# NCADA on the Move

### Relocation to new home is set for August

After 49 years of renting space – 29 of them at our formidably cramped current location in Brentwood – NCADA finally owns its own home: 9355 Olive Boulevard in Olivette.

Once renovations are complete, the south-facing, two-story contemporary building will provide increased room for the people who do the hard work of the agency, as well as more and much improved space for the on-site community services we offer.

The location also will give us and our visitors something we've never had before: abundant parking.



Counseling services and a state-of-the-art training facility three times as large as our current one will be on the first floor, with the prevention services department and administrative staff on the second floor. The training space also will be able to comfortably host large meetings – such as the monthly gatherings of the Coalition on Addictions (see speaker lineup on Page 3) – that stretch our current rooms to the bursting point.

The agency hopes to be working from the new building, even if still settling in, by mid-August. And we are planning an official Open House event for January 2015 to kick off NCADA's 50th anniversary celebration.

# Visit the new ncada-stl.org



New features and easier to use.

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# NCADA's 20th Annual Golf Tournament - Beating the Heat

The NCADA Golf Tournament turns 20 this year, and we have decided to shake things up a bit. For the first time, the tournament takes place on a Friday – August 8 – and starts first thing in the morning, an enlightened nod to the humid

reality of St. Louis summer afternoons.

The location is Tapawingo National Golf Club in Sunset Hills. Sign-in opens at 6:30 a.m., along with a continental breakfast. You can use the driving range to loosen up your swing. The competition begins at 8:00 with a shotgun start. Stick around for the luncheon and awards program immediately following the tournament, a perfect start to your weekend.

Golf 20TH ANNUAL NCADA Tournament FRIDAY, AUGUST 8



To register your foursome, purchase a sponsorship, or get more information: www.ncada-stl.org/golf.
Or contact Lynda Wolpert at (314) 962.3456 x335 or lwolpert@ncada-stl.org.

# "I'm a friend of Bill's." That phrase has a coded meaning most readers of this column

understand.

# DIRECTOR'S I'm a Friend of Bill's

But I'm not declaring myself in recovery from alcoholism. I'm simply saying that, until a year ago, I had a friend named Bill. Bill Kolen.

Billy died last June at the age of 55 from pancreatic cancer. In nine weeks, he went from being the picture of health to diagnosis to death. Bill spent his final two months preparing his loved ones to go on living without him, which has proved easy for exactly none of them. As his disease consumed him, he allowed himself not one moment of self-pity or "why me." This would have been remarkable enough under any circumstances,



but for a man who, decades earlier, watched his 8-year-old child succumb to a fatal congenital disease and a week later lost both of his parents to an automobile accident, it was positively Zen-like.

espite the unfairness of it all, Bill faced death with an almost supernatural equanimity. Although he wanted very much to live many more years with Caryn, the wife he adored, Bill didn't have a bucket list and felt no need to make one. He had lived a full life and had no regrets.

Bill didn't
have a
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and felt no
need to
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He certainly didn't want to die, but he said his body had served him well for 55 years and it was only due to one "minor malfunction," as he put it, that life was going to end a bit earlier than expected.

Bill and I were two of about 10 guys who grew up together in suburban Chicago and stayed friends through the decades. Improbably, we

all became reasonably successful in our chosen fields. If you saw us together today, you'd see balding and/or graying doctors, lawyers, business leaders, real estate developers, entrepreneurs ... and one lowly not-for-profit executive director. But before I became the only one of us in the non-profit world, that distinction belonged to Bill.

Billy Kolen was an attorney. He was smart, articulate, and passionate, and he could have made huge amounts of money in the private sector. Instead, Bill spent his entire career with the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago. His mission – and it was a mission – was to ensure that the justice system worked for the underserved and often overlooked people of our society, the ones who not only couldn't afford big-time legal representation but couldn't afford representation at all. Of all the guys in our circle of friends, nobody earned less than Bill, and no one loved his job more.

his made an impression on me. In fact, Bill's example was a major influence on my decision to sell my business in 2012. As my feelings of burn-out reached critical mass, I saw what Bill had done with his life and wondered if I, too, could earn less, work more and, by dedicating myself to something meaningful, find greater happiness at work.

So Billy was the first Chicago friend I called when I was offered this job. He was pleased that one of

his friends had finally chosen to follow the not-for-profit trail he blazed nearly 30 years earlier. Later, when I would tell him how overwhelmed I felt, he would just cackle. He knew. And he knew that he was right to have led me, by example, down this path. Not only because he knew I loved everything about the job, but also because



William A. Kolen – Billy

he knew I was working on behalf of a vitally important – and often overlooked – cause. And as far as he was concerned, that was the only good reason to work.

Bill's diagnosis devastated all of us, but the truth is that no one really knows what to do in the face of tragedy, and everyone responds differently. I want to tell you how another of our friends, Henry Engelhardt, reacted.

Years ago, Henry started an insurance company in Great Britain and became a wealthy man. When he and his wife, Diane, learned of Billy's illness, they wrote from their home in Wales to say how much the terrible news had

underscored for them the fragility of life. And although they had supported NCADA and countless other charities before, they said Billy's grim prognosis had given them a new sense of urgency. Life offered no guarantees. They wanted to help make a difference now at NCADA, and they offered to make an unexpected personal contribution.

Their
donations
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and what he
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people.

hen the gift arrived, excitement kicked in and I thought, "We're going to buy a building, and we're going to name it after Billy." Then reality took over, and I realized that, as large as their gift was, it wasn't that large. So, over the course of the next six months, Henry and Diane wrote two more checks. And when our other Chicago friends learned what was going on, most of them pitched in too. Thanks primarily to their exceptional generosity, we made a substantial down payment and obtained a mortgage on the building at 9355 Olive Boulevard.

It's ironic that this didn't happen because of the work we do here at NCADA. Their donations were a response to who Billy was and what he meant to a few good people who do not live in St. Louis, who have no connection to our cause and who have never received or been exposed to a single NCADA program or service. In other words, NCADA has bought a building because a group of people grew up together just outside of Chicago and, after all this time, still care about each other.

A sign outside 9355 Olive Boulevard will soon tell you that you've arrived at NCADA's new home. And when you come closer and see the plaque on the façade, now you'll know why it's called "The Billy Building."

Because at NCADA, we're all friends of Bill's.

hweissman@ncada-stl.org

# **CALENDAR**

July 31 Prevention Leadership Conference.
 & Aug.1 Details: www.ncada-stl.org/conference
 Aug. 7 Workshop: It's Not All About You—Addiction and the Family Impact

Aug. 8 NCADA Golf Tournament.

Details: www.ncada-stl.org/golf

#### **Ethics Workshops**

Aug. 12 Workshop: Ethics—A Matter of PerspectiveSept. 19 Workshop: Ethics—Right Way? Wrong Way?

Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings

Aug. 21, Sept. 17, Oct. 8, Oct. 21

September Red Ribbon Workshops

Sept. 9 St. Charles County
Sept. 11 St. Louis County

Sept. 18 Jefferson CountySept. 23 Franklin County

For the latest information on workshops and training sessions check ncada-stl.org/events.



Meetings of the St. Louis **Coalition on Addictions** (an NCADA program) are open to anyone interested in learning about addiction disease. For those who work in the addictions field, COA meetings provide exceptional opportunities for networking.

A complimentary lunch is served. A certificate for one contact hour is available for \$3.00.

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month from noon to 1:00 at NCADA—presently 8790 Manchester Rd. 63144, but moving to 9355 Olive Blvd. 63132 in August. Please check ncada-stl.org for meeting updates.

#### **Upcoming COA Meetings and Speakers**

Aug. 13 - No meeting

**Sept. 10** – Dr. Luis Guiffra, "The Neuroscience of Addiction and 12-Step Recovery"

Oct. 8 – Susan Taylor, "Women and Addiction – How Is It Different From Men?"

**Nov. 12** – Stacey Langendoerfer, "Substance Abuse Credentialing in Missouri"

Dec. 10 – Lori Zey, "The Changing World of Hepatitis C"

2 NCADA KEY 3

# NCADA a Top Workplace in St. Louis for the Second Straight Year

We're pleased and proud that NCADA has again been named one of the St. Louis region's Top Workplaces in rankings published by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. It's the agency's second year in a row on the Top Workplaces list, which the newspaper released in print and online on Sunday, June 29.

The rankings are based entirely on confidential surveys filled out by employees of companies participating in the program, which makes the results even more gratifying to NCADA.

"It's my hopelessly biased view that this is a great place to work," said NCADA Executive Director Howard Weissman. "Our staff of skilled, passionate, and compassionate people are great at what they do and believe in the importance of our mission. We're grateful for the Top Workplaces recognition and hope it brings

a little more attention to NCADA and the significant difference we're making for the people of our community."

The Top Workplaces program was created by WorkplaceDynamics LLP -- a Pennsylvania-based research and consulting firm that designs and tallies employee surveys and distributes the results to partnering media organizations in cities throughout the United States. The company, which specializes in using employee feedback to

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

help clients create and maintain healthy work environments, handles employee surveys from more than 5,000 companies annually and collaborates with more than 40 media outlets for the Top Workplaces lists.



# 2014 Prevention Leadership Conference

# Time's Running Out to Register!

WORK

**PLACES** 

2014

NCADA's 24th annual Prevention Leadership Conference for area high school students and staff takes place July 31 and August 1 at the Drury Plaza Hotel at the Arch in downtown St. Louis. The two-day event will inform, inspire, and excite young people about substance abuse issues, build connections with other students who share their commitment, and give them leadership skills to help their peers.

Students, teachers, and counselors who still want to sign up should (quickly!) contact NCADA's Danna Squires at dsquires@ncada-stl.org or (314) 962-3456 x301.



# **Red Ribbon Training at Four Area Locations**

NCADA offers ideas and materials to students and their school sponsors to help them coordinate anti-drug programs.

Four Red Ribbon Training special events aimed at middle school students and staff are scheduled on different dates in September and at different locations in the St. Louis region. The half-day programs include breakout sessions on specific issues and leadership training. To register, get in touch with NCADA's Lori Krueger at lkrueger@ncada-stl.org or (314) 962-3456 x323.

# **BULLETIN BOARD**

# Dying of a Heroin Overdose Does Not Make You a Scumbag

by A. Thomas McLellan, Ph.D

Originally published on the Huffington Post Blog; this reprint is condensed.

was shocked by the range of opinions and emotions voiced in the wake of actor Philip Seymour Hoffman's tragic death last winter. Media outlets of all kinds weighed in, focusing especially on the foolish, self-destructive choices he made associated with his addiction. The explosion of speculation and moralizing surrounding this death brought to light how conflicted our feelings are as a society about this disease.

And the science is clear on this point: Addiction is a disease, and like so many other diseases, its onset is caused by an inextricable cluster of biological, behavioral, and environmental factors. But for some reason, this disease still inspires a socially acceptable prejudice that is not appropriate and certainly is not right.

Some time ago, I spoke with a prominent and well-educated journalist who was working on a report about substance abuse. He was interviewing me as an expert in the field, a professional who has spent his career researching addiction and working to advance policies and practices to support improved care. But – like so many of us out there – my experience is also personal: In 2008, I lost my youngest son to an overdose.

Despite knowing my professional and personal background, this seemingly intelligent reporter made the following statement to me in casual conversation: "What a weak piece of sh\*\* that Philip Seymour Hoffman was, eh?" I am still dumbstruck by the callousness, audacity, and, most of all, the ignorance of this comment.

Overdosing on heroin doesn't make you a scumbag. Having a drink after 20 years of sobriety doesn't make you weak. Having an addiction is not a moral choice. In fact, it's not a choice at all.

Sure, it is a voluntary act the first time anyone picks up a drink, smokes a cigarette, or uses another drug, and that remains true for at least several more voluntary choices to drink and/or use. But then something happens in the brains of about 10 percent of those who use.

We don't yet know all that happens in those brains, but we know there is a triggering of genetic expression and likely an induction of immunologic reactions. We do not yet know why some drugs produce these effects in some people, how much or how often one has to use to bring about these changes, or how long these brain changes last. And we do not yet know which people who drink or use for the first time will go on to become addicted.

But we do know two things for sure: Nobody – nobody – has his or her first drink in order to become an addict. And the brains of those who have become addicted are very different from the brains they started with.

Drug addiction produces lasting changes to the brain's structure, particularly in those areas responsible for inhibiting actions and moderating motivational urges. For these people, environmental cues associated with alcohol and drugs (like alcohol commercials on TV) can trigger brain changes associated with substance use itself. These kinds of environmental events (people, places, and things associated with substance use) evoke strong cravings, even in sterile laboratory settings and even among those who have been steadfastly abstinent for years. In other words, common situations – like being offered wine at a dinner party – can cause the recovering addict's brain to work against his or her effort to maintain sobriety.

ast in this light, maintaining recovery from addiction sounds like a pretty heroic effort to me. So why haven't we celebrated that part of Philip Seymour Hoffman's story? Why are there no national campaigns celebrating the many day-to-day battles that recovering individuals fight to stay clean and sober? And if the disease of addiction overtakes you and you lose the fight, why do people who should know better sneer and suggest that the victim was a "weak piece of sh\*\*"?

We don't talk about other diseases the way we talk about addiction – but we used to. Many people who contracted cancers, tuberculosis, polio, depression, and HIV used to feel ashamed, alone, and angry. But science and medicine have changed the way these diseases are perceived. Those changes have brought increased understanding, increased support, and decreased stigma. Those with these diseases still valiantly fight relapse, but at least they no longer have the public's scorn adding to their struggles.

The science is equally strong in the case of addictions, and it is time that media and public perceptions about addiction catch up with that science. Until they do, too many talented, extraordinary, and valiant people will struggle in silence and die in the shadows of shame.

A. Thomas McLellan is chief executive and co-founder of Treatment Research Institute in Philadelphia.

ncada **key** 5

# 35th Annual Teen Institute Teaches Teens the Power of One

"Teen Institute was a reset button in my life." That's how one of this year's Teen Institute graduates described the experience.



Celebrating its 35th year, Teen Institute (TI) is a four-day, three-night retreat that helps teens explore the impact of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs on friends, family and society, and gives them the tools to be leaders and advocates for a healthy lifestyle. Seventy-four teens from over 35 area high schools participated in this year's TI, held June 3-6 in

Dittmer, Missouri. The theme was "One," and participants explored the power of "one idea, one voice, one action" in the prevention of substance abuse.

Teens participated in workshops to broaden their information on chemical substances and heard from a panel of individuals who faced the struggles of a drug addiction. When not participating in large group sessions and workshops, they enjoyed some quality downtime and developed or deepened friendships. They played volleyball and basketball, enjoyed paddle boating and learned new games and activities. They belted out their favorite songs during karaoke and even square danced (yes, they square danced – and they liked it).

The participants walked away with new knowledge about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, but they also left as members of a positive peer group and more confidence in their leadership skills. Most importantly, they left with the realization that although they may be just "one" voice in the crowd, they have the power to make a difference.







Teen Institute mixes indoor and outdoor activities to teach teens about leadership and substance





# 500 Bowlers Roll for Strike Down Heroin

Strike Down Heroin was organized by area families who had been personally affected by the St. Louis opiate epidemic. These families and their friends joined with NCADA to publicize the dangers of heroin and to raise funds to combat St. Louis opiate abuse.

This year, ten bowling centers hosted events and over 500 bowlers participated. More than \$35,000 was raised. We gratefully thank all participants, volunteers and sponsors.

To learn more, please visit strikedownheroin.com. If you are interested in volunteering for future events, contact Lynda Wolpert at lwolpert@ncada-stl.org.









When the goal is striking down St. Louis area opiate abuse, participation is more important than technique

#### **Tributes & Contributions**

February – May 2014

# **CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS &**

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Russell Sabor Foundation

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