

## A Lifetime of Learning and Healing. March 2024



Dear friends;

I had the distinct pleasure and honor of hosting a fireside chat with Dr Gabor Maté last Thursday. The conversation was preceded by an hour-long lecture that was filled with invaluable information gleaned from his many years as a physician, researcher, and author. The entire two-hour long webinar had more takeaways than I can count. Please take some time to view it in its entirety – it is linked at the end of this newsletter. His courageous vulnerability in sharing his healing journey, and the many ways his unhealed trauma can still (at 80) be expressed when he is stressed, perceives rejection, abandonment or loss of control allows for the rest of us to admit our own flaws as well.

Dr Maté's approach to understanding the human condition as it relates to addiction, mental health, and physical illness is that these are manifested reactions to our unhealed trauma and pain (in conjunction with other risk factors). He practices an approach called Compassionate Inquiry in the assessment and treatment of maladies faced by his patients. In that approach, he queries people on their childhood experiences, what pain they are experiencing, and how they soothe that pain. In asking not why the addiction but why the pain, he has found much more effective pathways to healing.

When questioned where personal responsibility lies in that approach, Dr Maté said that our society often confuses responsibility with blame. Each of us is responsible for our healing. However, when we are approached by another with compassion rather than shame, control, cajoling or guilt, we are much more likely to have the capacity to take that responsibility and do the healing work.

That resonated deeply with me. I only had to think back a few days earlier when I was crabby with Greg (my husband) for not following up with his doctor about a medical concern. When I've attempted to change, control, or fix someone else, I've justified those actions by explaining that the person's safety and well-being are at risk. While that may very well be true, my approach when it is coming from that wounded (anxious) part of me is not healthy or effective. In other words, those reactions to another's behaviors point out the work I have yet to do. We are ever-evolving works in progress, my wonderful friends.

Thanks for being on this journey with me,

Maria Coutant Skinner  
President & CEO



It's March – a time of basketball, brackets and, sometimes, betting. For some people, gambling can get out of control. Thanks to apps and the internet, the opportunity to gamble is greater than ever. If gambling is disrupting your life or the life of a loved one, the McCall Behavioral Health Network has the resources to help.

### Tips to avoid problem gambling.

For gambling to be a diverting leisure activity, there are several tips that are important to consider.

- Set limits on how much time and money you spend on gambling.
- Avoid "chasing losses" – don't continue gambling in an attempt to recoup lost money.
- Avoid gambling while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Take breaks from gambling – it's good to step away for a period of time.
- Understand that risks of gambling extend beyond financial loss. Gambling can impact relationships, work, and mental health. It can also lead to legal issues.

### Signs to watch out for.

There are clear signs that gambling is getting out of control. You may be in harmful territory if you're:

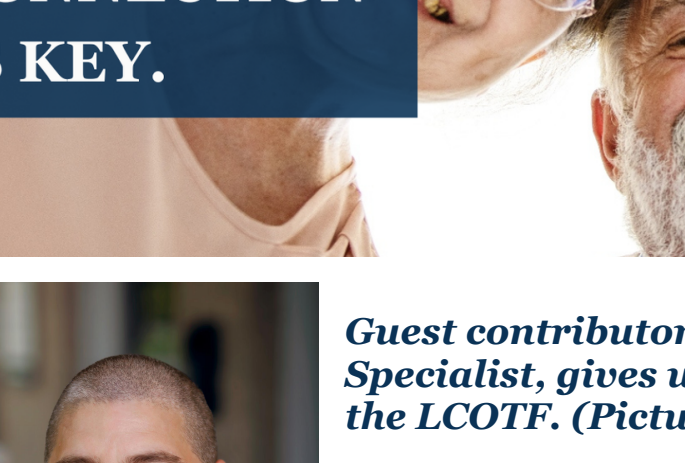
- Preoccupied with gambling.
- Lying about your gambling.
- Borrowing money to gamble.
- Neglecting responsibilities such as work and family matters.
- Experiencing mood swings and/or increased anxiety and irritability.

### Being aware of gambling's impact.

"I feel like we all have behaviors that might affect our lives, but we can't always see them clearly," says Carissa D'Amico, LMSW, ICGC-1. Carissa is a counselor at McCall's Renato Outpatient Services location in Waterbury. She's also nationally certified to treat problem gambling.

For those who are concerned that their gambling could be problematic, Carissa can provide expert guidance and support. "McCall is always happy to help." That's Carissa's message, adding, "We're going to work with you on what your personal goals are. We're not going to push you into never gambling again or doing something you don't want to do."

You can reach out to Carissa and McCall by calling our main number: 860.496.2100. You can also contact us through our website at [mccallbh.org](http://mccallbh.org). Other valuable resources for problem gambling include the [Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling](http://Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling), [Gamblers Anonymous](http://Gamblers Anonymous), and a [24-hour Helpline](http://24-hour Helpline) for support via text, phone or chat.

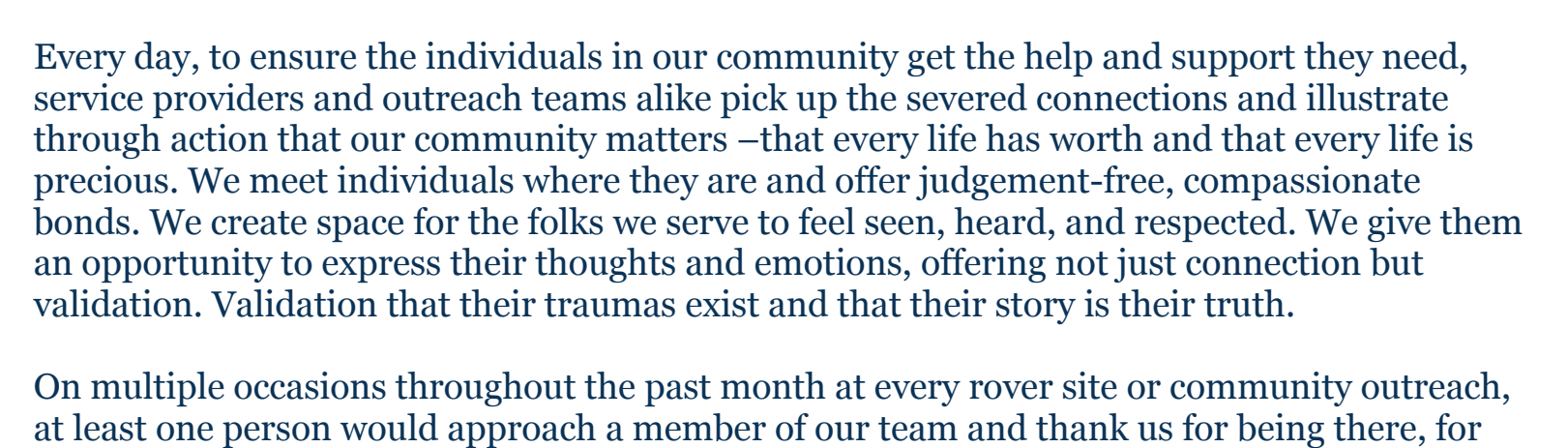


CARISSA D'AMICO LMSW, ICGC-1  
Outpatient Clinician  
PROBLEM GAMBLING

### Learn more on WZBG.

Don't worry, we've got you covered! Visit our pressroom to hear from Carissa D'Amico, LMSW, ICGC-1. Carissa has national certification in the treatment of problem gambling. You'll learn how to recognize when gambling becomes problematic and what to do about it.

Click on the image to listen to the full FM 97.3 WZBG interview.



We're thrilled to announce the launch of our Open Access Program in Danbury, Torrington, and Waterbury, providing expedited support for people experiencing issues with their substance use or mental health.

To begin, clients should call 860.496.2100. Following a brief, 20-minute phone interview, we will provide our clients with an Open Access time slot for their initial screenings. Oftentimes an appointment on the same day will be made available. Clients should bring a photo ID and insurance card.

### Open Access Hours at McCall's Travisano Outpatient Services in Danbury.

- Mon: 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Tue: Spanish and Portuguese-speaking clients) 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- Fri: 10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

### Open Access Hours at McCall's Outpatient Services in Torrington:

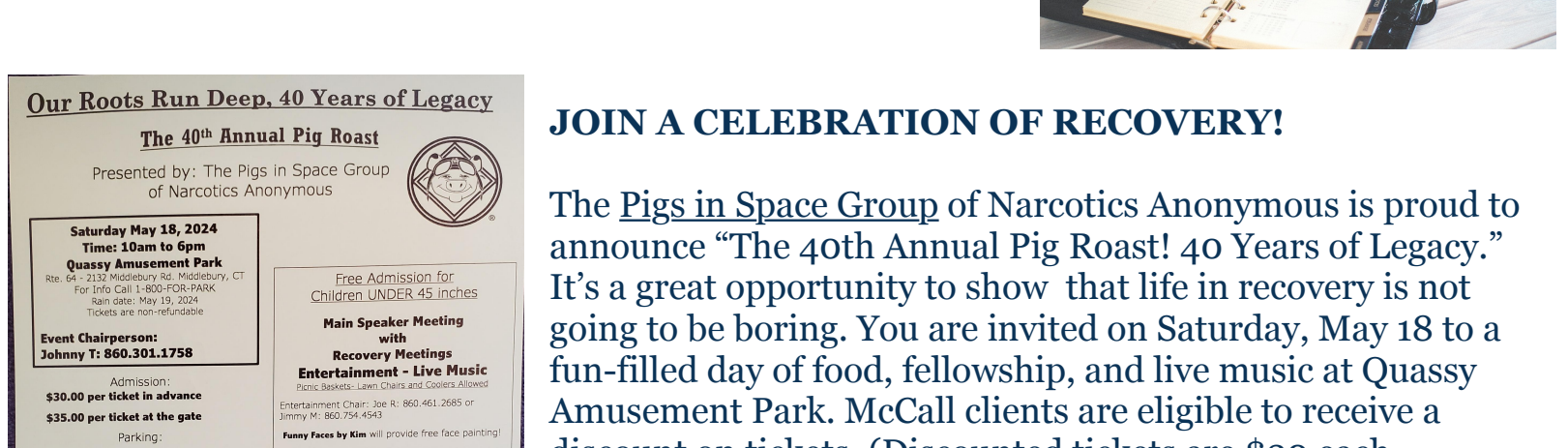
- Mon: 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
- Tue: 12:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Wed: 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
- Fri: 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

### Open Access Hours at McCall's Renato Outpatient Services in Waterbury:

- Tue: 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and Spanish-speaking hours from 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
- Wed: 12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Fri: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

It's important to note that while this service is a valuable resource for those seeking support, it is not intended for individuals experiencing a crisis. In such cases, immediate medical attention at a hospital emergency room is strongly recommended.

[Click here](#) to read the full press release.



### GIVE LOCAL IS COMING!

For 36 hours on April 24 - 25, 2024, Connecticut Community Foundation will host Give Local Greater Waterbury and Litchfield Hills for the 11th consecutive year. Nonprofit organizations will also compete for cash prizes, adding to the excitement and fun!

This year we are raising money for McCall's Insight Prevention Program for local high school and middle school students.

Stayed tuned for more details, including how to help us win a matching gift from our board of directors and an incentive for you too.



### Connection is Key.

Connection is a cornerstone of the human experience and is integral for our mental and physical wellbeing. Whether it's the bond formed with loved ones or our favorite teddy bear, connection plays a pivotal role in our early childhood and remains ever present throughout our entire lives. The absence or removal of a connection can have severe repercussions as feelings of loneliness very quickly become feelings of depression and isolation.

All too often in our society, the stigma that surrounds substance use leads to family members and friends "cutting off" individuals that struggle with a substance use disorder. When those connections are severed, the negative emotions that replace them become the impetus for continued usage and, in some cases, even heavier usage. The thought that no one cares and that you don't matter becomes another pain to numb, another hurt to bury.

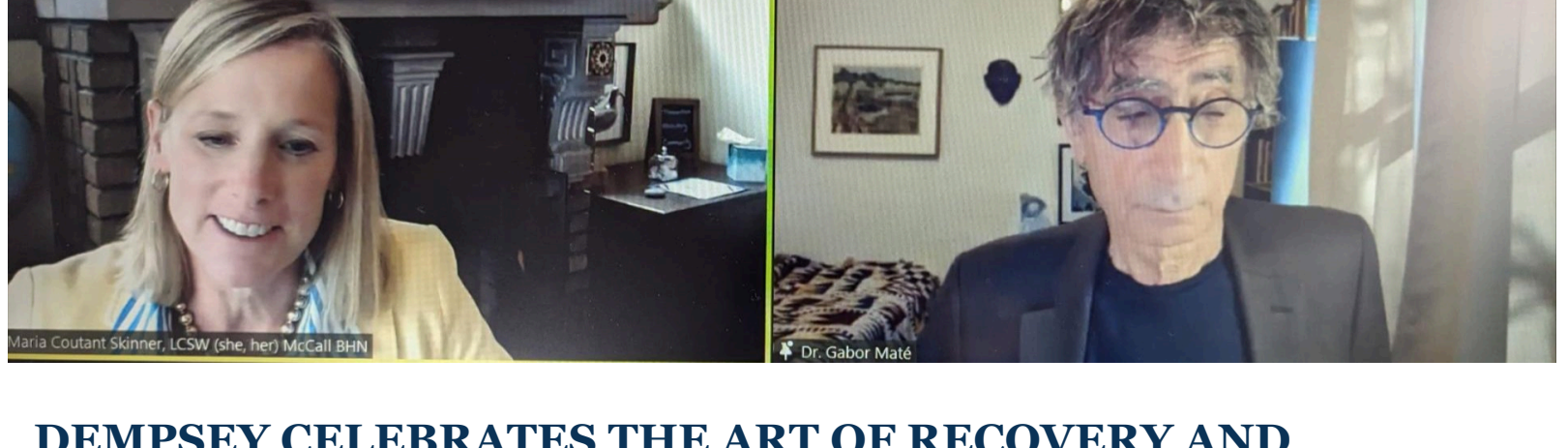
Every day, to ensure the individuals in our community get the help and support they need, service providers and outreach teams alike pick up the severed connections and illustrate through action that our community matters – that every life has worth and that every life is precious. We meet individuals where they are and offer judgement-free, compassionate bonds. We create space for the folks we serve to feel seen, heard, and respected. We give them an opportunity to express their thoughts and emotions, offering not just connection but validation. Validation that their traumas exist and that their story is their truth.

On multiple occasions throughout the past month at every rover site or community outreach, at least one person would approach a member of our team and thank us for being there, for taking the time to listen, for offering support and assistance without any strings attached or abstinence-based agenda. On our overdose responses, families as well as the individuals we went to see offered their thanks and shared their surprise that teams like ours exist. The connections made on these responses create a pathway to the services that those individuals may be hesitant to utilize.

Connection also serves as a conduit for our team's self-care. In order to process all of the pain and sorrow our team absorbs, we connect with each other and have difficult conversations. We connect with counselors to work through the trauma we see and hear to better understand the emotions it evokes in us. Sometimes we even connect with a good book and some tea to help us relax after an eventful day.

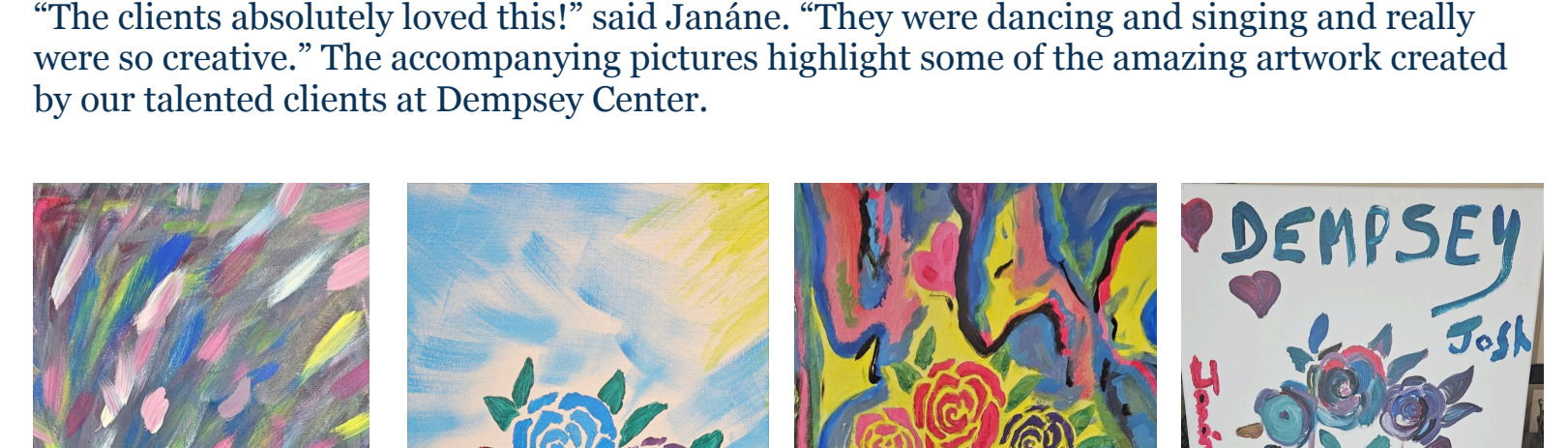
Dr. Martin Luther King once said, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

That quote has stuck with me for quite some time now and every time I think of it, I'm reminded that my team – and others like it – live that truth. We go out and remind folks that they aren't alone, that they are loved, and that we will walk alongside them in whatever pathway to wellness they choose. We strive to make the connection that carries the potential to make a difference. I hope that someday we all realize what I believe Dr. King was trying to share, that together is the only way forward.



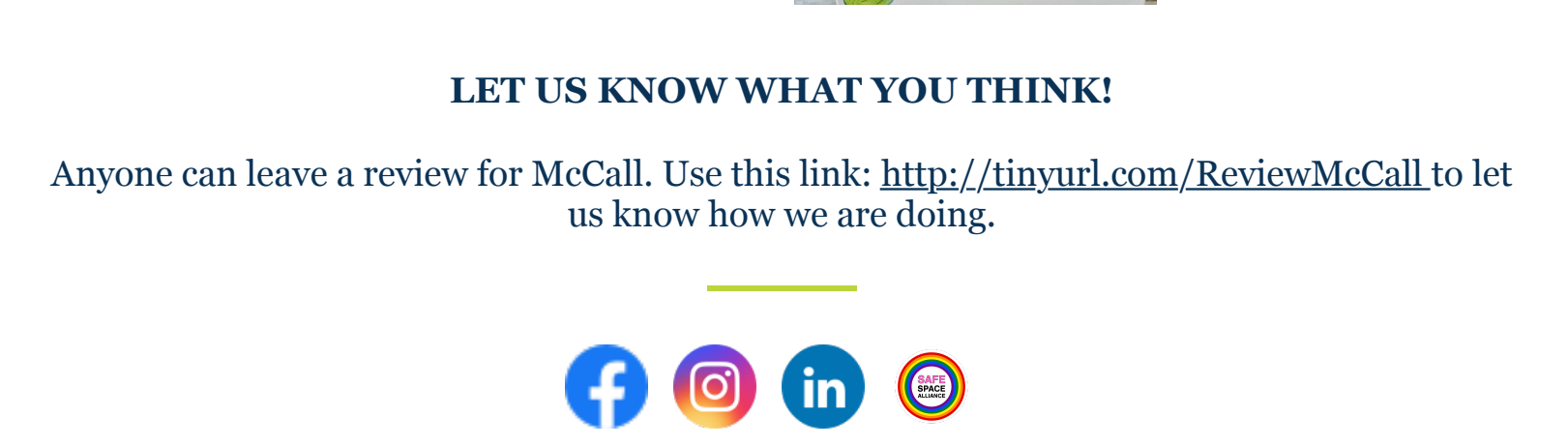
### CLIENT RESOURCES.

Learn more and see what's new.



### SIGN UP FOR MCCALL'S FAMILY IN RECOVERY NEWSLETTER!

McCall's Family Recovery Coach, Alicia Peterson, RSS, uses her own experiences to help others. Every month, Alicia publishes a free newsletter filled with helpful insights for people with family or friends who have a substance use disorder.



### ATTEND A FREE YOGA CLASS!

Sanctuary Power Yoga in Torrington is offering free yoga classes to all McCall clients. They would just need to present a McCall business card to gain free admittance. Learn all about the studio [here](#).



### MONTHLY EVENTS CALENDAR.

McCall has a variety of programs and resources your physician may not be aware of. Take a look at our monthly [Events Calendar](#) of support group meetings, Mobile Wellness Van locations, and more.



### JOIN A CELEBRATION OF RECOVERY!

The Pigs in Space Group of Narcotics Anonymous is proud to announce "The 40th Annual Pig Roast! 40 Years of Legacy." It's a great opportunity to show that life in recovery is not going to be boring. You are invited on Saturday, May 18 to a fun-filled day of food, fellowship, and live music at Quassy Amusement Park. McCall clients are eligible to receive a discount on tickets. (Discount tickets are \$20 each. However, you may have to pay a parking fee of \$10.) If you would like to attend, please reach out to a McCall staff member who can reserve your tickets.



### THANK YOU TO ALL SOCIAL WORKERS

Every March, National Social Work Month recognizes the dedication and empathy social workers across the country deliver while providing services to children and adults in need.

Social workers are advocates, advisors, counselors, and facilitators. Their services are provided in crisis situations or when life creates roadblocks and uncertainty. They guide individuals through the obstacles and help lift them out of the potholes. Social workers provide a voice for equal rights for underserved communities and connect people to resources.

This month we celebrate all of McCall's Social Workers – those who are licensed and those working toward their goal! Thank you for all that you do at McCall, especially for the support and encouragement you give our clients.



### HAPPY DOCTOR'S DAY!

Happy National Doctor's Day to our very own Dr. Natalie March! Thank you for your tireless efforts to keep our clients and staff healthy and safe. We are so grateful for your guidance, kindness, and dedication to excellence in behavioral health care.



### OUT & ABOUT with McCall



### STAFF MINI-RETREAT WITH SANDRINE.

On March 22, Sandrine Neenan, SEP, RSMT/E, GCFP, offered a trauma-informed mini-retreat to McCall staff, focused on slowing down, mindful movement, breathwork, and connection.

Sandrine specializes in working with and through the body (somatics), and is a trauma and stress practitioner in private practice. She is also a movement and meditation facilitator with over 20 years of experience guiding workshops, retreats, and trainings internationally.

She is holding a 6-day retreat at the OMEGA Institute in August, and commuters and lodgers are both welcome! [Click here](#) to learn more.



### THE WATERBURY REGIONAL CHAMBER LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT.

McCall proudly sponsored and attended the Waterbury Regional Chamber Legislative Summit on March 1. Governor Lamont was on hand and emphasized Connecticut's fiscal guardrails, ensuring stability and vital investments.

Discussions at the summit highlighted concerns about nonprofit funding. However, the Governor reassured those in attendance that ongoing efforts were being made to address funding for nonprofits.

At McCall, we're dedicated to behavioral health care and grateful for opportunities like this summit to advocate for our community. Our thanks go out to the Waterbury Chamber for hosting. To read more, [click here](#).



### MCCALL ON THE MOVE!

Residents of Waterbury and surrounding communities may get a glimpse of McCall's targeted bus advertising campaign made possible by a generous – and greatly appreciated – donation of \$10,000 from the Archdiocese of Hartford.



### MATÉ AND MARIA: A TRULY DYNAMIC DUO!

On March 19, the Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership presented a live virtual event entitled, "Substance use, society and social impact: A presentation and fireside chat with Dr. Gabor Maté."

Renowned author and addiction expert Dr. Gabor Maté shared his insights, followed by a discussion with McCall's President and CEO Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW. Those who attended this informative event witnessed a thoughtful, highly focused examination of the nature of addiction. To watch a recording of the talk and fireside chat, [click here](#). \*\*The video is currently unavailable, but we anticipate the issue will be resolved within the next few days.



### DEMPSEY CELEBRATES THE ART OF RECOVERY AND HEALING.

Janané Silva, BS, Shift Supervisor at McCall's Dempsey Center, reports that the folks at Dempsey connected with Winning Ways, a local nonprofit organization, and held a painting event with our clients a few weeks ago, which was extremely well received.

Winning Ways received funding from NEST, a nonprofit headquartered in Waterbury, to be able to sponsor similar events like for organizations that work with individuals who have been impacted by the criminal justice system.

Winning Ways guided the painting event and provided all of the art supplies and even set up a live DJ to spin tunes.

"The clients absolutely loved this!" said Janané. "They were dancing and singing and really were so creative." The accompanying pictures highlight some of the amazing artwork created by our talented clients at Dempsey Center.



### LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

Anyone can leave a review for McCall. Use this link: <http://tinyurl.com/ReviewMcCall> to let us know how we are doing.

