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Mental Health Film Festival Tackles Stigma by Focusing on Mental Health Recipients Who Excel

New York, New York: Co-sponsored by Community Access and the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS), the **9th Annual NYC Mental Health Film Festival** brings to downtown Brooklyn films that positively portray the mental health community. The theme this year is **Mental Health Recipients Who Have Excelled in Their Lives and Careers**, a powerful approach to fighting strong prevailing stigmas against the mental health community.

So far in 2013, many news stories have stirred up prejudice and stigma against mental health recipients. Yet behind many lurid headlines it is important to remember that mental health recipients are predominantly non-violent, and no more likely to commit violent crimes. On the other hand, they *are* much more likely to be victims of crime.

What is the best way to share the countless positive stories about mental health recipients? That they are doctors, actors, lawyers, teachers... our friends, family members, and neighbors? The 9th Annual NYC Mental Health Film Festival is one compelling answer. It will help to defeat stigma by offering a day of fun and great films: for everyone to enjoy, whether or not they feel they have a personal connection to mental health issues.

This uplifting, one-of-a-kind event takes place on **Sunday, May 5, between 11:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., at 182 Remsen Street in Brooklyn Heights**, and will also feature a filmmakers' Q&A, audience discussions, and, for good measure, a free lunch for all. Special guests include film subjects Ted "the Golden Voice" Williams, a formerly homeless individual famed for his extraordinary talents as a radio announcer, and Amanda Wang, an amateur boxer living and working in NYC who, aged 27, was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder.

Says festival coordinator and Community Access' community organizer Carla Rabinowitz: "We need the broader society to see mental health recipients in a way they usually don't get a chance to. Spend a day with us and you will see we are not very different from you. We are loving family members, valuable employees, and great neighbors. This festival tackles

the hysteria in Albany and New York City against mental health recipients through film. And it also shares what too many people too often don't get to see: people with psychiatric diagnoses just getting along with their lives like everybody else."

Films include:

Stephen Fry: The Secret Life of a Manic Depressive

In this Emmy Award winning documentary, the actor/writer/broadcaster Stephen Fry explores the remarkable highs and lows of manic depression: his own experience of the condition and through candid conversations with others affected by it (including the actors Carrie Fisher and Richard Dreyfuss).

Rethink BPD

Amanda Wang is a graphic designer living and working in New York. And an amateur boxer living with borderline personality disorder. In RethinkBPD, we follow her challenges and triumphs both inside the ring and out.

Three Voices

Young adults with mental health symptoms share tales of confusion, despair, stigma, and hope.

Heart and Soul

The power of healthy living – profiles of people in recovery.

ABOUT COMMUNITY ACCESS:

- Founded in 1974, Community Access empowers mental health consumers to reach their potentials. The people we serve too often lack access to life's most basic needs—housing, food, health care, education, and employment.
- Our programs are a daily resource to more than 2,000 individuals and families who rely on us for education, affordable housing, counselling, self-help, hot meals, and many more services designed to help them gain new skills, lift themselves out of poverty, and lead healthy, independent lives.
- In 2011, Community Access was selected as a Top 10 Semifinalist in the New York Times Company Nonprofit Excellence Awards.
- For more information about Community Access, visit:
 - <http://www.communityaccess.org>
 - www.facebook.com/communityaccess