

NAADAC

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NAADAC Announces Award Winners

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ALEXANDRIA, VA – Passion, vision and commitment links the winners of the 2009 awards selected by NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals. The

recipients of these awards have all excelled in their fields and exemplify the qualities held in highest regard by the addiction profession and the community.

The award winners and highlights of their accomplishments are laid out below.

Mel Schulstad Professional of the Year

The Mel Schulstad Professional of the Year award was created in November 1979 and is named after the first President of NAADAC. The award recognizes an individual who has made outstanding and sustained contributions to the advancement of the addiction counseling profession.

Hailing from Austin, Texas, Elizabeth Ann Coccia, Ed. D., LCDC, NCC and Advanced Addiction Counselor, has proven herself a diligent proponent of addiction counseling.

Coccia is currently a Professor in the Human Services Department of the Austin Community College as well as a PRN Counselor at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital's outpatient chemical dependency program.

She is also active in the Texas Association of Addiction Professionals and served as Austin TAAP Chapter President from 2001 to 2004, in which she "consistently demonstrated marvelous mediation, negotiation and organizational skills."

Coccia, who is described by peers as possessing, "personal integrity and an incredible work ethic," has often been lauded for her dedication to improving education and supervision requirements for the field of addiction counseling. She applied for and received a mini-grant to develop curriculum materials to enhance student learning and developed online courses in an attempt to give all students access to education and the opportunity to become licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors.

She was also involved with the Alcohol and Drug Assisted Ministries of Central Texas Dioceses and served as a dedicated addiction educator and trainer to clergy, family and lay persons of all communities of faith.

“Her hard work in the trenches educating and training the new counselors coming into this field has been a sustained and invaluable contribution to the field of Chemical Dependency counseling, treatment, prevention and intervention,” said Richard A. Greene, Vice-President of the Austin Chapter of TAAP and who has worked with Mrs. Coccia for over eight years.

Lora Roe Memorial Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselor of the Year

This award is presented to a counselor who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession of addiction counseling.

Award winner, Neville Pottinger, LCDC, serves as a member of the Texas Certification Board of Addiction Professionals and currently works as the Clinical Services Director, responsible for coordination, implementation and supervision of the Harbor Light Center’s Veteran Affairs Program in
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Houston, T

Described as dependable, understanding, deeply spiritual and kind, Mr. Pottinger is often praised for his ability to work long hours without complaint while maintaining his sense of humor. In her letter of recommendation, Elizabeth Coccia, winner of this year’s Schulstad Professional of the Year said of Pottinger, “Neville exemplifies the standards of this profession—caring, knowledgeable and genuine.”

NAADAC Organizational Achievement Award

Presented to organizations that have demonstrated a strong commitment to the addiction profession and particularly strong support for the individual addiction professional.

The NAADAC Organizational Achievement Award this year goes to Allies in Recovery led by Dr Dominique Simone-Levine. Allies in Recovery (AIR) is a group of researchers, psychologists and social workers with a combined experience of 75 years in the field of substance abuse.

Dr. Simon-Levine started AIR to provide families of those struggling with substance abuse the means to end addiction in their family.

AIR does this through phone coaching, group trainings and consultation. The theoretical cornerstone is Community Reinforcement and Family Training or CRAFT, the most well-studied and the most successful approach for families dealing with addiction.

In its five years, AIR has served over 150 Massachusetts families in person and by phone. AIR works to change the conversation about addiction by creating an informed family that can interact strategically and make educated choices to end substance abuse.

Their goal with clients is threefold: 1. to reduce the harm that addiction is causing in the household; 2. to unblock the situation and get a loved one into appropriate treatment; and 3. to reduce the stress and worry that accompanies addiction.

Using CRAFT, AIR trains family members in how to change their behavior and interact and react to a loved one who is struggling, in a way that unblocks and moves the situation toward recovery. CRAFT outperforms Al-Anon six to one, and the Johnson Institute approach (the interventional method most widely used) three to one: 70% of loved ones agree to enter treatment with CRAFT and 50% reduce their substance use. Even six months after learning CRAFT, families continue to report less anger, depression, family conflict, more family cohesion and report being happier.

AIR has trained close to 100 addiction professionals in CRAFT. Additionally, AIR is currently modifying CRAFT and training counselors to work with the families of inmates and those newly released from the criminal justice system.

AIR was featured as one of the 14 segments on HBO's Emmy Award-winning documentary called "Addiction". Additionally, AIR received the 2008 President's award for service excellence from the Massachusetts Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors.

Dr. David G. Scherer, Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, spoke glowingly of the award winner: "Under the competent and dynamic leadership of Dr. Simon-Levine, Allies in Recovery has matured into a premier training and service provider and is an organization that deserves recognition. Rather than resting on their laurels; they are pressing ahead, evaluating the effectiveness of their work and seeking new ways to disseminate CRAFT."

NAADAC's awards will be presented at the 2009 Sowing the Seeds of Recovery conference being held in Salt Lake City, Utah August 18-22.

For more information on NAADAC's awards and previous award winners, please visit www.naadac.org and click on "Recognition and Awards."

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NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals, is the largest organization for addiction-focused health care professionals. Founded in 1974, NAADAC is committed to the professional development of individuals who treat and prevent addiction. NAADAC also works to improve the provision of treatment services through education and advocacy programs.

“We help people recover their lives.”