

**LACDMH HOSTS 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HOPE AND RECOVERY CONFERENCE IN  
CULVER CITY**  
By Kimberli Washington, Public Information Office



LACDMH held its 14<sup>th</sup> Annual English Hope and Recovery Conference on Tuesday, April 9, 2013, at the Doubletree Hotel in Culver City, CA. The forum recognizes and encourages clients in recovery through personal recovery stories, keynote speakers and special interactive presentations. Nearly 500 clients registered for the conference.



The event was led by Mistress of Ceremonies, Catherine Bond, LACDMH Director of Empowerment and Advocacy. She kept the crowd engaged between speakers with interesting facts on the benefits of Self Help 12 Step Programs and an encouraging group chant saying "So What?" the next time people start labeling others regarding the stigma associated with mental illness.



This year's recovery speakers included Malia Javier, Paul Candice, Joana Arcangel and yoga instructor Niki Davis. Keynote speakers were Gwen Lewis-Reid from Long Beach Mental Health and Roy Brown, National Director of Vet to Vet. The plenary session was on the topic of Procovery Group Interaction by Kathleen Crowley, Executive Director of the Procovery Institute, and Procovery story by Gary Gougis of South Bay Wellness Center.



“We are celebrating everyone being well today,” said Gary Gougis. “There are a lot of happy faces and we are dissolving the stigma that people do not get well, they do get well. It is evident from the amount of people who has shown up today that Los Angeles County is a leader in the recovery movement,” he said.



The conference also provided entertainment in the form of raffles, music and movement with the group doing the “Cha Cha Slide” and comedian Steve Mittleman. LACDMH divisions and other community groups set up booths to provide participants with additional information and resources for continued recovery success.