

## October Gala Set to Deliver “An Evening of Magic and Laughter” *Ventriloquism, magic and stand-up comedy on tap*



John Pizzi, one of the hottest rising comics in the entertainment industry, will take his act to Turning Point’s “Magic and Laughter” Gala on October 15.

Mark your calendar for Thursday evening, October 15th. Turning Point is planning our annual benefit Gala—and this one promises to break the mold. John Pizzi, a new and rising star in the world of comedy, 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 illusion—the evening will include a cocktail dinner reception, music and dancing. There will be a 52” HDTV raffle and a compelling Tricky Tray, all to benefit Turning Point. 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**

*(To support the Gala, see back page)*

## Navy Vet Finds Recovery at Turning Point *18 months sober, he shares his story*

*Turning Point’s Outcomes Coordinator recently received an email filled with honesty and gratitude. It was written by a Turning Point alum, a Navy veteran named Timmy. He had been drinking since age 16, when a friend, concerned that Timmy was smoking too much marijuana, suggested a solution: alcohol. Here is Timmy’s story.*

Hello. My name is Timmy P and I’m an alcoholic. I got sober on December 11th, 2007, about 10 years into my drinking career.

After being thrown out of college and a couple minor arrests, my best option seemed to be enlisting in the U.S. Navy. Limited access and fear of court martial kept me away from other drugs for a time, and I doubled my drinking efforts in order to make up for not having anything to supplement the liquor with. Eventually my fear of court martial waned, and I left the Navy on their firm request. I drove directly from the Submarine Base in Connecticut to my coke dealer in New Brunswick.



A few more arrests later, I was fired from a job that I had managed to hold and excel at for a couple years. I had Coronas in the fridge, a bottle of Soco

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## Measuring Program Outcomes Keeps Turning Point on Track *Clients Eager to Refer Others*

Turning Point is downright compulsive about tracking outcomes for everything it does—from each specific treatment program to how its own employees feel about working at the agency. These internal numbers are compared to state and industry-wide averages to help measure, not only where the agency is in terms of the services provided, but also how much we are improving.

In fact, according to Dr. Manuel Guantez, Turning Point’s Executive Director, that is precisely the goal:

“Continuous Quality Improvement. We have a staff dedicated to this effort.”

So, what do the statistics tell us? Dr. Guantez was excited and encouraged by the most recent quarterly tracking results. “For one thing, almost all of our clients are willing to refer others to Turning Point for treatment. At our Secaucus Short Term Residential Program, 98.9% of our clients would recommend Turning Point to their friends and family, and the other sites show similar results.”

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# Turning Point Staff Selects the Best of the Best

## Employees of the Year Announced at Anniversary Luncheon

Much has changed since March 17, 1975, when Turning Point opened its doors to its first-ever clients. But one thing hasn't changed. As it does every year on March 17th, Turning Point once again held a festive Anniversary Celebration with a St. Patrick's themed luncheon. This year, nearly 175 clients, staff, Trustees and guests attended.

The event's highlight was the naming of two Employees of the Year. **Geré Greene** and **Dorothy Thomas** were selected by their co-workers as Turning Point's exemplary employees for 2009.

Dorothy, who joined Turning Point in May 2007, serves as Medical Records Clerk for the agency. She has extensive past experience with managing medical records at hospitals such as Clara Maass and Trinitas. Through surprised tears, Dorothy said: "Turning Point is not just a place where I work. I feel that my co-workers are all part of my family."

Geré had set her sites on joining the Turning Point team long before she actually was hired in 2004. She spent



(Left) Dorothy Thomas receives Employee of the Year award (for the Boonton/Verona sites) from Dr. Manuel Guantez at Turning Point's annual Anniversary Luncheon. (Right) Geré Greene was named Employee of the Year by her fellow Secaucus employees.



significant time and effort on the education and training she would need to be considered for employment and now serves as a Counselor Aide at the Secaucus residential program. Geré said, "I love my job and working for Turning Point. None of this would have

been possible without our clients and the people I work with. I'm so grateful."

Each woman received a plaque commemorating the honor from Dr. Manuel Guantez, Executive Director, to approving cheers from luncheon attendees.

## Navy Vet

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on the table and a safe full of assorted pills and powders. Around this time a friend of mine called and told me that she had stolen my wallet years ago. She wanted to pay me back, which was great timing because I was jobless. I knew she was sober, and I knew she was part of AA. I accepted her amends, and envied her new life.

*Timmy was arrested for beating his girlfriend and attempted suicide in jail. Finally, he found himself at Turning Point's residential program for men in Secaucus.*

Something happened to me when I was in there. I went in with the same reservations I always had when I was sent somewhere, but I left there with a willingness. One day my cravings were so strong that I heard a voice in my head say, "take it away." Whether I was asking God, or He was telling me, I don't know...but the craving left for that moment. It was not my last

craving, but I then knew that they could go away.

*Although Timmy jumped enthusiastically into a 12 Step program while he was still at Turning Point, once he left, he was "not making the most sober choices." But eventually, he found a sponsor whom he "felt had mastered serenity and could teach me how to achieve it."*

Having gotten complacent in my sobriety, I felt the need to re-do the steps from scratch with my new sponsor. I wrote another long inventory (and several small ones) and shared it with him. We would go on speaking commitments together, and I moved in with a girl who lived only a block from his house. I've always been a little shy with the phone, so it helped that I could just walk over to his house, or if I missed a day or two of calling he would stop by my house. We marked our Big Books up with different col-

ored highlighters and learned about the history of the fellowship.

*As we went to press, Timmy had been sober for 18 months. He continues to work the 12 steps and, these days, is making consistently sober choices.*

I'd put the excitement and energy of my weekly homegroup up against any bar scene going on at 8pm on a Wednesday night. I know we have more fun. I've been to plenty of bars on Wednesday nights. If my homegroup wasn't fun, I might go back to drinking. In chapter 9, it talks about laughter and enjoying life. That's what we try to do.

It hasn't been easy, but every day I make an effort to pray, to help someone else and to let someone else help me. I don't know what the future holds, but I know that if I stay sober I'll be able to have whatever future God has planned for me. Thank you, Turning Point.

# Turning Point Medical Director Certified by New Addiction Medicine Board

## Dr. Peter Finelli Among First in U.S. to Receive This Recognition

Dr. Peter K. Finelli, D.O., FASAM, is among the first physicians in the United States certified by the American Board of Addiction Medicine (ABAM), a new independent medical specialty board. The ABAM has begun to certify addiction medicine physicians from several specialties, including Dr. Finelli's: Family Practice.

Previously, only psychiatrists could receive addiction-related board certification.

ABAM sets standards for physician education, assesses physicians' knowledge, and requires and tracks life-long continuing education.

"We want addiction prevention, screening, intervention and treatment to become routine aspects of medical care, available virtually any place health care is provided," said Kevin B. Kunz, MD, President of the American Board of Addiction Medicine.

Although one in five Americans entering the health care system has a substance abuse

problem, there has never been a medical specialty, drawn from all areas of medicine, dedicated to treating addiction.

Studies show that fewer than one in five physicians consider themselves adequately prepared to diagnose alcoholism or other drug use disorders. Physician training is sorely lacking. Separate courses in Addiction Medicine are rarely taught in medical school, and there are no Addiction Medicine residencies among the 8,200 ACGME-accredited residency programs in the nation's hospitals.

Dr. Finelli has a wide ranging background in Family Practice and several certifications, including the American Society of Addiction Medicine. He has served on a number of boards, committees and in advisory roles at northern New Jersey hospitals and health-centers, and has extensive teaching experience. His practice is based in Elmwood Park. Dr. Finelli has been Turning Point's Medical Director since 2003.



Dr. Peter K. Finelli, Medical Director at Turning Point, is among the nation's first physicians to receive the new medical certification from the American Board of Addiction Medicine.

## Measuring Outcomes

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Dr. Guantez feels strongly that this one statistic validates Turning Point's entire approach to treating its clients and underscores the way in which the agency's staff embodies its mission.

"We're working hard to create a cul-

ture of recovery here. It's not just doing the right things. It's more than that. For recovery to take hold at a deep level, our clients need to know that someone truly cares. Looking at these Client Satisfaction measurements, I have rea-

son to believe that our clients are walking away with that feeling."

Dr. Guantez added, "There is a connection between people feeling that they've been helped and their willingness to urge others to have the same experience. That's why it's so gratifying to see the outcomes in this category, 'Would recommend Turning Point.'"

There was more good news in the numbers. "The Boonton women's program puts a special emphasis on including family members in each client's treatment," Dr. Guantez explained. "Clients have responded positively, with 95% indicating that 'the family program at Turning Point was helpful to me in understanding how my illness affects my family.'"

Dr. Guantez also pointed out that Turning Point's Detoxification Unit has a completion rate that tracks above the state average and, in fact, is one of the highest completion rates in the state.

Turning Point will continue to strive for continuous improvements in its programs—and the numbers will tell the story.

## Every Dollar Counts Toward Clients' Recovery

### Turning Point Deeply Grateful for Your Donations

You may not realize that the funding Turning Point receives from state and county governments covers only 80% of the costs of delivering care. To bridge that gap, some of our clients have insurance coverage or pay a fee on a sliding scale for their treatment. But, still, a gap remains.

Turning Point literally could not keep its doors open without your many years of loyal support, which has taken a number of forms.

Your \$10 check paid for stamps so a client could send a reassuring note home to a loved one. One client was able to get transportation to Secaucus to begin detox because of another donor's \$25 gift. A \$100 gift paid for another client's medications. Last fall's \$1,000 Gala Sponsorship paid the fee for four halfway house admissions. The gift of securities worth \$10,000 paid for four full weeks of residential treatment for another client.

The bundle of gently used clothing you dropped off helped make a formerly homeless client's stay more comfortable. The TV you gave us now enables clients to watch inspiring and informative DVDs to strengthen their recovery efforts. The list goes on and our gratitude for your generosity is endless.

# TURNING POINT

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## Are You an Online Shopper?

*Buy Gala Tickets, Ads and Sponsorships at Turning Point's Website*

It's easy to support this year's Gala (see page one). All you need is internet access and a credit card. Visit Turning Point's website at [www.tpnj.org](http://www.tpnj.org) and click on "Donate Now." You'll immediately find yourself looking at a page that will let you purchase a Gala sponsorship, buy a journal ad, get your tickets or simply make a donation.

You can also contact Brenda Hébert ([bhebert@tpnj.org](mailto:bhebert@tpnj.org) or 973-239-9400 ext. 158) to make a Gala purchase or get answers to your questions.

Did you miss last year's Casino Night Gala? Visit [ww.tpnj.org](http://ww.tpnj.org) for a look back at some of the fun moments and to see a complete list of supporters.

**DONATE NOW**

Visit [www.tpnj.org](http://www.tpnj.org) and  
look for this button.



## How to give your United Way Donation to Turning Point

If you work for a company that sponsors United Way fundraising drives each year, you may have noticed that Turning Point is not currently included on the list of nonprofit agencies that you can select to support.

We're working on that. In the meantime, did you know that you can still designate Turning Point to receive your annual United Way contribution? This is called a "Donor Directed Contribution." *The United Way will send all or part of your donation to any specific 501(c)(3) agency you choose.*

Simply write our name and address in the space provided on your company's contribution card: Turning Point, Box 111, Verona, NJ 07044. Our phone number is 973-239-9400.

We thank you so much for your generosity.