



## Long Island TRN Presents

By Margery David, LCSW LITRN Co-coordinator

In October, 2012 Hurricane Sandy struck. It took the lives of many and devastated communities along the Atlantic Coast. It also brought the members of our Long Island Trauma Recovery Network (TRN) to a startling realization. Even though we were up and running, it was difficult to link into the existing mental health disaster management continuum during the crisis and immediately thereafter. We did not have the established relationships needed to productively connect to the existing local response effort. We were committed to bringing relief for psychological trauma to our community. What could we do to make this happen?

The LITRN could only be effective if others in the community were aware of what we could offer. We also needed to establish ourselves within the existing disaster management system. Our focus became growing our outreach and membership through trainings, conferences and networking. With the support of our parent organization, Trauma Recovery, EMDR Humanitarian Assistance Programs (HAP), we pursued a grant to support the planning of an event to extend our relationships with our local disaster management system and educate mental health professionals about trauma informed care.

On October 3rd, 2015, that event came to fruition. The LITRN hosted a free community education conference for "Trauma Awareness and Readiness on Long Island: A Conference for Mental Health and First responder Professionals". This full day conference was supported by our parent organization, Trauma Recovery/HAP and was funded by a grant received from the Slomo and Cindy Silvan Foundation Inc. coupled with generous donations of food and venue space by the Terry Farrell Firefighter's Fund and Mercy First.

One goal of the event was to increase Long Island's mental health capacity to care for our communities and our First Responders. More specifically, to do so within a trauma informed framework following community tragedies and disasters. The program was also designed to strengthen community linkage in order to provide a strong safety net for the largest suburb outside of New York City with mental health support for both responder personnel and civilians.



*Panel discussion, moderator, Cathy Menzies, LCSW and LITRN Administrator*

An organizational goal of the Long Island TRN was to educate our mental health colleagues about trauma informed care, specifically EMDR therapy. This extended to education about our parent

organization-Trauma Recovery/HAP -and about the Long Island TRN.

Many community relationships within the existing disaster mental health community and other Trauma Recovery Network coordinators have developed and strengthened during the planning of the conference and were further solidified as a result of the well-executed program.

The conference hosted approximately 120 mental health and first responder professionals. Trauma Recovery/HAP's executive director, Carol Martin attended as did Cynthia Wellins, Trauma Recovery/HAP's grant writer, to show their support and provide presence on the national level. Gina Colelli, LCSW, New York City TRN Coordinator, and Karen Alter-Reid, Ph.D Coordinator the Stamford TRN, presented during the day, in addition to NYS Office of Mental Health's Gaylene Pandolfo, LCSW and Dr. Raymond Shelton, Director of the Professional Development National Center for Crisis Management. They joined LI TRN's own presenters, Margery David, LCSW, John Mc Donagh, Ph.D, Anne Marie Lepore, PhD, Susan Sullivan, NPP Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Cathy Menzies, LCSW, Phoebe Kessler, LCSW and Herb Cohen, LCAT.

We are now looking forward to developing action plans going forward to strengthen our TRN and its role within the LI community. Many of the Long Island TRN members have been trained in the New York state protocol for Disaster Mental Health and a follow up training is being planned for those who have not yet been trained. We are planning an R-TEP training and had 25 registrants from the conference request EMDR basic training. There is much more to do however we have now an even greater foundation to build upon going into 2016.



*Dr. Raymond Shelton*



*Susan Sullivan, NPP Mental health Nurse Practitioner and Yoga Instructor, LI TRN Co-Coordinator*



*Karen Alter-Reid, Ph.D & Captain Jacques Roy*