



# COUNSELING NEWS

Winter 2020

YMCA COUNSELING SERVICE

## RECONNECTING FAMILIES A YMCA FAMILY ASSOCIATION STORY

"I started coming to the Y because my daughter, Alyssa, was struggling with substance misuse and was seeking help. When we found out about the **Family Association**, Alyssa pushed my wife and I to go, so we started going every Wednesday. At first, it's hard to accept because it's a lot of information all at once, but it does help. If you keep coming, you get a little bit of information at a time that helps you. You take whatever is being said, and not only do you relate it to your loved one's substance misuse, but it relates back to your personal life as well. I've been coming here for three and a half years and even though I don't need to come here for Alyssa's substance misuse anymore, I still come here for myself. It helps me more with my personal life in terms of how I relate to people and how I deal with things better. It's helped me deal with a lot of different issues, not just substance misuse. The coping methods that I've learned have even helped me a lot in the workplace too.



The first meeting is a little overwhelming because you don't know what to speak about or what the right thing to do is. What I promised myself - and what I tell every person that comes here - is to give it at least five meetings. After five meetings, if you feel like you're not benefitting from it, then at least you tried. In my first few meetings, I didn't say a word. You take a lot of things in and then you start easing up and getting comfortable with the people in the room and realize how supportive everyone really is. More importantly, you realize that every story you hear is the same story you're going to tell. People think that they're alone, but they're not. It's the same story, but it's just different characters.

The staff and counselors at the Y - especially Christine, Barbara, and JoAnne - guided me through this process and helped me obtain a stronger relationship with my daughter. This place not only saved her life, but it gave her a life, and it did the same thing for me. It makes me feel better to still come here and speak to the people who are coming here for the first time. I'm able to help them have an understanding of what's going on and what the process is. Hearing it from a therapist is great, but hearing it from someone who went through it first-hand is a lot more impactful. That's what happened for me - I heard it first-hand from other parents at my first meeting three and a half years ago. You develop a friendship and a bond. You've never seen anything stronger than the support system here at the group."

The **Family Association** is held every Wednesday from 7-8:30PM at the South Shore Center of the YMCA Counseling Service. It is free and open to the community. For more information, please contact the YMCA Counseling Service at 718-948-3232.

South Shore Center, 3911 Richmond Avenue  
Staten Island, New York 10312 (718) 948-3232

North Shore Center, 285 Vanderbilt Avenue  
Staten Island, New York 10304 (718) 981-4382

### OPEN INTAKE HOURS \*NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY\*

#### South Shore Center (3911 Richmond Avenue)

Monday 1:30PM - 3:30PM  
Tuesday 10:30AM - 11:30AM  
Wednesday 4:00PM - 6:00PM  
Thursday 1:30PM - 2:30PM  
Friday 3:30PM - 5:30PM  
Saturday 10:30AM - 12:30PM

#### North Shore Center (285 Vanderbilt Avenue)

Tuesday 1:30PM - 3:30PM  
Thursday 4:00PM - 6:00PM

### WHO WE ARE

The YMCA Counseling Service is a comprehensive outpatient chemical dependency program providing prevention, treatment and recovery services to children, adolescents, adults and their families. It also serves as an immigrant resource center, providing vital services such as ESOL and Citizenship Preparation classes through its New Americans Welcome Center.

### OUR SERVICES

- ◆ Assessment Services
- ◆ Individual Counseling
- ◆ Group Counseling
- ◆ Family Therapy
- ◆ Psychiatric Services
- ◆ Addiction Medicine Management
- ◆ Immigrant Services

### ENJOY THIS ISSUE?

Feel free to share this newsletter with anyone who you think may find it useful.

### QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR IDEAS?

Contact Anna Bagliore, the editor, at [abagliore@ymcanyc.org](mailto:abagliore@ymcanyc.org).

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## MEET OUR STAFF!

### MEET JUSTINA & STEPHANIE!

#### MEET JUSTINA!



Justina is a Prevention Counselor at the YMCA Counseling Service. As a Prevention Counselor, Justina works with grades K-12 in schools across Staten Island to educate them on drug prevention using evidence-based programs.

Justina enjoys her work at the Y because she feels like she is making an impact in the lives of families on Staten Island and within the community. The Y has also given Justina the opportunity to go back to school for her advanced certificate in Mental Health Counseling.

When Justina is not working with her students, she enjoys spending time with her family. She is the oldest of five siblings, all of which live in different states throughout the country.



#### MEET STEPHANIE!

Stephanie is one of our teachers at the YMCA's New Americans Welcome Center. She began her career with the Y in 2011 as a Hospitality Agent.

Stephanie enjoys her work as a NAWC teacher because she's able to use her creativity to deliver a curriculum that's interesting and accessible to her students while helping them reach their citizenship goals. Her favorite part about her role is getting to work with her wonderful co-workers and students at the Y!

When Stephanie is not helping her students at the Y, she enjoys spending time with her three cats.

## CELEBRATING SAFER INTERNET DAY

### YMCA COUNSELING SERVICE PARTNERS WITH GOOGLE TO ENCOURAGE SAFER INTERNET PRACTICES

February 11th is **Safer Internet Day**, a landmark event in the online safety calendar. From cyberbullying to social networking, each year Safer Internet Day aims to raise awareness of emerging online issues and chooses a topic reflecting current concerns.

This year, the YMCA Counseling Service was proud to partner with **Google** to host Internet safety workshops at both our North Shore and South Shore sites. These workshops were hosted by **Justina Gibbs** and **Stephanie Parathyras**.

This event was able to serve a number of parents, clients, students, and staff. If you were unable to attend either of our Safer Internet Day workshops, we have some **helpful tips** to share with you:

1. **Be a positive presence online just like in real life.**
2. **Think before you post.**
3. **Protect your secrets.**
4. **Don't assume that people online will see you the way you think they'll see you.**
5. **It's always important to respect other people's privacy choices, even if they aren't the choices you'd make yourself.**

