



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

North Star Behavioral Health Services Celebrates 'Ribbon Cutting' Grand Opening

BETTY LITTLE May 22, 2009



Saranac Lake, NY, May 22, 2009 - On Thursday, May 21, 2009, Citizen Advocates, Inc. celebrated the opening of a new Professional Services Building for North Star Behavioral Health Services at 70 Edgewood Road in Saranac Lake, NY. Approximately 100 clients, state and local officials, community members and staff attended the grand opening celebration, which was marked by a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Open House. The date also marked the launch of Citizen Advocates' new website, citizenadvocates.net.

Speakers included Jeffrey Rundell, President of the Board of Directors, Citizen Advocates, Inc.; NYS Senator Elizabeth O'C Little; NYS Assemblywoman Janet L. Duprey; Susan Delehanty, Director, Franklin County Community Services; Steve Hanson, Director of the Bureau of Treatment, NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services; William Licurse, Deputy Director, Central New York Field Office, NYS Office of Mental Health; and Gregory Langdon, Executive Director, Citizen Advocates, Inc.

The building will house various programs from North Star Behavioral Health, a division of Citizen Advocates, Inc. Services available at the new site include North Star Mental Health Center, North Star Community Support Services, and North Star Chemical Dependency Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Services. Franklin County Community Services will also lease central office space within the building

Senator Little, who has championed the cause of North Country suicide prevention for years, noted the importance of easily accessible prevention and treatment services for children and adults affected by mental health and chemical dependency issues.

Assemblywoman Duprey shared how her life has been touched by an autistic family member, and how important it is to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues. Steve Hanson from the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services discussed the new "I Am Recovery" campaign, which encourages individuals in recovery from alcohol and drugs to share their story. William Licurse from the NYS Office of Mental Health mentioned the convenience for community members to have Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and Community Support Services available at one location.

The celebration also included a testimonial from two parents whose son receives services through North Star Community Support Services Program. As they shared the difficulties they had experienced with their special needs son, they noted the important role Citizen Advocates has played in his recovery. According to the child's mother, he is now on his way

to being a productive member of their family and the community. All speakers agreed that while the new building is important, it is the staff within the building that really makes a difference in the lives of clients and their families.

Citizen Advocates, Inc. was established in 1975, and began with provision of rehabilitation, residential and work center programs for developmentally disabled individuals. Over the past 34 years, the agency's growth reflects a rich history of program expansion and accomplishment focused on a mission to serve those in need. The North Star Behavioral Health Services were established in 1988, providing mental health treatment and crisis services, substance abuse treatment and prevention, community support and case management services. Recognizing that many families and individuals are involved in more than one behavioral healthcare service, Citizen Advocates had the foresight to envision a system of care available at one location that would promote and support collaboration and coordination of services among the different programs. Through the North Star programs, clients with multiple needs have access to high quality, coordinated care, ensuring that their challenges are addressed by professionals working together to improve outcomes for recovery and wellness.

Known today as the "North Star Family of Services", Citizen Advocates programs benefit the lives of thousands of individuals each year offering help, hope and support. In concluding Thursday's program, Mr. Langdon noted, "As we celebrate the opening of the new building, we also celebrate the countless lives that have been touched, and recognize and applaud the caring professional staff members whose commitment has laid the true foundation for all our services."

For more information, please visit citizenadvocates.net or contact Wendy Glennon, Executive Secretary, (518) 483-1251 Extension 2249