

John Pizzi to Perform Ventriloquism, Magic and Stand-Up Comedy at October 15th Gala

Don't miss an evening that promises to deliver lots of magic and laughs on Thursday, October 15th. Turning Point's annual benefit Gala will feature John Pizzi, one of the hottest rising comics in the entertainment industry, who will bring his unique style to the elegant Crystal Plaza in Livingston to headline "An Evening of Magic and Laughter."

In addition to John Pizzi's entertainment—a singular blend of comedy, magic, ventriloquism and illusions—Gala guests will enjoy cocktails, buffet-style hors d'oeuvres, music and dancing. There will be a 52" HDTV raffle and a Tricky Tray raffle of assorted compelling items, all to

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Turning Point Trustee Recalls Years of Heroin Addiction

John DeStefano to share story at "Magic & Laughter" Gala

These days, John DeStefano is a contented man. He's Chief Engineer and Facilities Manager at a busy Wayne, NJ hotel where his phone seldom stops ringing and his days are a blur. He speaks proudly of his married son and two granddaughters. He never misses his daily walk and will occasionally carve out some time to go fishing.

What sounds like an ordinary life turns out, however, to be quite extraordinary. John DeStefano will celebrate 25 years of sobriety on October 14th. The next evening, he'll address the crowd at Turning Point's annual Gala, "An Evening of Magic and Laughter." As he has done countless times over the past quarter century, he will share his story of addiction and recovery, which is something else that keeps John busy: his tireless commitment to Turning Point. John has been sharing



John DeStefano, Turning Point Trustee since 1986, will share his personal experience of addiction and recovery at the agency's "Magic & Laughter" fundraising Gala at Livingston's Crystal Plaza on October 15th.

at monthly Turning Point meetings since 1984 and became a member of the agency's Board of Trustees in 1986.

The contentment of John's life now is in sharp contrast to the years following his introduction to alcohol at the age of 12. By 16, he was shooting heroin. Five more years passed—including two stints in county jail—before he entered rehab in 1970 at a California recovery community. There he got clean and returned east three years later.

His recovery went incredibly well for a while. His flooring business, with two crews and a few trucks, was successful. When he resumed drinking, he figured he'd be fine as long as he stayed away from drugs. For five years, drinking was all he did. But a progres-

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"Our bodies are filled with serenity"

Women's Program Uses Yoga and Meditation to Help Heal Wounds of Addiction

Among the hallmarks of Turning Point's addiction treatment program is a holistic approach. For each new client, our goal is to address the physical, psychological, social and spiritual effects of addiction. The Women's Program at Turning Point offers one of the most visible examples of this approach. While the program is highly structured, purposely keeping clients busy for many hours each day with sessions, groups and introspective exercises, there is one hour each week that feels completely different from all the others.

That's when Heather Guarino of Montclair's Lotus Yoga arrives to lead the women in a series of yoga

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Heather Guarino of Lotus Yoga in Montclair leads a much anticipated weekly yoga and meditation class for the clients of Turning Point's Women's Program.

Local Communities Forced to Confront Prescription Drug Abuse

In early July, readers of the *Verona-Cedar Grove Times*, which serves a typical New Jersey suburb, opened their latest issue and saw this headline blaring from the top of page one: Prescription Drug Use on the Rise. Those who kept reading learned that local police had been keeping an eye on a busy, 24-hour chain drug store at the corner of Pompton and Bradford Avenues,

“Prescription drugs are easy to obtain from family or friends, by doctor-shopping, theft, fraudulent prescriptions and over-prescribing by unscrupulous physicians.”
—Dr. Guantez

which they describe as a “hot spot for prescription fraud.” According to the article, arrests for prescription drug abuse and fraud have gone up in Cedar Grove in the past year as prescription drugs “are diverted and sold in the township at higher rates than before.”

Trustee Recalls

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sion was gradually taking hold and when his business associates started doing cocaine, John finally did, too.

He spiraled down again, so far down that when he arrived at Turning Point on October 14, 1984, he was homeless and indigent. But he was ready for a much longer lasting recovery this time. Turning Point gave John structure and motivation. He ran sobriety dances for five years and alumni meetings for 12 years, all the while attending AA meetings at least three times every week.

“There were a lot of low-bottom guys, many from my old neighborhood. My counselor was someone from the street that I didn’t even recognize, he looked so good,” John remembers about his first days as a Turning Point client. “I figured if they could do it, so could I.” He acknowl-

But it isn’t just Cedar Grove, New Jersey. It’s probably your town, too.

Local communities across the United States are being forced to confront this problem as the nonmedical abuse of prescription drugs such as OxyContin and Vicodin becomes a serious and growing public health problem. Dr. Manuel Guantez, Turning Point’s Executive Director, who was interviewed for the *Verona-Cedar Grove Times* article, explained how easy access is fueling this problem.

“Prescription drugs are easy to obtain from family or friends, by doctor-shopping, theft, fraudulent prescriptions and over-prescribing by unscrupulous physicians,” said Dr. Guantez. “And online pharmacies are notorious for dispensing medications without a prescription and without properly verifying identity.”

Drug abusers often view prescription drugs as “legal,” less shameful to use, and safer than illegal drugs, which are more likely to be purchased from street dealers. As a result, an eye-popping 20 percent of the U.S. population has used prescription drugs for non-

edges that “running the alumni meetings was big for me. It was the responsibility. I had to show up. It gave me stability.”

John views his invitation to join Turning Point’s Board of Trustees as a particular highlight of his recovery. “I felt like I must really be getting better if other people saw it,” he mused. “It’s easy to be blind to that. You feel like the same person you were even though you’ve been making a lot of changes.”

John attends at least three AA meetings each week without fail, which gives him a chance to meet the new people coming in. “It keeps you green,” he said knowingly.

Asked about John’s contributions to Turning Point, the agency’s Executive Director, Dr. Manuel Guantez, said, “John’s 23 years of service to our Board have been important but his service to recovery is paramount. Without recovery, there is nothing. John’s life has perfectly exemplified this.”

medical reasons in their lifetime.

Are you beginning to think that someone you love has a substance abuse problem but don’t know how you can be sure? Read the sidebar article below for guidance.

How to Recognize Signs of Substance Abuse

Are you worried a friend or family member has a problem with alcohol or drugs? If you are, answer the following to review the substance abuse behavior of someone close to you. (Note: The references to drinking also apply to drug use.)

Have you noticed a friend or family member:

- Drinking to calm nerves, forget worries or boost a sad mood;
- Showing guilt about drinking;
- Trying unsuccessfully to cut down/stop drinking;
- Lying about habits or hiding drinking habits;
- Causing harm to himself or someone else as a result of drinking;
- Needing to drink increasingly greater amounts in order to achieve desired effect;
- Feeling irritable, resentful or unreasonable when not drinking;
- Having medical, social, family or financial problems caused by drinking;
- Spending a great deal of time getting alcohol and drinking alcohol; or
- Drinking in risky situations such as before driving or before engaging in unwanted/unprotected sex.

If you’ve noticed one or more of the above behaviors taking place with a friend or family member, get them to talk with a health professional as soon as possible or call the Addiction Hotline at 1-800-238-2333.

Chatham Community Players Reach Out to Turning Point Clients

Performances leave lasting impression

For Turning Point clients, becoming clean and sober means experiencing life in a completely new way for the first time in years. Thanks to the Chatham Community Players, live theater can be one of those new experiences for clients who come to treatment at Turning Point.

The Chatham Community Players is a local theater group with a strong focus on giving back in a society increasingly focused on taking. The Players bring groups of disadvantaged people, including those in drug and alcohol dependency programs, to the Chatham Playhouse to attend performances free of charge.

Turning Point and the Chatham Community Players connected for the first time ten years ago. Since then, three or four times each year, the agency's clients have piled into a few vans and headed to The Chatham Playhouse to mark their newly found sobriety with a singular and memorable evening. Each visit is a gift from



the Chatham Community Players to their community.

Chris Barton, Turning Point's Assistant Director, speaks for the entire staff of Turning Point when she explains how grateful the agency is for our clients' free admission. "For many, this is their first sober social experience," she explains. "Many have never attended a live theater production."

Most recently, clients of the Women's Program were invited to attend the Jersey Voices One Act Festival, a production that included five short plays written by New Jersey playwrights plus

an original musical. A highlight was the "talk back," an opportunity for the audience to interact with the cast, crew, directors and authors after the production. The evening left a lasting impression on the women.

"I haven't experienced a real laugh like that in a long time," said Mindy F. afterwards. "It brought back my joy," Debbie J. added.

Have you ever wondered how the actors feel about meeting our clients? Here's an email from one of them.

I just wanted to say thank you so much for bringing that great group of women out to see us. To hear their reactions during the show was so encouraging. And the feedback they shared with us afterwards was truly inspiring. I have been singing and performing in NJ for many years and I can honestly say that the experience last night was surprisingly humbling and it really touched me in a way that made me take a step back and truly recognize what a blessing every day on this crazy planet really is....It's an evening I will not likely forget.

Yoga and Meditation

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asanas (poses) and meditation. As one client said, "When Heather walks in, she fills the room with tranquility. When she walks out, our bodies are filled with serenity."

Heather, eleven years into recovery herself, embodies a profound passion both for her yoga practice and her students. She believes that "what you want, you give it to someone else" and sees yogic and Buddhist teachings as mirroring the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. "This is the piece missing from the 12 Step Program," Heather explains. "They don't teach you how to meditate. Meditation and the physical poses can help connect us to the higher entity.

"If everyone recovering from addiction would practice meditation," she suggests, "their recovery would be easier to attain and would last longer."

Jennifer Kohl, Founder and Director

of Lotus Yoga, agrees that yoga practice leads to physiological changes that can help people recover from addiction. "But what really affects the shift is the human connection. It's what stays with clients in treatment," she explains. That's why she assigned Heather to work with the women at Turning Point. "It has to be the right person. The heart has to be there."

"They trust me," Heather says simply.

Pat White, Women's Program Coordinator, views the weekly yoga sessions as a "calming, meditative time when each woman can access her inner restorative energies."

Pat emphasized how grateful she

and everyone at Turning Point is for the volunteer hours that Lotus Yoga has been offering the agency since 2005. Jen Kohl, for her part, expressed how much she appreciates the opportunity to be of service. "I cannot believe how strong these women are," said Jen, who is forming a nonprofit organization called Lotus in Action that will take yoga to those who are economically disadvantaged and won't otherwise have an opportunity to experience it.

Meanwhile, Turning Point's women clients look forward to their Monday evenings with Heather. As one client recently said, "She's making a hard situation a lot easier."

Gala

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benefit Turning Point.

Tickets are limited so purchase yours now by visiting www.tpnj.org and click on "Donate Now" or call 973-

239-9400 ext. 158. We hope you will join us for a wonderful cause.

Thursday, October 15, 2009

7:00 to 11:00 PM

Crystal Plaza

307 West Northfield Road

Livingston, NJ

TURNING POINT

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Verona, NJ 07044
Phone: 973-239-9400
Fax: 973-857-4407

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Deadline to Buy Gala Tickets Is October 15th

Visit online "box office" at www.tpnj.org for easy ticket purchase

Want to make a last-minute ticket purchase for Turning Point's "An Evening of Magic & Laughter" Gala? It's easy.

Visit www.tpnj.org -have your credit card handy—and click on the big green "Donate Now" button. Then click on "Support Our Annual Gala" and you'll be able to purchase your tickets in just a minute or two right up until the afternoon of the event.

Turning Point will receive an immediate confirmation of your purchase so your name will be waiting on the "Reserved Guest List" at Livingston's Crystal Plaza when the doors open at 7 PM on Thursday, October 15th.

If you have questions, contact Brenda Hébert at bhebert@tpnj.org or 973-239-9400 ext. 158.

DONATE NOW

Visit www.tpnj.org and
look for this button.



The Simplest Way to Leave a Legacy

Did you know there are ways to support Turning Point without writing a check? One of the most popular ways is to include us in your will. It's very simple to do. You can specify an amount to be given to Turning Point or you can designate a percentage of your estate to be donated.

Check with your attorney or your financial advisor to get the exact language you need. And be sure to advise Turning Point of your bequest so that we can properly thank you for your support.

If you have questions, call Brenda Hébert, Director of Development and Public Relations, at 973-239-9400 ext. 158.