



2016 Annual Report

# Help and Hope

**Overcoming Addiction**

“What is addiction, really?

It is a sign, a signal,  
a symptom of distress.

It is a language that tells  
us about a plight that  
must be understood.”

- Alice Miller

# Change in Leadership

After devoting the past 36 years to leading and growing MCCA, Joe Sullivan has stepped down. In September MCCA welcomed, John D'Eramo as he took the reigns as their new President and CEO.

When Joe Sullivan arrived at MCCA in 1980, the agency consisted of two small-scale locations in Danbury with 11 employees. A true visionary, Joe grew the agency into one of the most highly respected and top-rated substance abuse providers in the state. Today, MCCA is a full-service addiction treatment center with 12 facilities around the state and serves close to 10,000 clients annually.

A search committee comprised of MCCA Board of Directors made the announcement after a comprehensive search spanning several months for a candidate they believed met MCCA's vision for the future of substance abuse treatment.





## Dear MCCA Staff and Associates,

I would like to thank you all for a very warm and supportive welcome as MCCA's President and CEO.

On January 6, 2017 Joe Sullivan retired. His expertise and depth of knowledge of the substance abuse field have been and will continue to be a tremendous asset to the agency.

2016 was a year of transition for MCCA; however, we continued to grow and strengthen our programs, treatment options and facilities, while maintaining our strong commitment to quality. In April, the agency earned its seventh consecutive CARF accreditation - the gold standard for substance abuse programs.

Enhancing treatment options continued to be a priority for us. A generous grant from the *Hanley Family Foundation* enabled us to offer Vivitrol, an injectable medication for drug and alcohol addiction at three of our outpatient clinics. Additionally, both smoking cessation and Acudetox, a supportive acupuncture therapy, are now offered at all of our outpatient clinics.

MCCA's six outpatient clinics all saw an increase in referrals in 2016, while our residential treatment programs and detoxification unit continued to run at full capacity. The addition of seven additional beds at Trinity Glen Women's Program will enable us to now serve 18 women at this long-term residential facility in Kent.

Regrettably, responding to the ongoing opiate crisis has been complicated by one of the worst fiscal crises the State of Connecticut has ever seen. We continued to face challenges in 2016 with cuts to our state grants as a result of the state's budget deficit.

Despite these challenging times, we remain committed to our mission of providing *Help* and *Hope* to all individuals seeking treatment. As you review this annual report, I hope you will be as impressed as I am with the commitment to quality and innovative treatment that is provided by our caring and dedicated staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John D'Eramo". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John D'Eramo  
President and CEO



# Fulfilling Our Mission

**MISSION:** To provide Help and instill Hope for individuals, families and organizations working to overcome and prevent addictions.

**VISION:** Our vision is to be the premier prevention and treatment organization in Connecticut by providing state-of-the-art programs designed to achieve measurable results that bring value to customers and partners.



## **Accessible • Affordable • Accredited**

Individuals who suffer from substance use disorders come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds - addiction does not discriminate. At MCCA we believe recovery resources should be accessible and affordable to everyone in need of help. Every day, people from around the state benefit from participating in our accredited programs on their journey to recovery.

**MCCA takes pride** in offering high-quality addiction treatment for our clients. Our mission calls upon our staff to deliver essential and comprehensive programs to a diverse and often vulnerable population. Being a significant contributor to the communities we serve is equally important in fulfilling our mission.

## Scott Nelson Shines A Light On Fantasy Sports

MCCA's Scott Nelson, Director of Problem Gambling Services brought his expertise on Gambling and Fantasy Sports to a panel discussion in Hartford in January of 2017. The multibillion-dollar industry of fantasy sports—the online and unregulated business in which players assemble their fantasy teams with real athletes—has caught the attention of regulators in the last couple of years. Recently, New York has cracked down on DraftKings and FanDuel as illegal gambling operations and about a dozen states are challenging the legality of commercial fantasy sports. Sponsored by the Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling, the forum will seek to inform the legislative body on the different issues involving Fantasy Sports. Nelson represented the treatment field and welcomed the opportunity to shine a light on this newest form of online gambling.



**“The organization’s medical and clinical staff is dedicated to optimal care for the persons served. They are dedicated, passionate, approachable, and well qualified.”**

- CARF

## Joe Sullivan Receives the Annie Orr Good Samaritan Award

This year Amos House awarded the Annie Orr Good Samaritan Award to Joe Sullivan. Joe is grateful for being in long-term recovery from alcoholism (35 years) and is happy that he was able to get to know Annie Orr through his volunteer work at the Congregational Church Overflow Shelter. Joe dedicated the 2016 Annie Orr Good Samaritan Award to the MCCA Board of Directors and his MCCA colleagues (past and present) who are “good Samaritans” day in and day out. Amos House Inc. is a transitional living facility for homeless families in Danbury.



## Commit 2 Quit - Reducing Tobacco Use One Person At A Time

MCCA's Tobacco Cessation Program continues to grow under the strong leadership of the Program Director, Kris Novak. In 2016, close to 300 clients were treated at MCCA for nicotine addiction. Quit rates are also beginning to take shape, reaching a high of 25% in April, while the average reduction in smoking for three months is about 30%. Kris recently received Master level certification as a Tobacco Treatment Specialist after completing 2,000 hours of certified tobacco treatment and passing an intensive case review

by the Department of Tobacco Prevention at UMass Medical School. Congratulations Kris! Keep up the good work.



## Vivitrol - Help For Clients In Early Recovery

For individuals working towards recovery who are struggling with the persistent cravings of opiate and alcohol addiction, Vivitrol can be an effective tool to help them maintain sobriety. A long-acting, injectable form of naltrexone, Vivitrol is an opioid antagonist that is frequently prescribed to help dampen cravings in people who are physically dependent on opioids or alcohol. It is a relatively safe and effective medication and has been around for decades.

MCCA launched its Vivitrol Program in the summer of 2016 and the feedback from clients has been very positive. Lisa K. stated that, "Vivitrol has really helped to reduce my cravings and enabled me to focus on my recovery." The goal is to help highly motivated patients get through the early recovery cravings until they have stabilized their lives. Most people remain on Vivitrol for 6-12 months.



## Advances in Addiction Treatment



### Acu Detox

Detoxing from substances is one of the first and critical steps in the recovery process, however the process can be very stressful on the body. MCCA is now offering clients the opportunity to utilize Acu Detox - a supportive acupuncture therapy to aid the recovery process. Clinicians and clients are excited about this new tool as it opens up the possibility of treating the whole person - body, mind, and spirit.

Acu Detox therapy involves gently placing five small, sterilized disposable stainless steel needles in specific sites in each ear and leaving them in while clients sit quietly in a meditative state for 30 to 45 minutes. Stimulation of these ear points reduces stress and anxiety, lessens depression and insomnia, and alleviates the craving for substances, helping to aid in the recovery process. After a recent group session in Danbury attended by six men, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Joe W. said, "My appetite has improved and I sleep so much better." Tom B. shared that he feels much more relaxed and less stressed for days following the treatment. All six men were in agreement that holistic treatments are valuable and effective tools in recovery. This relaxing treatment, delivered by MCCA's Certified Acupuncture clinicians can enhance recovery at any phase. It is unique in that it is effective regardless of the client's level of motivation and tends to increase his or her ability to effectively participate in other aspects of therapy.



## CARF- The Gold Seal of Approval

MCCA was once again awarded accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation and Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) on April of 2016.

MCCA received their first CARF accreditation in 1997 and has successfully passed the CARF Survey every three years since that first accreditation 20-years ago.

CARF is considered the gold standard, the premier accrediting body for substance abuse programs: facilities that are CARF accredited must meet stringent international standards. CARF is a voluntary accreditation, which means that, organizations seeking CARF accreditation spend their own time, money and efforts to undergo the in-depth assessment and review that the organization demands.

This accreditation signals a service provider's commitment to continually improving services, encouraging feedback and serving the community.

Counselors are readily accessible to address any crisis or daily living stressors when needed.

Staff members treat clients with **dignity** and **respect** at all times.

A high level of **satisfaction** with the **gender-specific** programs, leading to increased **focus** and more **positive** outcomes.

Medical and clinical staff are **dedicated**, **passionate**, **approachable**, and **well-qualified**.

Active on all levels in **advocating** for persons with **opiate** use disorders.

## DMHAS Scorecard

In 2016, MCCA scored high marks across the board in the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) client satisfaction survey.



- General Satisfaction **91%**
- Access **84%**
- Participation in Treatment **93%**
- Quality & Appropriateness **92%**
- Respect **89%**
- Outcomes **85%**
- Recovery **85%**

## Prevention Works **Youth Substance Abuse Declining in Danbury**

According to the latest survey – 30-day use of alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, and tobacco use are all down among Danbury high school students.

The news was shared at the well-attended Danbury Youth Matter Forum on December 5th at the Danbury Police Department.

Prevention is not easy work, especially in today's environment of easy access to drugs and parental permissiveness. But Terry Budlong, MCCA's Director of Prevention, is not deterred in her mission to educate, students, parents and the community about the importance of prevention as she works with Danbury's coalition, *Stand Together Make a Difference*. The fruits of their labor were on full display at the forum in December with close to 80 leaders, teachers, volunteers, students, and parents in attendance. The results of the recent student survey were shared and tell an encouraging story with 30-day use among high school students showing significant declines for alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, and tobacco.



In 2016 STMD launched a new website, **[StandTogetherDanbury.org](http://StandTogetherDanbury.org)**, a valuable resource for all community sectors in Danbury.

## *How to Cope* **Turns 5**

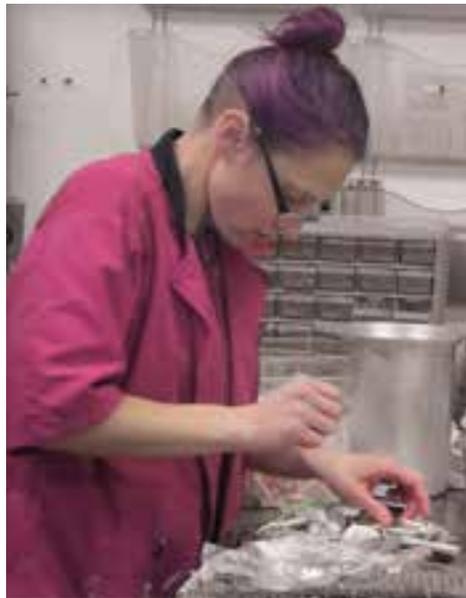
When one family member has a problem with drugs or alcohol, it creates tremendous stress on the entire family. Family support services are an essential piece in the recovery process – both for the family members and the person working towards recovery.

MCCA recognized the importance of this service and launched *How to Cope* five years ago to fulfill a growing need. We are fortunate to have Irene Sherlock, LMFT (a licensed marriage and family therapist) running the *How to Cope* groups in Danbury on Thursday nights. Over the past couple of years, Irene has had a tremendous impact on many individuals, couples and families by educating them about the disease of addiction and empowering them to change the one thing they can – themselves.

*How to Cope* is an evidence-based program and is proven to reduce co-dependency and increase resiliency.

# Five Months and 18 Days

That's how long it took Erin to lose her two young children, her job and her home - everything. Five months and 18 days, that was Erin's run time. That's how quickly the disease of addiction can take hold and bring a person down.



When you talk to Erin today you get the sense that she is very much in charge of her life. This college-educated young woman is well spoken, runs nine miles every day, works as a professional baker and is raising her two children as a single mother. But rewind the reel of her life back five years and you will find her sitting in a prison cell for pandering, prostitution and motor vehicle violations - all due to her addiction to crack cocaine.

What led Erin down that rabbit hole? As she likes to say, "I was an addict without the drugs. And then I picked up." Erin's cocaine-fueled downward spiral came to a sudden halt the day the Department of Children and Families (DCF) took her five-year old son and two-year old daughter away from her at MCCA's Waterbury clinic. Shortly thereafter she began serving her sentence.

After 40 days in prison, Erin was released to a long-term inpatient program where she began examining and reclaiming her life. "I was introduced to all the right people, Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and I was able to sit and listen and make the self-diagnoses that I am an addict." For the first time Erin felt she was part of the solution, instead of the problem.

Looking back, Erin believes that unresolved trauma was at the route of her addiction. "I wrapped it up in a pretty little box and stuck it in the back of the closet. I kept painting it different colors and avoiding my problems." She continues, "That caused me to act out in different ways and make the same mistakes over and over." In the process, she caused a huge amount of destruction to everyone in her life, including her two young children.



After completing the residential program, Erin came back to Waterbury and MCCA where she was determined to do whatever it took to stay clean. Returning to the role of 'mom' was the next big step for Erin. Although she had met all of the DCF requirements, including employment and a home, Erin was uneasy about the responsibility of motherhood. "Getting my kids back wasn't an easy thing, I wasn't sure I wanted them back, I wasn't sure I could do it by myself, if I could financially support them." But despite her fears and challenges she moved forward with the help of her strong support network and a 'lot of praying.' Erin's two children always attend meetings with her and most of their friends are NA (Narcotics Anonymous) children.

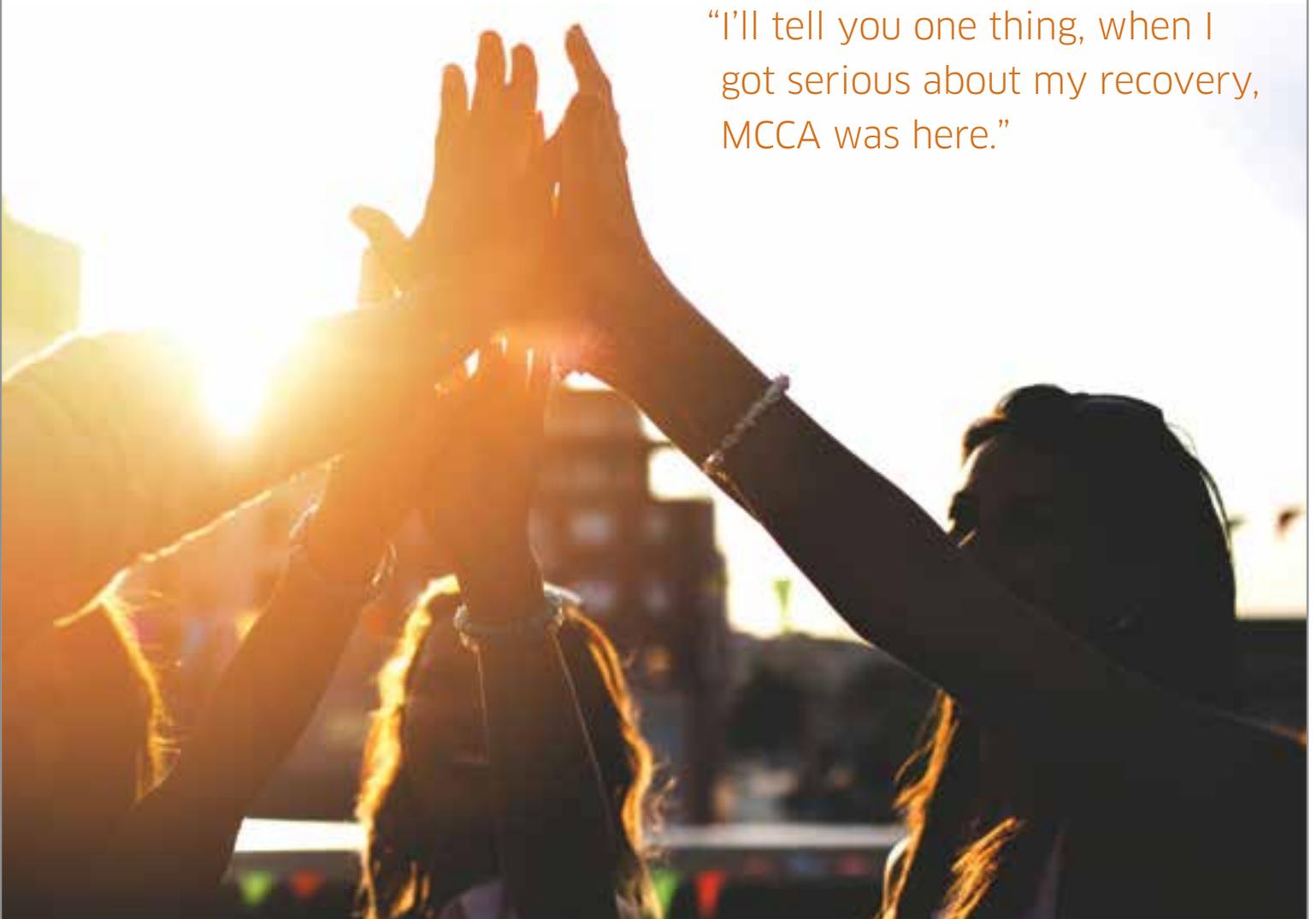
On Thanksgiving Erin stopped at Walgreen's with her 10-year son and they saw a young woman who appeared to be homeless outside the pharmacy. Erin recognized her from the street and knew she was a prostitute and was pleased when her older son asked,

"Why don't we give her our Thanksgiving dinner?" Coming from a child that saw his mother in her active addiction, Erin felt her son knew what this woman was doing. "It was such a magical thing. There was some kind of identification where he knew that it didn't have to be like that for her. And I knew it too. So we gave her our Thanksgiving dinner and he said, 'You know mom, we should never deny people food, it doesn't matter. It's a necessity.'"

Erin acknowledges that her addiction has taken a toll on her children and the process to repair her relationships with them has been ongoing. "I broke our relationship, our bond, our trust, our love. I broke so much between us." The pain and regret is evident in her voice, but Erin is determined and is grateful that she now has the tools to help him work through some of the issues that come up.

Things came full circle for Erin when she came back to MCCA's Waterbury Clinic after residential treatment. "At that moment it hit me how blessed I was." She adds,

"I'll tell you one thing, when I got serious about my recovery, MCCA was here."



# Persisting Through Adversity

## A Conversation with Joe Sullivan | By Lee Bodkin

**> Lee:** You've been here at MCCA for 36 years and you've accomplished a great deal. What drives you, what keeps you going?

**> Joe:** Well, (hearty laugh) I'm not going so much anymore. I would say new opportunities, new initiatives, and trying to find better and more effective ways to serve people, serve the community and grow the organization.

**> Lee:** Are you a competitive person? And has that helped you?

**> Joe:** Yes, I would say so. And it's probably helped, and probably hurt too. I think the more competitive people are, the less collaborative they tend to be. So I would say collaboration is something I've had to work at and develop.

**> Lee:** What have the high points at MCCA been for you?

**> Joe:** I would say, not in any particular order as they come to mind: starting Trinity Glen in Sharon, moving McDonough House from a roach infested dump in Danbury to a pretty nice upgrade in Bridgewater and then moving it back to Danbury. Opening the Women's Program in Kent was a recent high point. Also opening a detox, and all the outpatient clinics in various locations.

And seeing the number of people we serve grow; this has been very satisfying. I am also very proud of the professionalization and professional development of the staff, the counselors. We didn't circumvent quality improvement. But the absolute high point, the most satisfying experience was when MCCA won a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant for the Sobering Center in 1998. It was highly competitive, 13 grants funded out of almost 700 applications, nationwide.

**> Lee:** Have you had any low points, or challenging times?

**> Joe:** I don't think in terms of low points. I think in terms of persisting through adversity. I guess that's my personality. That's who I am. Finding ways to overcome obstacles and be persistent, that's kind of the story with Trinity Glen in Sharon, that's the story with getting this building (MCCA's headquarters at 38 Old Ridgebury Road). And it's the story with Trinity Glen in Kent. You don't give up easy. If something is worth achieving, it's worth being persistent about achieving it.

Now I've encountered setbacks over the years and you just try to persist and overcome them, and learn from them too. When you experience challenges you take a step back and you say, 'Could I have handled this any differently?' Have I made mistakes? Obviously, but you learn from them, you don't let them destroy you, or destroy your organization.

And you know sometimes things have a way of working out for the better. (Joe describes the challenges and opposition he encountered in trying to purchase property in Middlebury years ago for an adolescent treatment program). There was this prayer group that I used to meet with, and still do. I had asked for prayers about being wise and how to pursue this (initiative). Sometimes when you pray for something, and it doesn't work out the way you think it should, it might be that God, in his wisdom, knows more than you and has something better in store. Looking back, had we bought that place, it would have been a disaster.



(To read the full version of this interview, go to [mccaonline.com/Joe](https://mccaonline.com/Joe))

**> Lee:** How important has vision been in your life and in the growth of the agency? It's apparent that you believe in the work you're doing.

**> Joe:** Oh very much so. I believe in the importance of the work that we're doing at MCCA. I believe in trying to serve people, and to help people, and make a difference in people's lives. And with substance abuse, when people get better their lives improve dramatically.

So vision - I think it was George W. Bush that said, "I don't believe in this vision thing." I think I have been able to keep my eye on community needs, area needs, state needs, have some principle about being real, standing up for quality and at the same time not letting *perfect* be the enemy of the good. If you wait until you know everything you need to know, you won't do anything because you're never going to be fully prepared.

**> Lee:** If you could go back in time and talk to your younger self when you first came to MCCA, what would you tell him?

**> Joe:** This is something I've learned over the years from the 'school of hard knocks', try to look at things from other people's perspective and points of view. But at the same time don't make their point of view your own. Have your own point of view and know what you want to accomplish.

If I have to choose between being nice and protecting MCCA's interest or my family's interest, I will choose to protect my interest at the risk of not being nice. Be true to yourself without being arrogant about it, without thinking you know everything. It's contradictory but it's not. Be humble but self-assured; if you're right then fight for what you believe in.

**> Lee:** Where do you see the future of addiction treatment going?

**> Joe:** Once this opiate epidemic peaks out and begins to decline, which it will because epidemics always do, I'm worried that the public support and funding for treatment will diminish and make

it harder to get treatment and services. I am also worried that the opportunistic, for-profit addiction treatment organizations will discredit addiction treatment with their focus on profitability rather than results and outcomes.

**> Lee:** Being in recovery yourself, and having worked in this field, what would you like to share with people working towards recovery?

**> Joe:** Do what it takes, do what it takes to not drink and not do drugs. People are not responsible for their disease; they are not responsible for having become addicted to drugs or alcohol or nicotine. But they are responsible for their recovery. And at some point they have to make the decision to take their life back and take responsibility for their recovery. So do whatever it will take at any given time to not drink or do drugs.



I don't think in terms of low points. I think in terms of persisting through adversity. That's who I am.

# Thank You

The Hanley Family Foundation  
United Way of Western Connecticut  
Union Savings Bank Foundation

Cowles Charitable Trust  
The Robert G. and Marguerite M. Derx Foundation  
The Angel Foundation



## **Acknowledgments**

We gratefully appreciate and acknowledge the support extended to us by the City of Danbury, the Town of Ridgefield, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division, the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, the Veteran's Judicial Branch Administration, the Department of Public Health, and the Department of Children and Families.

# Financial Highlights - By the Numbers

**By being strong and financially stable,** we are able to make a greater impact in helping overcome addiction. In addition to our strong clinical side, our experienced administrative staff, centrally located in Danbury, provides efficiencies of scale.

<b>REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT</b>	<b>FY 2015/16</b>	<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>FY 2015/16</b>
<b>Grants and Financial Assistance</b>		Salaries	\$8,362,315
Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services	\$2,366,359	Payroll Taxes and Fringe Benefits	1,903,828
Connecticut Office of Policy and Management	733,382	Contracted Services	550,552
Department of Children and Family Services	916,150	Travel and Auto	79,783
Department of Public Health	83,156	Conferences, Education, and Training	34,999
Food Stamps	107,774	Materials and Supplies	401,571
Behavioral Health Recovery Support	40,070	Equipment	69,305
City of Danbury	14,000	Food and Food service supplies	506,118
Other Grants and Financial Assistance	30,420	Rent & Real Estate Taxes	316,104
<b>Total Grants and Financial Assistance</b>	<b>\$4,291,311</b>	Utilities	290,851
<b>Other Revenues and Support</b>		Maintenance and Repairs	254,322
Fee for Service	\$9,594,061	Security	41,987
Contract Services	583,567	Communications	100,961
Rental Income	399,257	Insurance	203,108
Contributions and Fundraising	86,426	Legal and Accounting	43,684
Interest and Dividends	158	Interest	184,133
Other Income	72,035	Depreciation and Amortization	444,917
<b>Total Other Revenues and Support</b>	<b>\$10,735,504</b>	Other expenses	92,419
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$15,026,815</b>	<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$13,880,958</b>
		<b>Net Revenue Over (Under) Expense</b>	<b>\$1,145,857</b>

## Our Board of Directors

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Howard Blayney

Sean Owens

Robert A. McDonald, **Vice Chair**

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Judy Ellis Knight

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Where Hope

**Restores Lives**



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