



E-News | September 2021



“Pretty fair for a square,” is **ASAP-NYCB Board President Roy Kearse’s** characteristic greeting even when nattily attired in zoot suit and fedora. (Seen here with NYS Governor, Kathy Hochul.) Then he gets serious. “I have learned that when you are given a gift you should show appreciation...I have been given the gift of recovery so I show my appreciation by always striving to give back, and I’m always looking for opportunities to help, so the sky is still the limit for me!”

A long-standing voluntary Board Member and Past President of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Providers (ASAP), the statewide association of prevention, treatment and recovery professionals, Roy has long championed diversity in Board membership, bringing new cultural groups to the table and extending community understanding of the New York Certification Board (ASAP-NYCB) role. Roy has served as ASAP-NYCB Board President since 2016, having joined the newly-formed project at its inception nine years ago. (ASAP-NYCB’s first certifications were issued effective September 1, 2012.) “I have always been concerned about peer workforce development and peer certification plays a vital role in that development,” he explains.

In his day job as VP of Recovery Services at Samaritan Daytop Village, Roy established, secured funding, and provided staffing for the Peer Alliance Recovery Center (PARC), a recovery community organization in Queens, NYC (est. 2017). The center provides a range of non-clinical services and activities for people in any stage of recovery, including vocational training in recovery coaching. Peer advocates who have completed foundational training are also invited to intern at Samaritan, thereby completing the role experience requirement for professional peer recovery certification and a career in public health. A second PARC opened in the Bronx in 2019. Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez cut the ribbon.

Roy’s interest is personal. “I am a person in long term recovery, over 40 years,” he explains, referring to his appearance as a talking head in the Emmy-nominated, *Reversing the Stigma* (2017). In the documentary, Roy speaks movingly of the day he realized that he was no longer depriving himself of a drink but, rather, had become someone who, out of a sense of the abundance of life’s choices, chooses now not to drink. It’s a powerful message, delivered with both purpose and humility.

Asked to identify the ASAP-NYCB initiatives of which he is most proud, Roy says, “Frankly, I am proud of many things that the talented certification board members and staff have achieved over the years, especially in peer workforce development.” He reminds us that workforce development is a cornerstone of the ASAP-NYCB mission. “From the beginning, we saw the role of the certification board as being to ‘enhance the recovery-oriented skills and capacity of the workforce.’” In this context, Roy is thrilled by the success of the ASAP-NYCB Trainer Registry launched under his eagle eye in July 2020. “Workforce development starts with quality training,” he says.

Roy is also proud of ASAP-NYCB’s online database, Certemy, an investment made during his tenure. “Our certification processes are sophisticated,” he asserts. “We’re offering the very best service systems for our candidates and certificants, in keeping with certification best practices nationwide.”

He sees the introduction of Certemy as part of ASAP-NYCB’s successful pivot to digital prompted by the challenges presented by Covid-19. “We immediately initiated ways to offer greater digital ease for certification processes. It was our aim to keep service delivery as seamless as possible despite having to close our offices and the terrible disruption to the Certification Staff.” He has a word of special thanks for Elisabeth Kranson. “In meeting this goal, we were fortunate to have our first full-time Director of Certification, who is herself a Certified Credentialing Specialist with the national Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). It was Elisabeth who proposed moving our records into Certemy, and who made it happen with her Program Associate, Cathie Gifford.”

No Pollyanna, Roy is realistic about ongoing workforce issues. “Our greatest challenge is getting people to understand the value of the peer workforce, and getting peers to understand the value of certification.” He ends on a note of encouragement for peer recovery professionals: “Be encouraged you are growing in numbers each day and more and more people are respecting the valuable service you have to offer.”