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2016 Annual Hope & Recovery Conference

By Ebony Campbell

On Wednesday, June 22, 2016, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) hosted the annual Hope & Recovery Conference, entitled United in Recovery: “It takes a Global Village to Recover” at the Cathedral Plaza in downtown Los Angeles. The all-day conference was free to clients, family members and caregivers.

LACDMH Program Director Helena Ditko, LCSW, welcomed everyone to the event. Brent Popham and Dorothy Banks served as the conference’s master and mistress of ceremonies. A personal testimony was presented by Llanette Morgan, Mental Health Advocate.

Acting LACDMH Director Robin Kay, Ph. D., delivered a heartfelt message stating that now is the “golden time” for mental health and that we must stay united in our journeys and that we must find our meaning and purpose. Then Acting Chief Deputy Director Dennis Murata participated in the “Ask the

Director” segment where Mr. Murata spoke to the conference attendees and then a Q&A session followed for attendees to ask questions.

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An Interactive Session was held by Roxanne Zavala who led everyone in a relaxing standing workout including Yoga and Tai Chi. A short Q&A session followed.

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This year's keynote speaker was standup comedian and television personality, Paul Gilmartin, who shared his story of alcoholism, infidelity, incest and molestation. "People think that they understand depression because of they experienced situational sadness--that's like thinking you understand Italy after going to the Olive Garden," he said. "Have compassion for others but not at the expense of yourself."

Lunch was provided and the rest of the day included a wellness fair, guided meditation with Michael Benner as well as an opportunity drawing.