIG REPRESENTS THE BEST OF SERENDIPITY



Hazel plugging in as usual, this time during the Serendipity Twentieth Graduation.

Hazel Craig, who graduated from *Serendipity II* in 2007, has been an almost constant presence ever since. Rare is the day that she doesn't stop by the facility to say Hi to the women, and sometimes to help out in the kitchen. As an alumnus, her steadfastness impresses all those still going through treatment. At the June 4 33rd anniversary celebration of NYTC, Inc. programs she was given the 2010 Alumnus of the Year award.

But her services to both women and men do not stop there. She is also the field supervisor for six three-quarter houses, five for women and one for men. Men and women come from residential treatment programs and homeless shelters into a safe environment where they can re-establish their lives and pursue their goals. Working with Eddie Horton, an ex-policeman and realtor, Hazel helps open a new house and then turns its operation over to a responsible resident, allowing her to move on to the next project. Their houses are located in Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Nassau County, each holding twenty-four residents. The next project she and Mr. Horton want to establish is a day center where older persons in recovery and those on disability can engage in fun and productive.

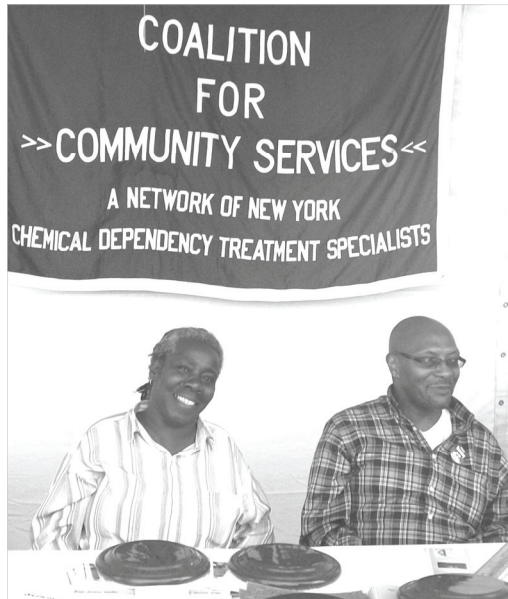
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On top of all this, Hazel is a founding member of the NYTC, Inc. Alumni Fellowship, and an active participant in all its activities. This summer, she and fellow *Serendipity* graduate Renee

Williams organized a bus trip to Six Flags for 45 alumni, residents and family members of *Serendipity II*; all had a great time. ♦



Commissioner Karen Carpenter-Palumbo of NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services with Luz Santiago, alumnus of Serendipity II and Vice Chair of the Alumni Fellowship, at the September 25 NYC Recovery Rally at Randall's Island Park. Right, Serendipity I



counselor Deborah Irving and Assistant Director Steven Holmes man a table.



Hazel's favorite photo from the bus trip to Six Flags.

RONALD WILLIAMS HONORED WITH HARRY SHOLL AWARD

In probably the highest honor possible from his peers within the world of therapeutic communities, NYTC, Inc. President and CEO Ronald Williams received the 2010 Harry Sholl Award at the Twenty-fifth World Conference of the *World Federation of Therapeutic Communities* in Genoa, Italy. Taking him and other NYTC staff completely by surprise, Dr. Sushma Taylor, President of the Treatment Communities of America (TCA), presented Ron with the award on the last day of the conference. This prestigious award is for those individuals who have provided outstanding leadership from within WFTC ranks in advancing therapeutic community goals, both through the Federation itself, and within the home region of the recipient. Ron at right shows the award to his Executive Assistant, Barbara Spain. ♦



Executive Vice President Sandeep Varma: On The Future of NYTC, Inc. and Treatment in America

Sandeep Varma joined New York Therapeutic Communities, Inc. in 1998 as Regional Director, and became Executive Vice President in 2007. He began his counseling career at Hospitality House in Albany, and worked as a psychiatric social worker for *Bellevue - New York University Medical Center* and as a Senior Case Manager for *Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC)*. He is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor. This year he was elected Secretary of the Executive Committee of Treatment Communities of America (TCA), formerly known as Therapeutic Communities of America.

“**What are your responsibilities with TCA?** I was elected to a two-year term, which means I'm a member of the five person Executive Committee which sets the national agenda for TCA, especially as it relates to the federal government, as well as planning our upcoming annual conference. Right now, we are especially focused on the federal health care reform and how it will be implemented.

What health care issues are you especially concerned about? First of all, there are some very strong positives. The fact that health care now includes by definition behavioral health is one. And the fact that behavioral health means not only mental health but also substance abuse was a major victory. Second, by law there is now parity between behavioral health treatment and other forms of medical care, which means insurance has

to cover both kinds equally. Also, they've redefined the eligibility for Medicaid nationwide to include substance abuse treatment. By 2014, there will be in place an exchange on which you can purchase your own health care with subsidized vouchers if you are a low or middle-income family. This should make it easier to get substance abuse treatment, and also easier to transist from Medicaid to private insurance for those completing treatment. However, because of the new availability of health insurance, there is the danger that the block grants given to the states to fund residential substance abuse treatment programs will be reduced, which would create a gap between supply and demand. We are working closely with the federal government to make sure that does not happen.

How does this impact NYTC's future? It's clear that the most robust substance abuse treatment sector will be those services which are medicalized, which at this point means out-patient treatment rather than residential. Under the current model, it is far more difficult to have residential programs funded through Medicaid or health insurance re-imburement. So our move into the out-patient sector, first with the Probation Ambulatory Programs, and now the Queens and the upcoming Brooklyn Out-Patient Programs [see cover story] has been designed to take advantage of this trend.

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Voices from Within

Words in Memoriam

On October 5, 2010, Ruth Scott passed away. Ruth lived at *Serendipity II* for two years, and moved out of the residence in January 2010. Just eleven days before her death, she attended the twentieth graduation of *Serendipity* to receive her certificate and officially become an alumnus.

Death is a part of each persons' life, and many of our graduates have seen more than their share. What follows are the words which Ruth herself spoke at the graduation, and some writing by her peers to express their grief and also their joy in celebrating one unique human being's life.

Ruth Scott 1962-2010

I'm not feeling well tonight, but I came. I never accomplished nothing in life, but I accomplished this.

Thank you all, Ms. Alexander and her staff. When I leave here tonight I'll be coming back. I'm never going to forget where I came from.

September 24, 2010

Poems

*An angel in the sky
Is a friend in my heart
You were around for a while
But now it's time to say goodbye
You will always live in our hearts and minds
For you were truly one of a kind.*

Danielle W.

*Ruthy was here and now she's gone
She left her love and memories to carry on
Those who knew her, knew her well
Those who didn't still can tell... of her goodness.*

Kelly Q.

*Impacting the world, she made it her choice
A kiss, a smile, a beautiful voice
A woman named Ruthie came a long way
With strength, hope and encouragement the least
we could say
She nurtured us all, as she would a child
Her niece in fact made it all the worth while
A step towards faith, now looking back at the past
She was the one who could always make us laugh
Rest in peace Ruthie, you live in our hearts
This is never the end and only the start.*

Melecia G.

Knock, Knock on Heaven's Door

One day there was a knock on Ruthie's door. She replied, "Who is it?" He answered GOD. He told her, "I'm so proud of you! I watched you all your life and I never gave up on you. Some of your hardest tasks in life became your greatest accomplishments, and I was there and you never gave up on yourself. You graduated from Serendipity II with a pure and clean heart. Today is your day, and I've come to take you home. All your good deeds have been fulfilled. Ruthie, you'll be missed, but your memories will always lie within your loved ones' and friends' hearts."

God asked her was she ready to receive her wings because she had earned them and an angel had risen. As Ruthie entered the Golden Gates of Heaven there was her mother and she said "Welcome, welcome home, Baby."

Ruthie, God bless you and I'll miss you dearly. I'll always keep the cross you've given me close to my heart.

Love,

Trina H.

"I never accomplished nothing in life, but I accomplished this... When I leave here tonight I'll be coming back. I'm never going to forget where I came from."

Sister, I Never Knew You

*Sister, I never knew you
But I know you, because you are me
God's thread of light runs through us all,
A thread we feel, but cannot see.*

*Sister, I never knew you
But the bond I feel is strong
God's light binds us all in faith and strength
Though our time in this world's not long.*

*Sister, I never knew you
But God knew you and loved you best,
For he has called you home to struggle no more,
He has finally given you rest.*

*Sister, I never knew you
But I'm sure we'll meet one day
We'll laugh we'll talk and thank our Father too
For his love, mercy and grace.*

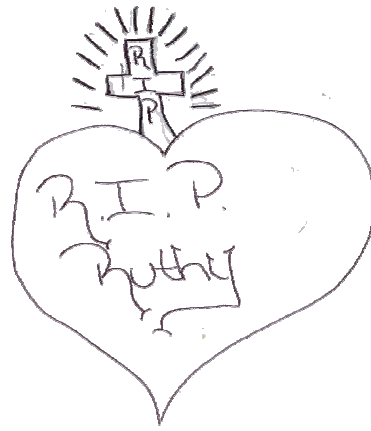
Karen Y.



Eres una Estrella de mi Corazon que tambien te me has ido a la inmensidad del Paraiso Ruthy uno de los petalos de rosas mas hermosa que he conosido y la que supo aguantar sus petalos antes de verse libre de oscuridad ahora esta sin dolor y tristeza en el brazo del Senor.

You're a star in my heart who's also gone to the vastness of paradise, Ruthy, one of those roses more beautiful than I can imagine, who could carry your petals until you were freed of the darkness, now without pain or sadness on the arm of the Lord.

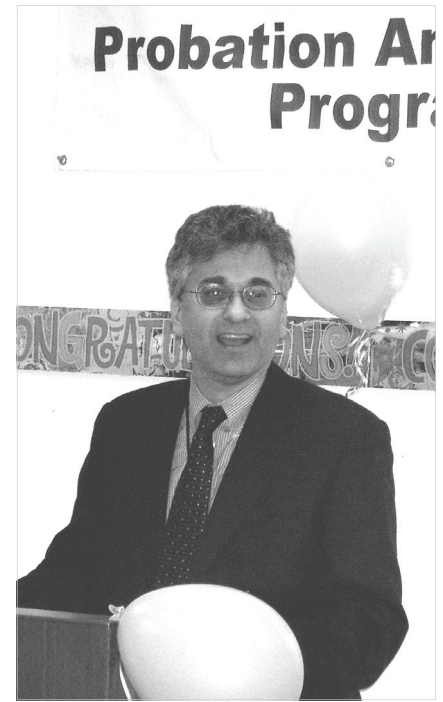
Judith G. ♦



Brooklyn Probation Program's 5th Graduation



On April 16, 44 graduates received their completion certificates, and heard the new commissioner of NYC Probation Vincent Schiraldi talk about the criminal justice system in this country. He noted that future generations were likely to look back at how we treat our prisoners and ask (much as we do about slavery), "What were they thinking?" Mr. Schiraldi replaced Martin S. Horn, who retired last year and now teaches at John Jay College ♦



Commissioner Vincent Schiraldi addresses the graduates.



Second Annual Alumni Fellowship Family Dance



The Second Family Dance of the NYTC, Inc. Alumni Fellowship, held June 5 in Brooklyn, offered an opportunity for those in recovery to have a really great time without alcohol or drugs. Fellowship President Darryl Eaton above with Calvin Kluck.



Serendipity's Twentieth Graduation Extravaganza



The Twentieth Graduation of the Serendipity programs was held September 24 at the Brooklyn Job Corps. Ruth Scott is in the center of the back row in the photo to the left. The first Serendipity program opened in 1990, originally as a transitional program for those coming from the in-prison Stay'n Out, while the women-only Serendipity II opened in 2001, ten years ago next March.





XXV World TC Conference in Italy On October 14-18, 2010 the twenty-fifth World Conference was held in Genoa, Italy, organized by the *World Federation of Therapeutic Communities* and by the *Centro di Solidarietà di Genova*. Two hundred professionals from 42 nations discussed the current state of the therapeutic community (TC) model and directions for the future. Italy has long been a pioneer in the TC movement in Europe, while Genoa offered an attractive location on the Ligurian Riviera. The *Centro di Solidarietà di Genova*, the local host, was founded in 1973 by Bianca Costa and a group of volunteers; the center addresses problems linked to youth marginalization and in particular drug addiction.



The World Federation is affiliated with the United Nations and the US Department of State, which was a primary sponsor of the conference. ♦

Sources for "Did You Know?" on front page

1. Wikipedia.com, from US Census Bureau
2. NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, *County Planning Data: Service Needs Profiles*, September 2010.

Upcoming Events in 2010-11

- December 3** Manhattan *Probation Ambulatory Program* Graduation
- December 17** Holiday Luncheon for Staff and Friends
- January 27** **An Evening with Dominic Chianese**
- March** Tenth Anniversary Celebration at *Serendipity II*
Brooklyn *Probation Ambulatory Program* Graduation
- May** Mothers' Day Celebration at *Serendipity I*
- June** **34th Anniversary Celebration**
NYTC, Inc. Alumni Fellowship
Third Annual Family Dance
- September** The *Serendipity I & II* Graduation

Focus NYC:
J-CAP in Queens
Part of Tom
White's Legacy



Founded by Thomas White Jr. in 1968, J-CAP (which the organization refers to as *Just Caring About People*) is one of the largest minority-operated treatment programs in New York state. Located in Jamaica, Queens, J-CAP offers an intensive drug treatment program in a residential setting for chemically dependent adults and young adults ages 17 and older. The program operates from two buildings that can accommodate over 400 persons, with treatment based on the therapeutic community (TC) model that was pioneered by Phoenix House and other programs. J-CAP also offers enhanced services for veterans who struggle with mental health and substance abuse; HIV/AIDS and other medical services; and programs for young parents. ♦

Thomas White, Jr.
1939-2010

Thomas White, Jr. was a city councilman and longtime leader of the Queens Village Committee for Mental Health for J-CAP Inc. Born in Jamaica, Queens, he opened up a storefront drop-in center in 1968 across from Queens Hospital Center, providing drug



information and prevention services. In 1971, in recognition of the growing need in South Jamaica for substance abuse services, he and the center became associated with the Queens Village Committee for Mental Health, and he became Executive Director in 1977. Mr. White also served for fifteen years as city councilmember for South Jamaica, and was a member of Gov. Mario Cuomo's Advisory Committee on Drug and Alcohol Abuse. As a community leader, he was a powerful advocate for the fight against drugs, crime and poverty. Mayor Bloomberg spoke at his funeral and described him as a mentor, a father figure, a life changer and a trusted colleague. NYTC President Ron Williams notes that Tom White epitomized the person in recovery who achieves great heights. He will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him. ♦

NYTC Spotlight ROSA NELSON CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

Rosa Nelson first met Ron Williams one November day in 1980, when she was the third applicant for the bookkeeper position at 79 Madison Street at 28th Street in Manhattan, then the main office for New York Therapeutic Communities, Inc. At that point she was simply relieved to get the job, for she'd just found out that her unemployment check would be a measly \$50 a month.

That year NYTC had only the two in-prison *Stay'n Out* programs. In the beginning, Rosa says she was "the baby of the family." The principle clerk was Stacy Lucas, the *Stay'n Out* graduate who is now the Social Worker at the *Queens Out-Patient Program*. Another member of the administrative staff was Community Liaison Louis Concepcion, for whom the *Brooklyn Probation Ambulatory Program* is named. Rosa also knew Madeline Randers, who became Ron's Executive Assistant a couple of years later; another *Stay'n Out* graduate, Madeline is remembered in the Madeline Randers Residence of *Serendipity II*.

The first agency anniversary Rosa attended took place in one of the side chapels of The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine. She

recalls 1983 because the administrative office moved to a larger space at Eighth Avenue and 35th Street, and also because *Stay'n Out* graduate John David joined the agency as Community Liaison. He too is memorialized in the John David Residence of *Serendipity I*, which he helped establish.



In 1994 Rosa missed an opportunity to travel to Texas for the opening of the *Lone Star Stay'n Out* because she was on vacation. But over the years she has participated in a number of fundraising events, the most memorable being the boat and yacht cruises.

Today, as the agency's longest serving staff member other than Ron Williams, Rosa handles payroll and benefits, and assists with Medicaid billing. Rosa notes that over the past thirty years the only constant for the agency has been change itself. ♦

► Sandeep Varma Interview

What other trends do you see for NYTC? *We have just amended our by-laws and mission statement to reflect the fact that we no longer will be restricting ourselves to criminal justice-oriented programs or even to substance abuse treatment. We may be going after funding for juvenile programming, family services, veteran services, or vocational training. In general, we see NYTC becoming a broad-based social and human services agency, with a great deal of more direct involvement in local communities than we've had in the past. Already we see that with the Queens Out-patient Program, where we are establishing local linkages within the Jamaica community.*

What excites you most about the coming year? *Without question, it's the opening of our new facility in East New York, Brooklyn, as home for both the Serendipity I men's program and the Brooklyn Out-Patient Program. This project was a rare opportunity in this field: a gut renovation of a former daycare center which allowed us to design an ideal space for the day-to-day operations of a residential program. Any residential treatment facility will have a certain institutional feel to it, but our new building will have a courtyard, smaller dorms for five to two people plus one bedroom for a single, a roof deck, an exercise room, a computer lab, enlarged kitchen facilities, a barbershop, a*

medical station and plenty of lounge space. The Brooklyn Out-Patient Program, which will be the new name for the current Brooklyn Probation Ambulatory Program, is scheduled to move to Fulton Street this coming winter, and Serendipity I in spring of 2011. I think everyone involved is very excited about the completion of this five year-long effort. ♦

"If you want to travel fast, travel alone, but if you want to travel far, travel together."

African Proverb

NEW YORK THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES, INC.

President/CEO/Founder: Ronald Williams
Executive Vice President: Sandeep Varma
Director of Finance: Eugene Rose

Administrative Offices

266 West 37th Street, 21st Fl, New York, NY 10018

Tel: (212)971-6033; Fax: (212)244-6796

Toll Free: (800)533-7252

E-mail: generalmailbox@staynout.org

www.staynout.org