

WINTER 2017

news

Locating Services Under One Roof Better Serves Clients



Individuals who struggle with mental illness and substance abuse are best served when treatment is available for both disorders in the same setting, according to the NYS Office of Mental Health and Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services.

For that reason, Equinox has moved its substance abuse Counseling Center into the same building as the agency's Mental Health Outpatient Clinic.

"Co-locating these services under one roof offers substantial benefits to our clients who have co-occurring disorders," said Equinox CEO Dorothy Cucinelli. "This is a best practice model that provides better services

and outcomes for those who are living with these complicated and serious disorders."

Before the move, treatment for a mental health issue or a substance use problem was handled by separate professionals at separate locations. Communications between professional providers was limited by both location and by area of specialty. With treatment now co-located at 500 Central Avenue in Albany, clinicians and therapists are better able to coordinate services, share treatment objectives, and communicate face-to-face in real time.

The team provides clients with coordinated treatment that includes individual and group counseling along with medication therapy.

Improving service delivery to people with co-occurring disorders – which affects about 8 million adults in the U.S. – can have profound consequences. According to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), if one disorder goes undiagnosed or untreated, individuals face a higher likelihood of experiencing homelessness, incarceration, medical illnesses, suicide, or even early death.

When treatment is co-located, SAMHSA notes, "Practitioners can address mental and substance use disorders at the same time, often lowering costs and creating better outcomes." ●

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CEO's Message

2017 has begun unlike any in recent history, and with it has come much uncertainty. Like many nonprofit human services agencies, we are uncertain how we will be affected by changes

in federal funding priorities. But we are certain that the community's need for Equinox has not diminished. So as the year moves forward, we are working diligently to maximize resources and continue to deliver compassionate, effective services in the most efficient way possible.

For example, we have launched a street outreach program that is helping homeless and runaway youth move off the street into safe and stable housing. The program was made possible by the award of a three-year federal grant totaling \$600,000 that we received in the fall of 2016. A key component of the program is our partnership with the Albany Police Department and with In Our Own Voices (IOOV), an Albany nonprofit that serves LGBT young people of color. IOOV's unique expertise is helping us most effectively engage youth on-the-street and encourage them to access the comprehensive services and support available through the street outreach program.

Further, as you read on the front page, we have taken steps to better treat individuals struggling with the complicated diagnosis of co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders. Co-locating these services is an excellent example of how we are working to best use our resources for the benefit of those we serve.

We feel especially grateful to have such loyal donors and friends, many of whom have been by our side for decades. Of course we are also heartened to welcome new supporters to the Equinox family. We are thankful for every supporter and every gift of every size – from individuals, community organizations, corporations, and private foundations.

But that generosity is something we do not take for granted. During this time of uncertainty, we know that many more nonprofits may turn to you for your support. We hope you will continue to invest in Equinox – and in the youth, adults, and families whose lives we have been working together to make better. They need us more than ever.

In gratitude,

Dorothy S. Cucinelli, PhD

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Foundations Invest in Equinox

Equinox has been the beneficiary of several substantial grants since last summer. We are very grateful to these funders for generously investing in Equinox's mission and supporting our efforts to improve the lives of those we serve.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) • \$600,000. This grant from the HHS Family and Youth Services Bureau is funding a comprehensive Street Outreach Program aimed at connecting runaway, homeless and street-involved youth with safe and stable housing and a range of community resources. The grant provides \$200,000 a year for three years. Partner agencies In Our Own Voices and the APD share in the funding.

The Hearst Foundations • \$50,000. With this generous grant, the Hearst Foundations again support the Youth Outreach Center (YOC) and mentoring programs. Since 1994 the YOC has been a safe and welcoming haven for thousands of urban youth (ages 13-24) growing up amidst poverty and violence. The mentoring programs provide youth with positive role models, fulfilling activities, life skills, and life-expanding opportunities during high-risk, non-school hours.

The Daniel & Susan Pfau Foundation • \$25,000. Equinox is grateful to the Pfau Foundation for its second grant to the YOC. These funds help support critical services to hundreds of young people every year, including crisis intervention, such as linkages to emergency shelter, and physical and mental health care; advocacy to remove obstacles to school attendance; and help forming connections with family, school, and community.

B'nai B'rith Gideon Foundation • \$25,000. This meaningful grant was awarded in support of Equinox's Project Independence (PI). PI provides homeless youth and young adults with rental assistance and support services as they develop life and employment skills to prepare for permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

Verizon HopeLine • \$20,000. The continued support of Verizon HopeLine has helped Equinox provide comprehensive services to domestic violence survivors and their children. These services – 24-hour hotline, emergency shelter, counseling, advocacy, and supported transitional housing – provide the support, guidance, and safety that enable victims to take steps toward a violence-free and independent life.



Equinox Community Snapshots



Fuccillo Gift Makes a HUGE Difference – Again!

For the third year in a row, the Fuccillo Auto Group pledged \$100 from every auto it sold in New York State during October (Domestic Violence Awareness Month) – to go to organizations that provide services to domestic violence victims. And once again Equinox was the Capital Region beneficiary, receiving a check for more than \$57,000. Equinox is extremely grateful to Billy Fuccillo and the Fuccillo Auto Group for this tremendous generosity and advocacy. Equinox annually provides services to more than 2,000 DV survivors, including more than 200 a year who find safety at the DV Shelter. Pictured is Equinox CEO Dorothy Cucinelli with a “huge” cut-out of Billy Fuccillo.



UALbany Club Donates Dozens of Warm Coats

Members of the UAlbany branch of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) conducted a coat and toy drive, collecting dozens of new coats and action figures for youth and children who receive services through Equinox Youth and Domestic Violence Programs. Pictured in the lobby of Equinox's 95 Central Ave. location are representatives of LULAC and Equinox.



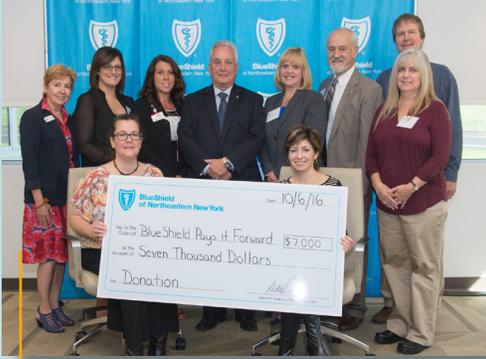
What a Partner! St. Peter's Health Partners Supports Domestic Violence Services

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October, employees at St. Peter's Hospital and Albany Memorial Hospital collected clothing, baby supplies, diapers, and toiletries for women and children living at the Equinox DV shelter. In addition, St. Peter's Health Partners staff raised \$5,000 for Equinox DV services. Pictured is Equinox CEO Dorothy Cucinelli and generous members of the St. Peter's Hospital Medical staff.



Raymour & Flanigan Furnishes Help

Many thanks to Raymour & Flanigan in Niskayuna for again encouraging their employees and customers to support Equinox and the Annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner (T-Day). Its in-store event raised \$900 for T-Day. We also appreciate their help each year in working with local elementary schools to create Thanksgiving cards to accompany the meals delivered on Thanksgiving Day. Pictured is Equinox Director of Development and Community Relations Christina Rajotte (center) with Store Manager Steve Benidt and Danielle Kriss, Showroom Manager.



BlueShield Casual Day Benefits Equinox, but Nothing Casual About Our Gratitude!

Many thanks to BlueShield of Northeastern New York for “paying it forward” to seven local community organizations including Equinox, each of which received \$1,000. We are also grateful to BlueShield of NENY for partnering with Equinox as a sponsor of the second annual ThanksGathering Celebration. In the photo, Dr. Kirk Panneton (center), BSNENY Regional Executive & Medical Director with Christina Rajotte (to immediate right of Dr. Panneton), Equinox Director of Development and Community Relations.



Regeneron Generates Excitement for Our Youth

Regeneron Pharmaceuticals donated and delivered five flat-screen televisions to Equinox’s Youth Outreach Center and Transitional Living Program – replacing older TVs and providing additional ones for more youth to enjoy. Pictured are youth in the Outreach Center playing a video game on the new TV while they wind down after school.



Bank of America Supports Homeless Youth

Thank you to Bank of America Charitable Foundation for its gift of \$5,000 to the Equinox Transitional Living Program (TLP), which provides supervised housing and support services for homeless and runaway youth. Pictured is Allyson Tallman (left), Equinox Youth Services Director, with Jillian Pasco from Bank of America. Jillian presented the check to Allyson during her tour of TLP.



Companies Compete, Equinox Wins! SEFCU Smartest Company Trivia Contest

The SEFCU Smartest Company Trivia Competition was a fun and fast-paced contest that not only had area companies matching wits against one another, but was also a benefit for agencies that provide services to homeless individuals and families. Equinox, Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless, and St. Paul’s Center were all winners. Thank you to SEFCU and all participants for the \$2,500 gift. (And that’s no trivial matter!) Pictured with Christina Rajotte (center) is the Equinox Staff Trivia Team: Kayla Pisciotta, Dwayne Martin, Colleen Chera, Kate LaFerriere, and Nicole Badalato.

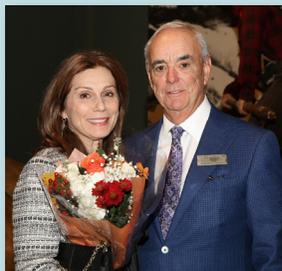


TD Bank “Bring Change” Event Helps Make a Positive Change for Homeless Youth

Thank you to TD Bank for encouraging the community to support Equinox’s Transitional Living Program (TLP) for homeless youth! Its Bring Change event, held in September, provided customers with the opportunity to donate their change, topped off with a corporate contribution from the bank. The event raised more than \$2,100. Pictured is TD Bank’s Cara Schroeder (left) with Kate LaFerriere, Equinox Annual Giving & Events Coordinator.

ThanksGathering Celebration Kicks Off the Holiday Season

More than 250 friends and supporters of Equinox came together on November 10 for a festive ThanksGathering Celebration – and to mark the unofficial countdown to the Equinox Thanksgiving Community Dinner. The Adirondack exhibit at the NYS Museum again provided the perfect backdrop for a lively evening of delicious seasonal food and beverage tastings, jazz, and very successful raffle and gift card pull.



Equinox Companies President J. Eric King and his wife Kathy Thiel.

Equinox CEO Dorothy Cucinelli and Board Chair Steve Baboulis took the opportunity to recognize the enormous contributions of the 2016 Thanksgiving Community Dinner Committee (above). A very big thank you to all of our Sponsors who helped make the evening such a success! A special acknowledgement to the event's returning Presenting Sponsor: Equinox Development Companies – a company that shares our great name. Some of our sponsors have been with us for years, including major sponsors: Hannay Reels, Tri-City Rentals, and KeyBank – we're so grateful for their ongoing support. Also, many thanks to our inaugural sponsors for renewing their support: Schuyler Companies and Albany Broadcasting. We were delighted to welcome our new sponsors: MVP Health Care, Bolton St Johns, Earl B. Feiden Appliance, Hinman Straub, and Janitronics.

Award Winning Partnership!

The NYS Broadcasters Association presented Equinox and Albany Broadcasting with a "Serving New York" Award in recognition of our successful partnership. As the ThanksGathering Celebration media sponsor, Albany Broadcasting has used the power of their six radio stations (and websites) to promote the event and encourage the community to support Equinox and the Thanksgiving Community Dinner. And B95.5 Program Director and on-air talent Chad O'Hara has been ThanksGathering's enthusiastic emcee. Pictured is Chad O'Hara (far right) with Equinox Board Chair Steve Baboulis and CEO Dorothy Cucinelli.



10-Year-Old Wins Contest, and Our Hearts

Before 10-year-old Luke Finlan found out how much money his family had won from America's Funniest Videos (AFV), he asked his parents if they could donate some of their winnings to help homeless individuals and veterans. Luke's parents Kathy and Jon thought that was a wonderful idea.

"Luke felt that our family was already blessed, and he wanted to share his blessings," said Luke's mother Kathy.

When the very sweet video of Luke tearing up at his elementary school graduation won 1st Place in November, the Finlans made generous donations to Equinox's Thanksgiving Community Dinner and Soldiers Heart. On the Sunday before Thanksgiving, the Finlans visited the Empire State Plaza and got a tour of the extensive "T-Day" operations, where preparations had begun on the 10,000 meals.

Not only did the Finlans donate \$1,000 of their winnings, they went on to spread the word about Equinox on Facebook through a "Turkey Challenge" and teamed up with Wolf's 1-11 for a fundraiser drawing nearly 300 supporters.



All in all, the Finlans raised close to \$4,000 for Equinox's Annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner and collected hundreds of cans of yams!

Because of Luke and his family, students at South Colonie elementary and middle schools made festive Thanksgiving cards that were included with Equinox meals delivered on Thanksgiving Day.

And there's more! AFV was so impressed with the Finlan family's generosity that they ran a follow-up piece on January 15. The nationally broadcast segment featured an interview the Finlans did with Time Warner Cable News during their visit to the T-Day operations.

"Equinox was thrilled and honored to be a beneficiary of this remarkable young man's generosity and advocacy," said Christina Rajotte, Equinox Director of Development and Community Relations, "What an inspiration to all of us!"

STAY CONNECTED!

Visit us at equinoxinc.org and
at facebook.com/EquinoxAlbany.
Or visit us in person. Call (518) 434-6137, ext. 5366 to schedule a
tour. We'd love to see you!



Donate online
www.equinoxinc.org



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Same great shop, new hours!

Great Finds, the Equinox women's thrift boutique, has new hours.
The store is now open **Tuesday through Friday, 12 noon to 5 pm**. Plan to stop by 260 Washington Avenue in Albany
and check out the wonderful selection of gently used, stylish clothing and accessories.

There are truly great finds at great prices – and you'll be supporting Equinox and our clients!

Holiday Gift Drive Makes Season Brighter

Many thanks to our generous community for supporting the Equinox Holiday Gift Drive in December. Because of all the individuals, families, organizations, and businesses who participated, we were able to distribute gifts to many of our clients through our Youth and Domestic Violence programs. Below are some of our community partners who helped make the holidays bright for children, youth, and families facing difficult circumstances.



Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha PSI Fraternity	The D'Angelo Team at Keller Williams
Capital Luxury Cars	The Yoga Loft
CDM Smith	Trinity United Methodist Church (Albany)
Church of the Immaculate Conception (Glenville)	UHY, LLP/UHY Advisors
Crisafulli Bros. Plumbing and Heating	Verizon Albany FSC
McGeary's Irish Pub	Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker LLP
NYS DOT Office of Right of Way	
SEI Design Group	
The Affinity Group	