



Suffolk County Voter

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July 2009

Wed. July 15: LWVSC Board Meeting, Riverhead Library Craft Room, 10:00am-12 noon

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CPEP: Good News!

CPEP, the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program, has been put in the Capital Budget for 2010 by the SC Legislature. The budget now goes to County Executive Steve Levy for his approval. He has supported CPEP in the past. This budgetary support of CPEP will enable the expansion of its facilities, now severely overcrowded and over-utilized. CPEP's goal is to provide short-term assessments, stabilization, and triage services for those suffering episodes of severe mental illness.

Economic Benefits of Alternatives to Incarceration

Advocacy for Alternatives to Incarceration has been a priority of the League of Women Voters of New York State for many years. The League in Suffolk County has stressed the importance of ATI locally, most recently because of the pressure to enlarge the jails in Yaphank and Riverhead to accommodate the increasing size of our prison population.

Both the in-depth League studies which led to its advocacy, and studies done through the years by agencies involved with the criminal justice system, conclude that ATI increase public safety, decrease recidivism, and result in significant economic savings for municipalities and governments at all levels.

Restorative Justice, a program which the League introduced to several SC school districts last year (assisted by a grant from the SC Legislature) is explicitly set up to safely manage troubled young people through local resources within their communities, thereby avoiding youth being sent away from their homes and schools to residential placements proven to have high recidivism rates. These placements have contributed to the "school to prison pipeline" for many young people in Suffolk County. Restorative Justice can, instead, provide constructive and healing alternatives.

Two new research briefs were released on May 19, 2009 by the Washington DC based Justice Policy Institute, a non-profit public policy and research institute dedicated to ending society's reliance on incarceration and promoting effective and just solutions to social problems. These briefs indicate that by utilizing tools already available (i.e., expanding access to treatment, improving parole policies and practices, and reducing the number of non-violent youth and adults that are incarcerated) substantial cost-cutting can be achieved.

This research recommends that money saved on incarceration be invested in community-based services that improve both public safety and the life outcomes of individuals, and in social institutions that build strong communities, including education, employment training, housing, and treatment. It stresses that counties send fewer youth to residential care facilities by utilization of community-based options. **Evaluations of effective programs and policies in juvenile justice that support the development of new and different approaches to reduce delinquency and recidivism among youth must be done.**

The Justice Policy Institute has provided copies of these research briefs, at our request, for distribution to policy-makers in Suffolk County. We are hopeful that they will help to bring about greater support for our Alternatives to Incarceration advocacy. For copies of these studies, please contact the Justice Policy Institute at (202) 558-7974 x308, LaWanda Johnson or email ljohnson@justicepolicy.org.

Katherine Hoak

LWVSC 41st Annual Convention: May 28, 2009



*Congratulations to
Local League
Award of Achievement
recipients:*

Brookhaven:
Allan Aronoff
(posthumous)

Hamptons:
Arlene Hinkemeyer

Huntington:
Mary McLaughlin

Shelter Island:
Phyllis Gail Gates

Smithtown:
Sondra Irvine



CE Steve Levy

LWV Suffolk County held its annual convention at the Bellport Country Club on Thursday, May 28. Delegates from all five local leagues were present, along with LWNYS 1st VP Georgia DeGregorio.

The guest presenter was Alan Berkowitz, Acting Assistant Attorney General in charge Suffolk Regional Office of the NYS Attorney General, who spoke on Project Sunlight, www.sunlightny.org. The keynote speaker was County Executive Steve Levy, who shared his thoughts on professionalism in government.

At the LWVSC business meeting, Katherine Hoak and Lisa Scott (co-Presidents) gave the President's report, and Judie Gorenstein (Voter Service Chair) and Katherine Hoak (LegComm/ATI Chair) each gave reports on their respective areas. The 2009-2010 LWVSC budget was adopted, and the LWVSC County Program was reviewed and accepted. The Nominating Committee Chair, Anne Marshall, presented the recommended slate for 2009-2010. The slate was unanimously approved by the delegates present.



Judie Gorenstein



Katherine Hoak, CE Steve Levy, Alan Berkowitz