Spring Awards Luncheon Coming April 8

• Algonquin Golf Club, 340 N. Berry Road, Webster Groves
• Doors open 11:30; lunch at noon
• For reservations visit ncada-stl.org

Our Spring Awards Luncheon will feature a very special keynote speaker, U.S. Army Captain (ret.) Florent Groberg. Capt. Groberg’s awards and decorations include:

- The Bronze Star Medal with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster
- The Purple Heart
- The Meritorious Service Medal
- The Army Commendation Medal
- The Army Achievement Medal with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster
- The Afghanistan Campaign Medal with three Bronze Service Stars
- The Global War on Terrorism Medal
- The National Defense Service Medal
- The Army Service Ribbon
- The Overseas Service Ribbon
- The NATO Medal
- The Combat Infantryman Badge
- The U.S. Army Parachutists Badge
- The U.S. Army Ranger Tab
- The Meritorious Unit Commendation

And the Medal of Honor.
The Medal of Honor is the U.S. military’s highest honor for valor above and beyond the call of duty. President Obama presented this award to Florent Groberg on November 12, 2015 for his actions during his second tour in Afghanistan.

Despite his valor, Flo still lost four military brothers on what he has described as “the worst day of my life.” And due to the injuries he sustained on that day Flo has undergone more than thirty operations on his left leg and spent three years of his life recovering at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Once you hear about Flo’s actions in Afghanistan—the lives he saved and the risk he took to save them—you will question the meaning of words you thought you could easily define. Words like courage, bravery and sacrifice. What might a Medal of Honor recipient have to say about addiction, substance use, treatment or recovery? Come to the luncheon and hear for yourself.

We will be giving a few awards of our own. Deserving recipients this year include: Gee Vigna, Marv Danielski, Richard Cox and Oval Miller.

The Spring Awards Luncheon is open to the public. The cost is $35 per person or $300 for a table of ten. Reservations must be prepaid by April 1st. Seating is limited so early reservation is strongly advised. To register, please visit ncada-stl.org. For additional information call 314.962.3456.
is to succeed in life and be everything they can be. And if there’s anything that makes us happy, I don’t want my kids doing it.”

Dr. McKee is talking about football, and she is not alone. Most Americans are aware of a connection between football and long-term brain injury, and recent polls suggest that a significant percentage of parents would now discourage their children from taking up the sport.

Thanks to the work of Dr. McKee and others, we know that the cause of the brain damage isn’t only from powerful, high-speed collisions. We now know that recurrent subtle head injuries—blows that don’t even qualify as concussions and have no immediate brain damage—is primarily a brain injury. It’s not a coincidence that a mild concussion has exactly the same symptoms: nausea, headache, memory loss, difficulty concentrating or tolerating noise, depression or anxiety.

Repeated hangovers do the same things to a young person’s brain as repeated concussions. A hangover is, essentially, a fairly vicious whack on the skull with a broom handle. The insult to the brain is chemical rather than from blunt force, but the consequences are the same. And let’s face it: when teens drink, they often drink badly. They consume too much in too short a period of time. A hangover is, essentially, a fairly vicious whack on the skull with a broom handle. The insult to the brain is chemical rather than from blunt force, but the consequences are the same. And let’s face it: when teens drink, they often drink badly. They consume too much in too short a period of time. A hangover is, essentially, a fairly vicious whack on the skull with a broom handle. The insult to the brain is chemical rather than from blunt force, but the consequences are the same. And let’s face it: when teens drink, they often drink badly. They consume too much in too short a period of time.

Though it feels bad all over the body, a hangover within just 24 hours of heavy drinking.

You can’t even measure the damage and a collection of hazy memories when the risks are exposed, responsible parents change the rules.

When the risks are exposed, responsible parents change the rules. So in thousands of homes across the country, young boys with football dreams are fiercely complaining to intractable parents. When we as caregivers put the welfare of our children first, we withstand the complaints. We make our decisions and our kids don’t have to change the rules.

If your son came home after a football game and reported that he “got his bell rung” and couldn’t remember parts of the game, you’d probably be headed to the nearest hospital for an immediate neurological evaluation. And you’d be sure he stopped playing, at least for a while. But when the same child comes home with alcohol on his breath, vomit on his shirt, and the same kind of amnesia, the response is often quite a bit more casual. “It’s just boys being boys; kids being kids.”

So as a parent ask yourself, if you’re willing to keep your child safe from the potential harms of playing a contact sport, would you also be willing to reinvigorate your commitment to keep your children away from the other activity that is equally likely to damage them?

Yes, the football game on Saturday is fraught with risk... but so too is the party on Friday night that precedes it.

And as we near the time for high school spring break, maybe re-think the importance of your child attending a class trip to sunny Mexico. For many young people, spring break trips to the Caribbean become week-long benders that result in more than some lingering brain damage and a collection of hazy memories tinged with embarrassment and shame. Permitting this activity is the neurological equivalent of allowing your son or daughter to take up bare-knuckle boxing.

Underage drinking isn’t just illegal, we now know that it’s genuinely harmful. University of North Carolina professor, Fulton T. Crews sums it up when he says, “...a growing list of studies... suggest that even short-term binge drinking can have long-term effects.”

If you’d like more information about how to talk with your teenager about drinking, give us a call.

hweissman@ncada-stl.org

The football game on Saturday is fraught with risk... so is the party on Friday.
McCaskill, Slay, Stenger, Ehlmann visit NCADA to address heroin crisis

Brandon Costerison

During last month’s Super Bowl broadcast, 1.3 million people in the St. Louis area watched a commercial in which a young woman lost everything. In 60 harrowing seconds, she cast away her family, her friends, her education, and even her dog, as she spiraled into heroin addiction. For any other Super Bowl ad, that’s where the story would end. Eyebrows — and then awareness — would be raised, but the troubling images would soon fade and nothing would be different. This year, NCADA had greater ambition. We wanted to go beyond merely dramatizing the problem; we wanted to incite action.

So the very next day NCADA hosted a press conference with St. Louis County Executive Steve Stenger (left) and St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann.

Mayor Clay concluded the press conference by discussing the link between violent crime in the City of St. Louis and the ongoing heroin and opiate epidemic. He noted that addressing the misuse of heroin and opiates would decrease violent crime. He stressed the need for the city to institute a needle exchange program, Slay took a leadership role on the issue at the winter meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, in Washington D.C.

Rep. Holly Feider was also in attendance, and spoke on the necessity of a prescription drug monitoring program. A PDMP is a cornerstone of any comprehensive response to this crisis, but continues to face organized resistance in the Missouri Legislature.

But the momentum didn’t end with the press conference. Within a week, two amazing things happened.

Firstly, U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill hosted a roundtable discussion at NCADA to discuss the heroin crisis and the need for a PDMP. The hour-long meeting included law enforcement, treatment providers, prevention experts, families who had lost loved ones to overdoses, and individuals in recovery. Sen. McCaskill showed knowledge and passion about the issue, and a strong commitment to treatment and prevention programming for communities.

The jaded among us say that nothing good happens when politicians get together. Those naysayers have been proven wrong. Our community leaders have united in order to address a scourge that is killing one person a day in the region. Their level of commitment and shared purpose is unprecedented, and we take pride in knowing that one provocative and well-placed commercial played some role in moving all these different leaders to share common ground in the name of ending this epidemic.

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The Social Scene

NCADA’s social media activities augment the agency’s programs and initiatives, and this was very much the case with the recent 2016 Super Bowl anti-heroin PSA.

NCADA is active on several social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Periscope. Additionally, the Curiosity+Heroin campaign has its own Facebook page, designed specifically for people interested in the heroin and opioid crisis.

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Instagram was selected because it’s one of the fastest growing social media platforms among young people. In the final seconds of the PSA, viewers were asked to share their stories with NCADA on Instagram using the hashtag #heroism. As individuals created their posts on Instagram, the use of #heroism allowed their content to be searchable and discoverable.

This enabled us to share these stories to our own NCADA Instagram account, increasing awareness of the heroin crisis, and creating a conduit for people to learn more, get help, or take action.

In the ever-changing social media world, the challenge is selecting the proper channels and strategies to ensure that our messages are actually received by the intended audience, so Instagram was not the only social media platform employed.

In the run-up to the 2016 Super Bowl, dozens of our posts to Twitter and Facebook included throwbacks to last year’s PSA and “teasers” for the new one. As the new PSA began to go viral on the web, many people engaged with us on Facebook and via Twitter. After the Super Bowl we used Periscope to broadcast the press conference with Francis Slay, Steve Stenger and Steve Ehlmann (see story on page 4). To date, the YouTube version of the PSA has received more than 408,000 views, from people in all 50 states and in 180 countries around the world. So we know people are following and interacting with us.

Now, our challenge is to build upon the heightened awareness of the heroin and opiate problem by creating messages on social media that will translate into meaningful—and measurable—change in the St. Louis region.

Teen Institute 2016

Start Here. Start Now. Just start!

At this year’s 37th annual Teen Institute (TI) for Prevention Leaders, participants will hear the theme “Start Here” countless times. Every leader has to start somewhere, and for young leaders this summer, that somewhere is the Teen Institute.

From June 7-10, teens from across the St. Louis region will come together to learn about the impact of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, which, in turn, will establish them as credible sources of information and as role models for their fellow students. Not only will teens gain a wealth of knowledge, but they will have fun doing it. Evening activities such as yoga and karaoke will keep teens engaged and help them forge new friendships.

At the end of TI, they will leave with the motivation and skills to increase their peers’ awareness of the risks of substance use, to correct dangerous myths and misinformation about alcohol and other drugs, to encourage healthy choices, and to refuse perceptions of non-drug users as boring or “un-cool.”

If you know a teen currently in 9th, 10th or 11th grade who is interested in attending, please visit stltiennoninstitute.org or contact Libby Brim at 314-662-3456 x320 or Joy Norful at x355.
NCADA: St. Louis’ Finest Tax Dodge

Howard Weissman

We’re happy to report that the Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED) has again awarded Youth Opportunity Program (YOP) tax credits to NCADA for our work with at-risk youth. These are 50% tax credits and the benefits to our supporters are considerable. How else could a $100 expense result in a $50,000 contribution to NCADA? Only through the alchemy of tax credits.

If you’ve been waiting to make a donation to NCADA your tax credit ship has come in. Donations greater than $500 are eligible for YOP tax credits. Our allocation from DED should take us through the end of 2016.

Questions? Contact Cheryl Carrier. CCarrier@ncada-stl.org

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For more information contact

or visit ncada-stl.org

Thank You to All Trivia Night Attendees, Volunteers and Sponsors

Trivia Night is not only a fundraising event, it’s a reunion of NCADA’s “extended family.” Friends, spouses and supporters come together in a relaxed setting to say hello and have fun. For some attendees it’s their first exposure to our agency and to its mission. We are grateful to everyone who helped make this year’s event a success, and offer a special thank you to the Andrew Eagles Foundation.

Volunteer “runners” (from left)
Karli Keeling, Brittny Freeman and Sarah Rice.