



CONTACT: Trista G. Meister
239-354-1468

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2014

David Lawrence Center Honors Four at 25th Annual Recovery Month Awards Dinner

Naples, FL - The David Lawrence Center, Collier County's only comprehensive, not-for-profit mental health and substance abuse treatment facility serving children, adults and families, is joining the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and other voices of recovery from across the nation to observe the 25th Annual National Recovery Month. This event, held every September, increases awareness and understanding of mental and substance abuse disorders, and promotes the message that behavioral health is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.

This year's theme, "Join the Voices for Recovery: Speak Up, Reach Out," encourages people to openly discuss mental health and substance use disorders and the reality of recovery and it aims to foster public understanding and acceptance of behavioral health conditions.

David Lawrence Center will honor the observance by celebrating individuals and organizations in our community for their outstanding contributions to support those in recovery at the Annual Recovery Month Awards Ceremony. The event will be held on Thursday, September 25th, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. at the New Hope Community Center located at 7676 Davis Boulevard in Naples.

This year we are honoring the following individuals and organizations for sharing their voices to foster public understanding and acceptance of behavioral health conditions:

PAWS Assistance Dogs is being honored as our volunteer pet therapy partner. The PAWS Assistance Dogs are specially trained, intuitive and compassionate canines that provide much needed assistance to those in need. Through our collaborative partnership, this organization and their volunteers have embraced our mission and helped bring an innovative, proven therapeutic healthcare practice to our inpatient and residential treatment programs. PAWS

brings their puppy cadets waiting to be placed with a disabled veteran to train with our residents. The puppies practice healthy socialization and therapy skills while our clients experience firsthand the numerous benefits of pet therapy including lowered anxiety and blood pressure, increased feelings of comfort, improved mood, increased positive socialization and reinforcement of gentle interactions. Participants also learn positive strategies for behavior modification which can help them as they learn to manage their recovery.

Vivian Parziale is being honored for her work as an active leader in the David Lawrence Center Alumni Association and a recovery community volunteer. She has achieved over seven years of sobriety. She selflessly volunteers her time to sponsor others in their journey to recovery and shares her experience, strength and hope with women by facilitating weekly 12-steps meetings in the jails and at the David Lawrence Center Crossroads addiction and recovery program. In addition, she dedicates her time to assist women in recovery at St. Matthew's House by helping them prepare their resumes and get professional attire for interviews ensuring their successful reintegration back into employment and personal sustainability. For the last five years, she has also dedicated her time to coordinate annual events, fundraisers and volunteer efforts for the DLC Alumni Association.

Master Officer Bill Gonsalves is being honored for his work as the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Coordinator with the Naples Police Department (NPD). As a 28-year veteran with the NPD, he has a passion for helping those with a mental health and/or substance abuse diagnosis. He was recognized by his peers as well as several families he helped when he received the CIT Officer of the Year Award in 2009. He is known for his patience, compassion and diligence in his work with those most vulnerable and has been directly responsible for saving lives. He also serves on the board of the National Alliance for Mental Illness.

Gulf Coast Runners (GCR) is being honored as an invaluable generous donor and Drug Court Recovery partner. This year, they partnered with the David Lawrence Center Young Executives for their Beach Bum Run helping to raise money for the mental health first aid prevention program. In addition, for the last several years, they have given participants in the Drug Court program the opportunity to enthusiastically volunteer at their events as part of their community service work. The men and women who make up Gulf Coast Runners have brought depth to the Drug Court experience by embracing each participant in their journey leaving them feeling both inspired and valued. GCR routinely supports Drug Court events and ceremonies as well.

The evening includes dinner generously sponsored by St. Matthew's House, the David Lawrence Center Alumni Association and the David Lawrence Center Young Executives. Entertainment will be provided by students from the Lely High School Drug Free Collier CORE Society. Recovery Community partners Collier County Sheriff's Office, the Shelter for Abused Women and Children, Drug Free Collier, St. Matthew's House, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Naples Equestrian Challenge, MADD, Gulf Coast Runners, Hazelden and PAWS Assistance Dogs will host educational tables during the reception.

The event is free to attend, however donations are appreciated and will be accepted at the event or in advance by calling 239-354-1434. To make reservation, please email Emily Naranjo at emilyn@dlcmhc.com.

David Lawrence Center is the Southwest Florida-based, not-for-profit leading provider of behavioral health solutions dedicated to inspiring and creating life-changing wellness for every individual. The Center provides innovative, comprehensive inpatient, outpatient, residential and community based prevention and treatment services for the one in four local children and adults who experience mental health, emotional, psychological and substance abuse challenges. David Lawrence Center has eight locations in Collier County and touches the lives of more than 50,000 people each year. For more information about David Lawrence Center call 239-455-8500 or visit www.DavidLawrenceCenter.org.

#####