



Happy 35th Anniversary to NALGAP

By Philip T. McCabe, CSW, CAS, NALGAP President

NALGAP, the Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Addiction Professionals and their Allies, began in 1979, when co-founders Dana Finnegan and Emily McNally “came out” to faculty and fellow students at the Rutgers’ Summer School of Alcohol Studies and, along with 13 other gay men and lesbians, began the first national organization to address alcohol and addiction issues in the lesbian and gay community. It was their vision of improving treatment for gay and lesbian individuals that was the cornerstone of our association, as was a need to link the brave members of our profession who similarly advocated on behalf of their clients.

During the past 35 years, we have experienced a lot of growth as an association and have seen our field evolve significantly. Counselors gained recognition as addiction professionals. Treatment providers expanded services in the area of prevention. Research has helped to move us from the early debate of the “disease model” to recognition of the neurobiology of addiction. A single approach of treating alcoholics moved to evidence-based practices and inclusion of co-occurring disorders and trauma informed care. A more comprehensive understand of addiction emerged. Training on Codependency, Eating Disorders, Compulsive Gambling, Sexual Compulsive Behavior and an expansion of 12 step fellowships, different models of recovery, self-help, Harm Reduction, Recovery Readiness, Motivational Interviewing, Stages of Change, Client Centered Approaches, Nutrition, Medication Assistance, Spirituality and Mindfulness have become essential in helping others affected by addiction. For 35 years, NALGAP has been there working with others to improve the lives of LGBTQ individuals.

I personally came out in 1978, having struggled for several years to accept myself as a gay man. I recall witnessing the struggle of our community in seeking, first, acknowledgement that lesbian and gay people existed in all walks of life, and progressing to demands for LGBT Rights, Protection, Inclusion and Equality have proliferated. What an exciting time we currently find ourselves in with the changes we have witnessed in our continued fight for equality. Let us always remember the legacy of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Individuals who have led the way, sometimes at great personal loss. Two such individuals are Marty Mann whose story is in the *Big Book Women Suffer Too* and who later



Phil McCabe, President and Raven James, board member celebrate NALGAP’s 35th anniversary at their birthplace – Rutgers Summer School



Dr. Claudia Black and Phil McCabe, NALGAP President, congratulate Dr. Caitlin Ryan on receiving the NALGAP Founders Award 2014

found the National Council on Alcoholism and Barry L., the author of *Living Sober*, which has helped so many individuals in early recovery. Both were early members of AA who made very significant contributions to our field, yet, at the time their sexual orientation was only shared with a close circle of friends.

Today we are proud of the accomplishments and struggles of our past 35 years and honor the work of so many who have carried our mission. We owe an incredible debt of gratitude to two remarkable women, our co-founders Dana Finnegan and Emily McNally. They opened a closet door, and left it open for so many others. We will continue NALGAP’s mission to confront all forms of oppression and discriminatory practices in the delivery of services to all people and to advocate for programs and services that affirm all genders and sexual orientations.

We are happy to join NAADAC for the 2014 Annual Conference & 40th Anniversary Celebration in Seattle, and invite all attendees to our workshops and the NALGAP Plenary Panel Presentation: “LGBT Addiction Treatment and Recovery – Where We Were Then; Where We Are Now?” moderated by Laura Fenster Rothschild, PhD, with panelists including myself, Craig Sloane, Jeff Zacharias, and Raven James, PhD.

NALGAP needs your support ... and your membership to support our mission of confronting all forms of oppression and discriminatory practices in the delivery of services to all people and advocating for programs and services that affirm all genders and sexual orientations. Become a NALGAP member today!

NALGAP’s goals are to create alliances with LGBTQ and other professional organizations to ensure that issues specific to LGBTQ tobacco, alcohol, and drug abusing and addicted clients are addressed and to ensure that LGBTQ clients receive respectful and culturally competent services; and to ensure that the chemical dependency field create a safe and supportive atmosphere for staff members and clients who may be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

NALGAP’s services and activities include an annual newsletter; annual conference; advocacy; involvement in national education, training, and consultation; referrals to treatment; and a clearinghouse on LGBTQ substance abuse.

Visit www.nalgap.org for membership.