

## *One of only 29 grants awarded nationwide* **Turning Point Receives \$839,000 Technology Grant to Improve Access to Addiction Services**

Turning Point has always been able to count on your support to help us keep growing and adapting to our clients' changing needs. Our ability to meet those needs has become more challenging in recent years. We offer more addiction treatment services to more people than ever before—more than 2,000 men and women each year. We have more employees, a bigger facility, generate more data/paperwork and comply with stricter regulations to stay licensed.

"For some time now, we've dreamed of being able to use up-to-date technology—Health Information Technology—to communicate with each other and with our clients more efficiently and effectively," explained Dr. Manuel Guantez, Turning Point's Executive Director. "That's the best way to make sure clients can get services when and where they're needed."

But according to Dr. Guantez, in the current fiscal climate, few addiction treatment providers can afford the nearly million-dollar price tag. "It's too costly at a time when we're all just trying to survive," he stated. "When we heard about this grant, it seemed too good to be true."

Dr. Guantez was referring to a

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*Your support helps so many create new lives*

## **Former Client Feels "Burden Lifted Off Me" at Turning Point**

"Society painted a picture of how I should live," says Vicky J.\*, thinking back to the years before she became addicted to heroin. "Get married, have children, get a job. It all looked so happy and joyful. I wanted to fit in so I tried it but I still felt out of place," she admits. "I got married, had a child, divorced, got into a new relationship..." Her voice trails off then she adds, "I was always considered a square and corny individual."

Back then, Vicky seemed unlikely to become addicted to drugs. She had tried marijuana at age 17 and stopped right away. "It didn't feel comfortable,"

\* Vicky J is a fictitious name used to protect our client's confidentiality.

she remembers. Twenty-one years passed. Then, "when I was 38, I sniffed heroin for the first time. It looked like fun. At first, I didn't know I was addicted."

As Vicky tells it, "I just accepted the uncomfortability and kept doing it. At some point, I knew I wanted to quit the heroin but I wasn't able to. I tried cocaine because someone told me that my heroin habit would go away if I used cocaine and I believed it."

This went on for two years and, finally, Vicky started going to "detox after detox after detox. Sometimes I'd go to the same one three or four times. I probably went through detox 15 times over a 12 year period," she

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*Thanks to your support, a record-breaking event*

## **Dennis Rodman Appears at Turning Point's Benefit Gala, Helps Raise Nearly \$120,000**

Dennis Rodman's appearance at Turning Point's 10th annual Benefit Gala on October 6th helped raise nearly \$120,000 and created exciting memories for those who attended. The recently inducted NBA Hall of Famer, as much entertainer as athlete, accepted a Certificate of Appreciation and spoke with both emotion and humor about his own battle with alcoholism.

The nearly 200 guests who filled the Crystal Plaza in Livingston also heard Turning Point alumna Candice Singer recount her years of addiction to methamphetamine and her inspiring nine years of recovery since leaving treatment at Turning Point. Ms. Singer, the evening's featured speaker, is a

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Dr. Manuel Guantez, Turning Point's Executive Director, awards a Certificate of Appreciation to Dennis Rodman at Turning Point's annual Benefit Gala on October 6th. Darren Prince (far left, Turning Point Trustee) and Steve Della Valle (President, Board of Trustees) look on. The event raised just under \$120,000—the most ever for a Turning Point Gala. See inside for more photos and a list of the event's supporters.

## **“Burden Lifted Off Me”**

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recalls. Each time, she thought she was cured, but then she'd go back to the same people, places and things as before and start using again. "I didn't want to use. I didn't know I had a disease and that's why I couldn't stop."

Why didn't she get residential treatment (or "rehab") after detoxing? "I was very rebellious, I was against rehab. I thought detox should be enough," she says. "Turning Point was my first and only rehab."

***“Life didn't stop. I just stopped living. I kept making meetings. I did an intensive outpatient program at Turning Point because I felt as if I needed structure.”***

When Vicky was finally referred to Turning Point, she was ready. "I was fed up and tired, so tired. I'd tried detox over and over. I thought, 'I don't want to live like this anymore. I have to try something different.' Suddenly I just HAD to go to Turning Point [for residential treatment]."

She detoxed one more time at a different facility so that she could be admitted clean to Turning Point "but then [Turning Point] couldn't let me in the same day I got out of detox. I had to wait 24 hours. I was so scared to leave. I stayed around family members that didn't use. I didn't sleep well that night. I wanted to be awake when the

**Is your family  
struggling with  
addiction?**

**TURNING  
POINT  
can help.**

**Call 973-239-9400 ext. 195**

## **How You Can Support a Loved One in Recovery from Addiction**

Getting a family member or friend the treatment they need is a huge and important step, but family assistance and support should never stop with the end of treatment. When your family member is reintegrated into their home and community after treatment, family help and support can be important factors in the ultimate ability of your loved one to stay sober. There are some things a family can do to decrease the probability of relapse.

**Get educated and get involved.** Take advantage of the family component of most addiction treatment programs. Learn how best to support your loved one, just as they must learn how to stay clean and sober.

**Stay sober with the recovering loved one.** Empty the house of all possible intoxicating substances. Provide a sober, alcohol- and drug-free environment to support newly sober living by removing easily available temptation that could prove overwhelming.

**Help to reduce stress in the recovering person's life.** Help make the first sober months as stress-free as possible so your recovering loved one can concentrate all their energy on staying sober.

**Don't let a relapse happen.** There is no need to wait until after a relapse to act. If you think your loved one is in danger of using, get them into a safe environment immediately. Even just a visit and some companionship can be enough.

**Take care of the family as the family takes care of their loved one.** The damaging effects of addiction can ripple through a family long after sobriety is achieved. The family needs to heal itself. Get professional counseling or join a family-centered education/support group to help with the healing process.

**Is your family struggling with addiction?** Turning Point can help. We offer education, support groups and individual and family counseling at a nominal fee for family members, whether or not their loved one has made the choice for sobriety. Call 973-239-9400 ext. 195 or email [family@tpnj.org](mailto:family@tpnj.org). The Family Wellness Program is funded by a grant from the Partners for Health Foundation.

*This article was adapted from a piece appearing on [www.choosehelp.com](http://www.choosehelp.com).*

driver came to get me. I was so determined but I was so fearful I'd make a left turn and go back in the wrong direction. It was like a burden lifted off me when I finally got there."

But Vicky was not happy when she got to Turning Point, after all. "Too many rules and regulations . . . all these classes," she says. "I had a bad case of I-don't-wanna-do-its. But they let me stay!" she says incredulously. "I just *had* to get the gratitude. Here they are trying to help me. Why am I so rebellious?! The fog is gone. I'm 52 years old and I wanna complain 'cos someone is trying to help me after I made all these bad choices in my life? Rules and regulations. That's what life is all about!" She's smiling triumphantly.

Things started happening right

away. The love and concern of Turning Point's counselors really made her feel she could do this. "I could talk with the counselors about anything. I kept thinking, 'I've gotta get to the core.' I'd lie awake at night and remember more things. I couldn't wait until morning to tell [my counselor]. I'd sit there and talk and the tears would roll.

"People listen to you there. I enjoyed everything about being at Turning Point. I loved the groups, loved the recreational games. The staff was extremely friendly. I was so used to not finishing something. Now I finished it. I was so afraid of leaving. My counselor asked me if I thought I was ready. I said, 'I need to say to you, my thinking is not that good, what do

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## “A Heartfelt Thank You to the Family Wellness Program”

*Turning Point has been a blessing not only for my son but now with the Family Wellness Program I am also getting some much needed help. It's very scary to think so many families are affected by this disease of addiction but also comforting to know that your family is not alone. Going to the program has helped me to not feel so isolated and frightened. I can openly talk about my feelings and concerns without any shame. I actually look forward to Wednesday night meetings. I pray every day for my son's recovery and I'm hoping that with the treatment he's been receiving that this time it will "click" and he can live a sober and productive life and one day our family will be free of worry.*

*Sincerely, A Mother*

## “Burden Lifted Off Me”

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you think? I need you to help me make this decision.’

“She said she thought I was doing really well and she picked a date for me to go home.

“I went to my Mom's house. That first day, I stayed on her like glue. I was afraid to leave to make a meeting. I tried to use a cigarette—it was TERRIBLE! I thought, “These people have even got me to stop smoking cigarettes!” Again, Vicky is bursting with amazement about her experience and happiness at the outcome. “The next morning—day two—I made a meeting. I still felt as if I was in a box by myself. But I got in there and the people said ‘We'll love you 'til you love yourself. Keep coming back.’”

Vicky took nothing for granted. She says now, “I had fear. I stayed mindful of what I learned. I couldn't do it alone. I didn't have to use anymore. Life didn't stop. I just stopped living. I kept making meetings. I did an intensive outpatient program at Turning Point because I felt as if I needed structure. I was upset when I graduated from there, too.”

Vicky has been clean and sober for nearly four years. She graduated from computer school and is in a program for mature workers. She's working in a pre-school with children. She suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure and arthritis but says, “No pain could be worse than what I felt in active addic-

tion.” She has applied for college for a degree in Human Services. She has her own apartment now.

“Now, I stay connected. I accept life for what it is. There's gonna be good days and there's gonna be bad days. That's life. I don't have to run from my feelings and I don't have to use.”

When asked what would have happened if she hadn't come to Turning Point, Vicky doesn't hesitate. “I believe I would still be using, I really do. I'd still be with the same people doing the same thing.”

What would she say to the generous donors who help keep Turning Point going? “Thank you so very much for supporting Turning Point. It has helped me with structure and understanding this disease. If it could help me, it can help someone else.”

## Special Thanks to Susan Turner.....

....whose generous donation made it possible for Turning Point's female clients to attend this year's “Women of Distinction” luncheon. This annual tradition gives the women a special opportunity to feel the inspiration that could solidify their commitment to recovery and is a powerful experience for those who attend.

## Technology Grant

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grant announced last spring by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a public health agency within the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. SAMHSA was inviting government agencies and nonprofits from across the U.S. to apply, expecting to make only 20 grant awards.

The application was submitted in May. In late September, SAMHSA announced that Turning Point had been selected to receive a three-year, \$839,000 Health Information Technology grant, one of only 29 agencies in the United States—and the *only* New Jersey agency—to receive funding.

The grant will support new technology that will make it easier for those who need treatment to access it. For example, clients entering Turning Point will be able to use their smartphone or web-based information to make the process more efficient for them.



Turning Point will be able to share “real time” information with all those providing care who need access to it. The project will benefit New Jersey's entire addiction treatment system by making possible an electronic health record (EHR) that will meet the unique documentation, reporting and billing needs of all of the state's addiction treatment providers.

“In the end, it's all about giving our clients a better chance to find lasting recovery,” Dr. Guantez concluded. “We aim to be creative in the ways we collect, manage and use information to improve outcomes for those who receive addiction treatment at Turning Point.”

The New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA) and the New Jersey Department of Human Services/Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services will both consult with Turning Point on the project's implementation.

# Relive the Fun: Some Highlights from Turning Point's 10th Annual Benefit Gala



**(Left)** Patron Sponsors—the highest sponsorship level at \$10,000—were recognized with eye-catching signs at the event.  
**(Center)** The Gala's Benefactor Sponsors (\$5,000) were also prominently recognized.  
**(Right)** Candice Singer, a Turning Point alumna with nine years of recovery, gripped the audience's attention as she shared her experience of addiction and its aftermath.

Photos by Steven R. Smith



**(Left)** Dr. Guantez, Bonnie Carroll and Susan Forte (right) pause for a chat.

**(Right)** Dennis Rodman autographs photos, jerseys and basketballs to help raise funds for Turning Point.

**(Left)** Brant Cali (Secretary, Board of Trustees) and his wife, Alicia Ortiz, check out the Gala Journal.

**(Right)** [From left] Lena Corbo (Trustee), Susan Turner (Board Vice President) and Roberta Braneck (Director of Admissions) share a laugh.



**(Left)** Kitt Greenberg (Turning Point Trustee) and her husband, Richard, pose for a photo with Dennis Rodman.

**(Center)** [From left] Jacqueline McMullen has a lighthearted moment with Bonnie Carroll, George Turner and Kevin Carroll.

**(Right)** Dr. Guantez and Turning Point employees/volunteers get up and dance!

Go to [www.tpnj.org](http://www.tpnj.org) for more photos.

## Dennis Rodman

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former attorney who faced 87 years in prison for multiple burglaries and manufacturing "meth" before getting clean and sober. (See Ms. Singer's profile in the Summer/Fall 2011 edition of *The Point* at [www.tpnj.org](http://www.tpnj.org)- click on Press Room.)

"Based on their feedback, our guests had a terrific time at this year's Gala," said Dr. Manuel Guantez, Executive Director. "It was a thrill to have Dennis Rodman there, of course, and everyone was moved by Candice Singer's remarks—even Dennis Rodman, who admitted how challenging it is to

maintain a successful recovery. We are so grateful to everyone who came or sent donations."

This year's Patron sponsors (\$10,000) were Dr. Brant Cali and Alicia Ortiz with Merck & Co., Inc.; John J. Clancy; and Susan and George Turner. There were five Benefactor sponsors (\$5,000): Barbara and Val Azzoli; John J. and Rose Cali; Kevin and Bonnie Carroll; Centralpack Engineering Corporation; and Kitt and Richard Greenberg. Turning Point is deeply grateful for the generosity of our sponsors as well as

for the very generous in-kind support of: Darren Prince for arranging Dennis Rodman's appearance; Steve Della Valle for donating the evening's deejay/MC and live entertainment; and Steve Smith of S. R. Smith Sports Photography for donating his professional photography services.

All Gala proceeds will be used to support Turning Point's addiction treatment programs. See page 5 of this newsletter or go to [www.tpnj.org](http://www.tpnj.org) for photos and a complete list of Gala supporters.

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*We thank you so much for your record-setting support\**

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# TURNING POINT

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Winter 2011-2012

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For assistance or further information, please contact Brenda Hébert at 973-239-9400 ext. 158 or at [bhebert@tpnj.org](mailto:bhebert@tpnj.org).

Be sure to advise us of your bequest so that we can properly thank you for your support. Your generosity would help countless men and women break free of their addiction and go on to create productive and fulfilling lives.

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