

Reflections Over 10 Years in the NAADAC Pond

By Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, NCAC II, CCDC III, SAP, Executive Director of NAADAC

It is not possible to write about the past 10 years as Executive Director at NAADAC without first describing how I came to be at this wonderful association. Many of you would call it a “God Thing.” I left my children, my husband, and a beautiful home of five acres of old wooded timber to come to Washington, D.C. to work at the Central East Addiction Technology Transfer Center (CEATTC) and Danya Institute because I felt a higher calling. With my family’s words “you have to go to make a difference” echoing in my ears, I took the leap to get involved with the addiction profession on a national level. Within my first week in my new and geographically confusing city, I learned that NAADAC was facing difficulties. Within a year, I was recruited by NAADAC’s incoming President, Mary Woods, to help guide NAADAC through a potential merger and the effects of a larger financial crisis. Being a past President of NAADAC, I wanted to do everything I could to support the association that I loved and came on board to assist while continuing my work at CEATTC.

My first item of business was to stabilize NAADAC’s financial situation and build a healthier association. With a small, but dedicated, staff of nine, I went to work to create a strategy and set goals with benchmarks. A major priority was to expand revenue streams. At the time, over 90 percent of the association’s funds came from membership and certification fees. New relationships and partnerships were formed or strengthened, new grants and contracts were signed, new cutting-edge trainings were developed and implemented across the country to increase capability and competency for addiction and other helping professionals, and annual, regional, and state conferences were created with affiliates as key stakeholders and decision makers.

Next, NAADAC needed to step up its advocacy efforts on behalf of the addiction profession. To start, we focused on the Substance Abuse Block Grant, workforce development, and advancement and medical coverage for substance use disorders. Over the past 10 years, I am proud of what NAADAC has helped achieve for both addiction professionals and the clients we serve. Some highlights include: Block Grant sustainability and/or growth; the Second Chance Act; the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; and the new SAMHSA Minority Fellowship Program for Addiction Counselors.

NAADAC has changed and accomplished so much just 10 years, it is hard to choose a few accomplishments to highlight. NAADAC’s Certification Commission became the National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCC AP) and expanded credentials offered to include certifications for adolescent specialists, nicotine dependence specialists, co-occurring disorders, peer recovery professionals, clinical supervisors, and student assistance professionals. NAADAC has also significantly expanded its professional development education program, with the addition of webinars to the cadre of face-to-face and home study trainings offered. Starting with 12 webinars a year, NAADAC now offers over 24 webinars a year and contracts with other groups and organizations to create even more trainings for addiction and other helping professionals. NAADAC’s dedication to the education and professional development of addiction professionals is further demonstrated by our re-launched quarterly magazine for members, *Advances in Addiction &*

Recovery, and our two epublications, the weekly *Professional eUpdate* and the bi-weekly *Addiction & Recovery eNews*.

At the encouragement of SAMHSA’s Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), NAADAC worked in concert with the International Coalition for Addiction Studies Education (INCASE) to create national addiction education curriculum standards for one-year certificates to doctoral-level education programs and was significant in setting the profession of addiction as a credible and legitimate profession against the backdrop of other professionals such as social work, marriage and family, and general counseling. With that accomplished, INCASE and NAADAC formed the National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission (NASAC), the only accrediting body that represents addiction-focused educators and practitioners and accredits all levels of academic education that have Addiction Studies majors, minors, or concentrations. NASAC now sets the standards for what is acceptable education for an addiction professional. At the same time, NAADAC gave technical assistance to a national scope of practice based on a tiered system of progressive professional development that was adopted by a national stakeholders group and then promoted by SAMHSA as a national model.

I’m also proud of NAADAC’s international expansion, and the numerous opportunities for international service, trainings, and education that NAADAC and NAADAC members have been given to help other countries develop their addiction counseling workforce. NAADAC has worked in over 50 countries to train, create certification and training systems “in country,” and to build corresponding affiliates where appropriate. Since 1993, NAADAC has worked in American Samoa, Antigua, Australia, Bermuda, Cambodia, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, El Salvador, Greece, Guam, Hong Kong, Iceland, Indonesia, Kenya, Maldives, New Zealand, Poland, Palo, Puerto Rico, South Africa, South Korea, and Vietnam. While these activities have provided crucially needed development of addiction treatment in other countries, they have also provided many life-changing personal and professional development opportunities for NAADAC staff and members.

It is hard to believe I have been at NAADAC for 10 years and exciting to think about everything the association has accomplished during that time, and during the past 40 years! What a reflection on the many professionals who have chosen to help people recover their lives. I am proud to be your Executive Director and proud to be a NAADAC member and supporter. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for NAADAC and for the addiction profession.

Blessings!

Cynthia Moreno Tuohy



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