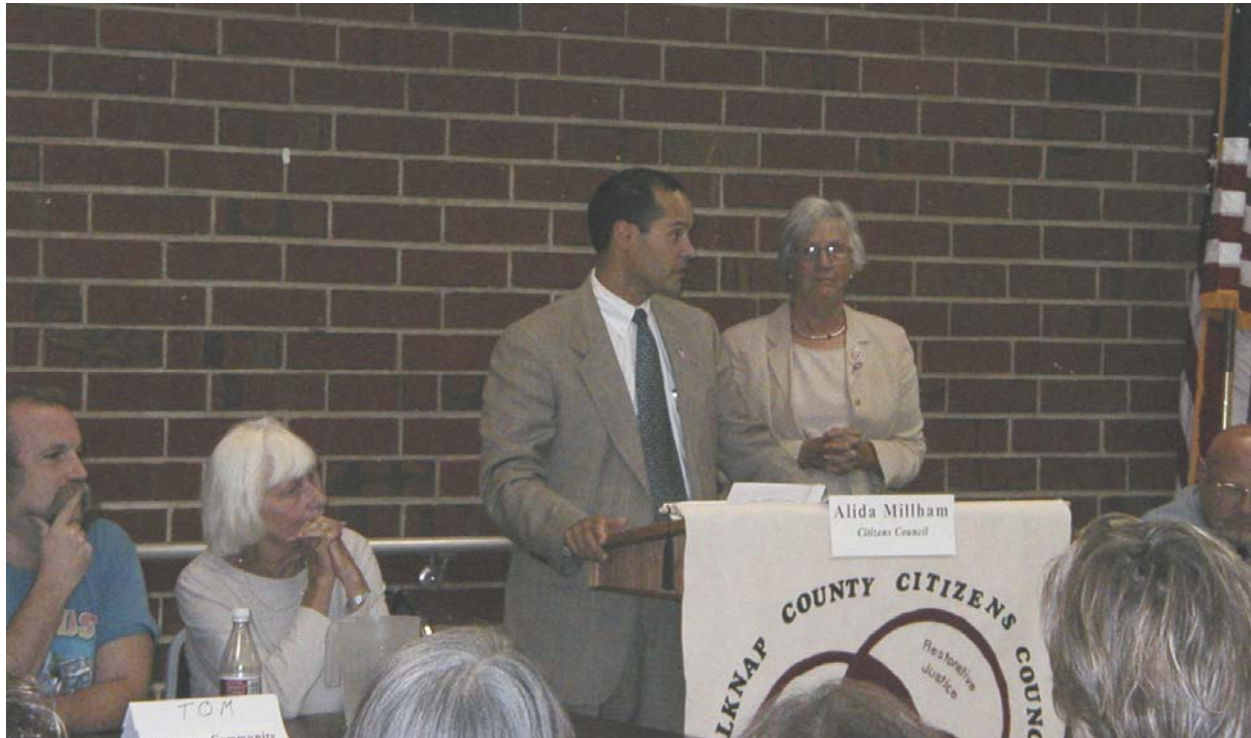




Belknap County Observes National Recovery Month



LACONIA: Belknap County is participating in National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, as stated in a Proclamation presented by County Commissioner Christopher Boothby to those attending a special briefing on Wednesday, September 1 at the County Complex off North Main Street in Laconia.



NH Health and Human Services Commissioner John Stephen, standing at podium with Alida Millham, participates in the September 1st Press Briefing that launched a countywide observance of National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month in Belknap County.

The Proclamation signed by the three County Commissioners celebrates the efforts and progress of the many citizens in Belknap County who are in recovery from alcohol and drug use disorders as well as those who have helped them find treatment and provided support along the way.

The briefing and the month-long observance has been organized by the Belknap County Addictions Task Force, a committee of the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families. Alida Millham, Chair of the Citizens Council, facilitated the hour-long briefing.

According to Addictions Task Force Chair, Jacqui Abikoff, Director of Horizons Counseling Center, statistics from the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) frame alcohol and drug use disorders - which include misuse, abuse, dependence, or addiction to alcohol and drugs - as a “major public health problem in the United States.”



Alida Millham, Chair of the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families (standing) facilitates the panel discussion at the Press Briefing on September 1, 2004. Panelists (L-R) Sue Caldon and Jacqui Abikoff shared from their experiences as professionals in the field of substance abuse, treatment, and recovery.

Abikoff, who participated with eight other panelists in discussing the recovery process at the briefing, says, “What must truly concern all of us is how these numbers actually play out in Belknap County. Addictions don’t belong to one segment of the population. The impact is everywhere.”

“And equally alarming,” she adds, “is realizing that only a small portion of those that need and ask for treatment are actually receiving this help.” Abikoff explains that the capacity in Belknap County is very limited with no residential treatment services at all. “Folks have to stand in line and wait weeks and

months for a bed to open up elsewhere.” She says that this type of monitored and focused setting is needed for many, especially given the complexity of problems that often accompany alcohol and drug disorders.

“Unfortunately, there are only a handful of outpatient programs and trained substance abuse counselors operating in Belknap County. And most of us have long waiting lists and limited resources to help them. This reality is discouraging to those people who are making steps to change a lifetime of alcohol and drug addiction.”

Abikoff adds that one of the most serious barriers to treatment is the stigma associated with being an alcoholic or a drug addict. Countering these perceptions, she is quick to point out that the success rate for those who are in recovery is about the same as those who are dealing with any chronic ailment, such as diabetes or heart disease.

She states that the stigma attached to addiction “makes it risky for those in recovery to come forward and acknowledge their own success,” explaining that the “public face of addiction is that of an individual whose life and relationships are ravaged by the disease and not of the productive citizens for whom recovery is working on a daily basis.

“We need to know that Belknap County’s most valuable resources for combating drug and alcohol problems are those people who are successfully in recovery.”

Other panelists included Sue Caldon, Director of the Nathan Brody Chemical Dependency Program at LRGHealthcare; Niki Miller, Director of the new NH Task Force on Women and Addictions; Gary Groleau, Director of Human Resources at NH Ball Bearing, Inc, Astro Division; Jody Fine, Director of Adult Services at Genesis Behavioral Health; Rufus Chafee, NH Division of Public Health Services; Joe Harding, Director of Friends of Recovery, New Hampshire; and two members from the recovery community, Tom and Helga.

The event also included ten “Partners in Treatment and Recovery Certificates of Appreciation”, presented by the Belknap County Citizens Council to those individuals and entities who have made outstanding contributions in aiding the recovery of individuals in Belknap County, and beyond.

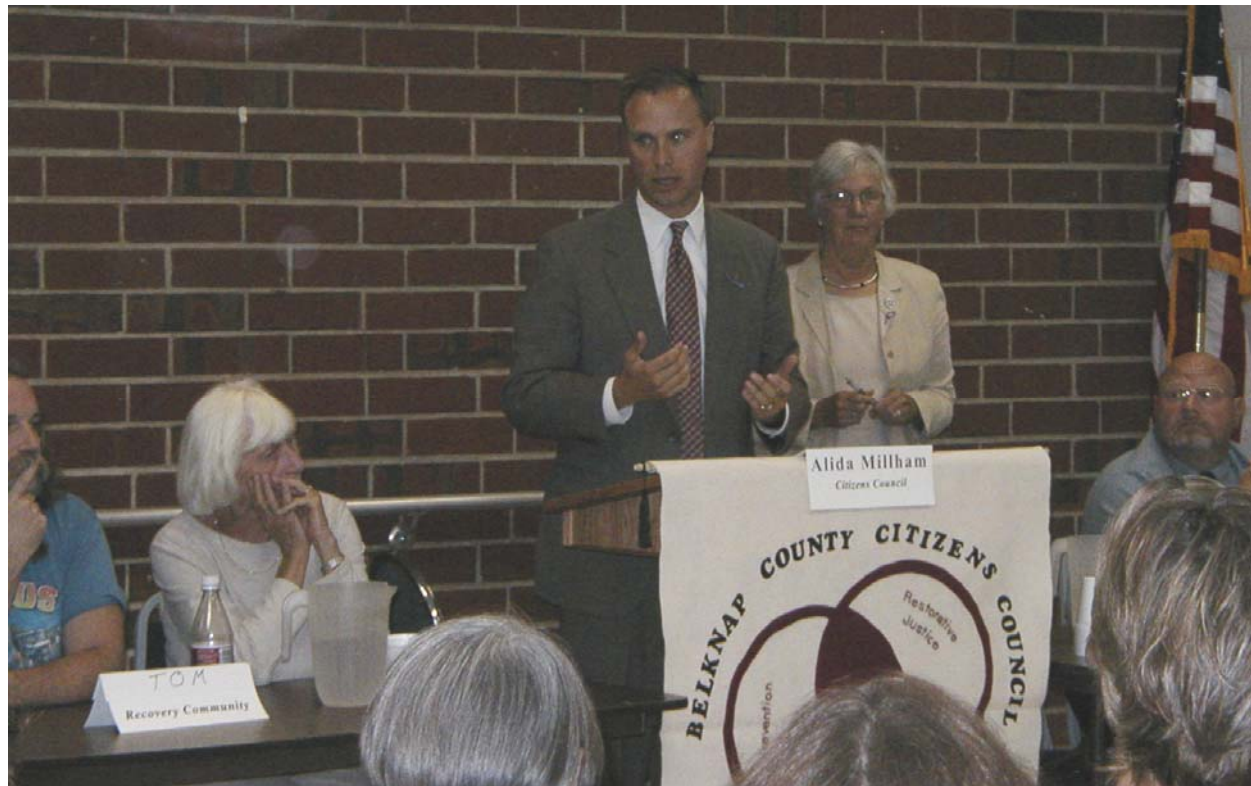
Eight individuals were cited by Millham, including Sue Caldon; Tom Peters, a recently retired Substance Abuse Counselor with the NH prison system; his wife, Gloria Peters, who leads support groups



Shown holding their Certificates of Appreciation as “Partners in Recovery and Treatment are four of the eight recipients (L-R) Helga Garger, Tom Peters, Gloria Peters, and Carolee Longley. Standing at the far right is Alida Millham, Chair of the Belknap County Citizens Council who presented the certificates from the Council, and Council Executive Director, Alan Robichaud. Missing from the photo are the other four recipients: Sue Caldon, Jacqui Abikoff, Tina Pillsbury, and Connie Ryan.

for those affected by addictions; Carolee Longley, Home-School Coordinator at Winnisquam Regional School District; Tina Pillsbury, Juvenile Probation and Parole Office and a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor who works with juveniles in Belknap and Grafton Counties; Connie Ryan, Board Member for Horizons Counseling Center; and Helga Garger, who retired recently following more than 20 years as a Licensed Counselor with the Nathan Brody Chemical Dependency Program.

Two agencies that focus on outpatient substance abuse treatment were also named as recipients of this first time Partners Award. Commended for their long service to the Lakes Region were the Nathan Brody Chemical Dependency Program, developed several decades ago by Dr. Nathan Brody who was a member of the LRGH medical staff and a pioneer in the field of alcohol and drug abuse treatment, and the Horizons Counseling Center, that operates a variety of treatment and support programs from their Gilford and Plymouth sites.



Christopher Boothby, Belknap County Commissioner, reads from the official Proclamation naming September as National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month in Belknap County at the September 1st Press Briefing held in the County Complex. Standing with Boothby is Alida Millham, Chair of the Citizens Council and the facilitator for this event.

The list of planned activities for the remainder of the month-long observance of National Recovery Month include presentations for the media and for local service and civic organizations, recognition from the pulpits of several of this area's churches, an Open House at the re-located Nathan Brody Chemical Dependency Program, the annual Horizons Counseling Center Auction, and the launching of a year-long

“Voices of Recovery” project, an effort to gather statements from Belknap County residents who are successfully in recovery into one collection. A complete listing of events follows. *(or is listed elsewhere)*.

The mission of the Citizens Council, composed of representatives from each of the eleven communities in Belknap County, is to promote community justice throughout the county so that children and families can live safely with dignity and respect. For more information about the Addictions Task Force or the Citizens Council, one may call 528-3185 or visit www.bccj.org



ACTIVITIES RELATED TO RECOVERY MONTH

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Place</u>
Sept 1	11 am	Press Briefing	County Complex, Laconia
Sept 14	6 pm	Presentation to the Zonta Club by Jacqui Abikoff and Sue Caldon	Taylor Congregate Center, Laconia
Sept 18	6 pm	8 th Annual Fundraising Auction Horizons Counseling Center	Congregational Church, Laconia
Sept 24	12 pm	Presentation to the Lakes Business Group by Jacqui Abikoff and Sue Caldon	Taylor Congregate Center, Laconia
Sept 26	10:30 am	Recovery Sunday Focus of service on Recovery, featuring Dan Daniszewski and Rev. Sharron LaMothe	United Baptist Church, Lakeport
Sept 27	8:30 am	Monthly Meeting – Belknap County Addictions Task Force	River Level Meeting Room, Busiel Mill, Laconia
Sept 27	5-7 pm	Quarterly Meeting – NH Task Force on Women & Addictions	Congregational Church, Laconia
Sept 28	12 pm	Presentation to the UpStream Coalition by Niki Miller	Congregational Church, Laconia
Sept 29	3-5 pm	New Futures 6 th Annual Leadership Recognition and Awards	Grappone Center, Concord
Sept 29	4-7 pm	Open House – Nathan Brody Chemical Dependency Program	25 Fairview St, Laconia