



Recently, NCADD South Bay had the opportunity to partner with NCADD National on a Town Hall Meeting sponsored by A&E's "Intervention," Charter Cable and The Salvation Army. The Town Hall meeting was filmed before a packed crowd at California State University Long Beach studio theater.

The evening program was moderated by Brad Pomerance (News Anchor for CNN/Charter Cable local news) and featured panelists Candy Finnegan from "Intervention," Long Beach Police Chief Jim McDonnell, Dr. Dennis Fisher of Cal State Long Beach and NCADD South Bay's Executive Director, Michael Ballue.

A broad-based community audience included staff, clients and alumni from The Flossie Lewis Center, NCADD South Bay's residential treatment center for women, specializing in women with children. In addition, NCADD Torrance made arrangements for testimonials of recovery to be given by an alumna of The Flossie Lewis Center who will soon graduate from Cal State Long Beach with a business degree; the other was given by DeJuan DJ Verrett. Mr. Verrett, the author of one of the stories in Christopher Kennedy Lawford's book, "Moments of Clarity," has supported NCADD South Bay at multiple community events and has a truly amazing story of recovery, along with all the great communication skills to be expected from an accomplished actor and performer. (To read the follow-up story, [Drug addiction has a physical toll](#), Long Beach Town Hall meeting in the Press-Telegram.)



Participation in the Town Hall allowed NCADD South Bay to invite and directly interact with important local politicians and community leaders who attended the event and to build support for programming and fundraising at The Flossie Lewis Center through the airing of the event on A&E and Charter Cable On Demand. The exposure has been extremely valuable as it reaches multitudes of local residents that NCADD South Bay would not otherwise have access to. The women from Flossie Lewis that participated (many shared short recovery testimonials) were thrilled and excited to be able to be part of the Town Hall. The vast majority of our clients are indigent or extremely low income, and for many it was their first exposure to a large group of people, not direct care providers or 12-step meeting attendees, that encouraged them, thanked them for their courage and supported their efforts. For many re-entering the main stream of society no longer looked so daunting.

As many endeavors in life do, participation in this event rewarded "suing up and showing up" with further opportunities. Mr. Ballue was invited by Mr. Pomerance to have an interview filmed for CNN/Charter Cable Local Edition on March 9, 2011. Mr. Pomerance had been very touched

by the testimonials from the women of the Flossie Lewis Center and was disappointed to hear the great difficulty many of them had in obtaining employment after treatment. He was gracious enough to focus a section of the interview on that in hopes that it will bring local employers to the table with opportunities for women in recovery. As A&E plans more Town Hall meetings across the country, we at NCADD South Bay strongly encourage A&E and our fellow NCADD Affiliates to partner on this remarkable community education opportunity!

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