

# East County Herald News

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY HERALD - SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR 2004

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## Real people recover

Gretchen Burns Bergman, executive director and co-founder of A New PATH (left) and Annie Majors, president of the board of the Proposition 36 Alumni Association Saturday, Feb. 24.

Two-hundred-fifty recovery advocates came together around HBO's documentary "ADDICTION" and the "We pass each other on the street" art exhibition.

**A** New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing) announced Monday, Feb. 26 that residents of San Diego County are working together to make it possible for more people to get the help they need to recover from addiction to alcohol and other drugs. According to Gretchen Burns Bergman, co-founder and executive director of A New PATH, "We are calling this campaign 'Real People Recover, because countless people from all walks of life are in recovery leading productive lives, but they are still affected by stigma."

The announcement followed a well-attended Art Exhibit, "We Pass Each Other On The Street" at the San Diego Art Institute in Balboa Park on Saturday, Feb. 24. The artwork was created when students from UCSD and San Diego City College interviewed individuals in recovery from drug addiction who are members of the Proposition 36 Alumni Association. Professor Andrea Singer developed the cross-discipline collaborative project with her husband Professor Bill Stewart. According to Professor

Singer, her students were deeply moved by the experience: "Each student in the class ended up calling me to tell me about the power of the interviewing process and how it has affected them on a personal level. Art can illuminate, educate, and create positive social change." For the individuals who were interviewed, "they have learned to value the strength of their survival and to honor their own unique journeys to recovery", said Oliver Hamilton, founder of the Prop 36 Alumni Association.

Part of the *Real People Recover* campaign is to illuminate and expand the success of Proposition 36, which has allowed over 140,000 Californians to enter treatment and has saved the State \$1.3 billion in just five years. Speakers addressed the need to show the public that individuals who received treatment from this landmark treatment-not-incarceration law are putting their lives together, working, achieving long-term recovery, and becoming valuable members

of society. Commissioner Pennie Carlos, Presiding Judge for Proposition 36 Court spoke in support of Prop 36 success, and Melanie Cohn, a representative from Assembly Member Lori Saldaña's office presented a certificate of recognition in honor of the event. Escondido Mayor Lori Holt Pfeiffer sent a certificate on behalf of the Escondido City Council in recognition of the "unique event, which supports recovery from substance abuse and addictive illness."

The exhibition, which included poetry, original art, multi-media works, and books, was awe-inspiring. "It created a new language to communicate deeply important messages", said Gretchen Burns Bergman.

The attendees also viewed a four-minute clip from HBO's upcoming documentary "ADDICTION."

"The HBO show gives us a chance to start an overdue discussion of the possibilities that exist for people in recovery," said president of the board of directors of A New PATH Caroline Stewart, "and it is important that our community understands that individuals with addictive illness can and do get better."

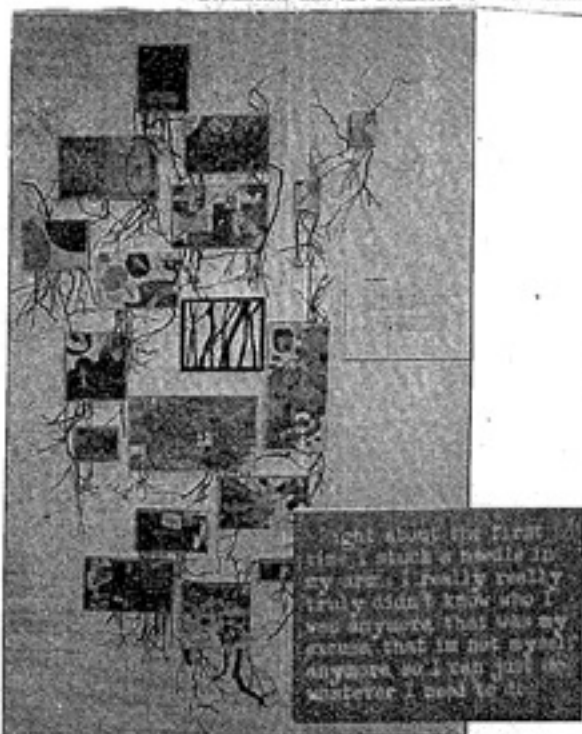
A centerpiece of the HBO show is a discussion of the new treatments that are available to

help people with addiction. With new breakthroughs comes new hope for individuals and families in achieving long-term recovery.

"It is important that the public learns about these new treatments for addiction which can help people to achieve and sustain long-term recovery," said Dr. David Bergman, a psychiatrist and advisory board member of A New PATH.

A New PATH is a non-profit organization of parents of individuals suffering from the disease of addiction and concerned citizens, partnering with health care professionals, the justice system, individuals in recovery, and community leaders dedicated to reducing the stigma of drug addiction and advocating for therapeutic rather than punitive drug policies. For more information visit: [anewpathsite.org](http://anewpathsite.org).

A New PATH and San Diego County are one of 30 communities working on a national multi-media outreach campaign, in partnership with Faces & Voices of Recovery, the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions and Join Together, and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to educate our communities about the reality of long-term recovery. For more information, visit: [www.AddictionAction.org](http://www.AddictionAction.org).



On display at, "We pass each other on the street art exhibit."