



Human Resources Administration
Department of Social Services
Steven Banks, Commissioner

HRA's HIV/AIDS Services Administration Celebrates 30th Anniversary

In 1985, during the height of the AIDS epidemic, when those living with the disease often could not receive care due to prejudice and ignorance, HRA created one of the first and most comprehensive programs to serve this vulnerable population. For thirty years, the Division of AIDS Services, which later became the HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) has provided those living with HIV and AIDS with vital assistance with housing, comprehensive case management, and a variety of other services to help them stay healthy. Medical advances have greatly improved outcomes for those living with the disease, and HASA is now working closely with partners in the City, State and advocate community to end the AIDS epidemic in New York by promoting access to care, education and supportive services.



HRA Chief Special Services Officer Daniel Tietz



HASA Deputy Commissioner Jacqueline Dudley



New York City Councilmember Corey Johnson

On Wednesday, January 13, HRA held an event to commemorate 30 years of the groundbreaking HASA program and the effect it has had on New Yorkers' lives.

"You have saved so many lives, and done an amazing job at saving an important piece of the world. Thank you," said New York State Senator Thomas Duane.

"HIV/AIDS is a disease of poverty," said City Councilmember Corey Johnson, "To address it we need to lift people out of poverty and treat them with the respect they deserve, which you do every day."

February 11, 2016

“HASA is a unique program that has been at the center of the struggle against AIDS since 1985,” said Jacqueline Dudley, Deputy Commissioner of HASA. “There have been extensive medical advances, but the work of HASA goes on.”



New York State Senator Thomas Duane



New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute Director Dan O'Connell

The event also featured remarks from Dan O'Connell, Director of the AIDS Institute at the New York State Department of Health, which works closely with HASA. Mr. O'Connell spoke about the joint commitment by the City and State to end the AIDS epidemic by 2020.

“Right now the energy is all around doing something no one has been able to do, to end the AIDS epidemic without a cure or a vaccine,” said Mr. O'Connell. “We can do it with the tools we have right now, and the reason we can is because of the approach we've taken. To confront an epidemic like AIDS we had to change the system—and we did with programs like HASA and the AIDS Institute, and in hospitals and communities throughout the State.”



*Brightpoint Health Enroller and Former HASA Client Kevin Arnold
and Executive Assistant to HRA's Chief Special Services Officer
Felix Rodriguez*



*HASA staff celebrate their colleagues' service at the anniversary
event*

Kevin Arnold, a former HASA client who is now a Credentialed Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor and enroller for health and home care at Brightpoint Health also spoke at the event. Mr. Arnold shared an inspiring story about his struggle to overcome addiction, and how the HASA program was able to give him the support and services he needed to get clean, go back to school and begin a new career.

Chief Special Services Officer Daniel Tietz and Deputy Commissioner Jacqueline Dudley presented awards for Outstanding Service to HRA staff and community partners for their dedication to the fight against AIDS, and presented ten HASA staff members with the John Maher Award for Service.

John Maher started working for HRA in 1985, and in 1993 was assigned to what was then The Division of AIDS Services and Income Support (DASIS). During John's years with DASIS and HASA, he worked as a supervisor, Director of Field Operations and Director of Eligibility and Fair Hearings. John performed all his duties with professionalism and pride. To those who worked with him, John was a mentor, a consultant and a trusted advisor. John was well-regarded throughout HRA and in the community for his institutional knowledge and his dedication to HASA clients. Sadly, John Maher passed on May 6, 2013. To acknowledge John's outstanding service and commitment to the HASA program and clients, the John Maher Award for Service was named in his honor and given to HASA staff who also demonstrate outstanding service and commitment.

HRA staff that have devoted 20 years of service or more to the HASA program were also honored for their dedication and commitment.

Dennis Velez, Director of the Kingsbridge HASA Center, delivered the closing remarks. Mr. Velez shared stories of the early days of the program, scouting the city for locations that could house HASA clients.

"This is a calling for many of us, as it is for me," said Mr. Velez. "Some of us have seen many people die, and you don't forget that. It's an honor to be here with all of you. I commend all of you for your working with HASA, and I hope you continue your great work. Your dedication is what's needed to serve our clients."