



Advocacy Day 2016

FOR-NY held its 7th Advocacy Day in Albany on February 2nd. Mother Nature cooperated and the hundreds of Recovery allies who came to Albany from throughout the state were greeted with sunshine and mild temperatures. (Not something we see a lot of during Albany winters!)

The day kicked off with a Recovery rally at Emmanuel Baptist Church with welcoming remarks from FOR-NY CEO, Robert Lindsey, Board President, Charles Devlin, and Public Policy Chair, Richard Buckman; and a powerful invocation from Pastor Paul Mead from Friends of Recovery – Warren & Washington. Next came the premiere of FOR-NY's new video, ["The Power of Community. The Power of Recovery."](#)

In addressing the audience, each of our guest speakers demonstrated a clear understanding of the epidemic of addiction sweeping through the state, and the need for more and improved community-based Recovery support services. Each voiced their support for our cause and pledged to work hard to make sure the needs of the Recovery community are met. (To which the audience offered hardy applause!) Our invited guest speakers included:

- Senator George Amedore – Chair of the NYS Senate Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Committee, and Co-Chair of the NYS Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin & Opioid Addiction
- Senator Robert G. Ortz - Co-Chair of the NYS Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin & Opioid Addiction
- Senator Terrence P. Murphy - Co-Chair of the NYS Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin & Opioid Addiction
- Assemblywoman Linda B. Rosenthal – Chair of the NYS Assembly Alcoholism & Drug Committee
- Arlene González-Sánchez – Commissioner of the NYS Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services (OASAS)
- Sheriff Craig D. Apple, Sr. – Albany County Sheriff's Office

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We then welcomed several individuals and family members in Recovery to share their inspiring stories. Sharing their stories were:

- Chacku Mathai - a person in long-term Recovery and one of FOR-NY's founding members
- Ashley Livingston - a young person in sustained Recovery
- Claudia Friszell - Family member
- Julie Ann Brennan – Family member

Next on the agenda was a tribute to FOR-NY co-founder and immediate past-president, Laura Elliott-Engel who passed away in late 2015. Laura was a true friend of Recovery and worked tirelessly on behalf of the Recovery community for most of her adult life. She will be missed by many, but her incredible spirit lives on in the work of FOR-NY. Laura's daughter, Amaris, accepted a plaque honoring her mother and spoke about how much Laura's own Recovery and the work she did on behalf of the Recovery community meant to her.

Following a brief legislative advocacy "teach-in" presented by FOR-NY Director of Policy, Stephanie Campbell, the more than 300 Recovery allies in attendance marched to the Capital to meet with legislators from their Districts and advocate for funding for Recovery support services.

The day was a complete success and received significant positive TV and print press in the capital region, including the cover of the Albany Times-Union.

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