



June 23, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Anne Mc Kenna, Director of
Development and Community Relations
(585) 256-3800, ext. 213

People in Recovery
Celebrate Enrichment Graduation

“This has been a wonderful experience,” said Bobby, of East House’s Cody House for men in recovery. “I had a great time and I learned that I have TALENT.”

Bobby was one of thirty-seven proud graduates of a unique East House Enrichment program. The graduates, in recovery from chemical dependency or mental illness, completed two weeks of intense study at RIT. These students had the opportunity to take classes in computer skills, creative writing, Spanish, drawing, public speaking, picture taking, and many more subjects. The program is designed to enhance other treatment programs and encourages clients to pursue education to achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

Greg Soehner, the new President/CEO of East House, was keynote speaker at the graduation, held June 11th at RIT’s Ingle Auditorium. Soehner reminded the graduates that “It’s not over until it’s over...learning is a life-long process. You have been through a lot, but you are strong, and you are already successful.” He quoted Randy Pausch, the deceased author of “The Last Lecture” who said, “When you are living your life right, good things will come to you.” Soehner, who cited examples in his own life in which he found himself starting over, said “Continue to do the right thing and be open to new opportunities. I wish you much success.”

(more)

TJ Stevens, a 2007 graduate, shared reflections on his experience, which led to his current employment as a machinist. TJ echoed Soehner in sharing that many good things have changed his life for the better, since he recovered, received his GED, took classes at MCC and is now successfully employed. TJ was given \$5000 worth of machinist's tools from a retired machinist who heard him speak at his 2008 GED graduation. "It changed my life, and has meant the world to me," he said, as he also encouraged the graduates to move forward.

Several graduates added their comments. "I'm thankful to East House for this great opportunity, East House believes in me; believes in US," said Wade. "I'm very excited to be here today."

"I enjoyed learning again, and I'm already enrolled in fall classes at MCC," said Ray, of the Crossroads Apartment Program. More than 200 guests attended the graduation, which included volunteer teachers, East House staff and Board members, graduates' family members, and guests. Following the ceremony, guests enjoyed a reception in the Student Alumni Union.

The two-week program and graduation event was sponsored by M & T Bank. The program , which is funded wholly by donations, also received support from the Fred and Floy Wilmott Foundation, The Kessler Group, Riverton Golf Course, the Rochester Female Charitable Society and Wegmans Food Market. Individual donors included: Mr. and Mrs. James Papero, Margy and Mel Pisetzner, Dr. and Mrs. Peter Kogut and Dr. and Mrs. Edward Lewis. This is the thirteenth year that East House has carried out this beneficial program.

East House is a private, non-profit rehabilitation agency. Founded in 1966, East House provides residential, rehabilitation and support services to individuals recovering from mental illness and/or chemical dependency. East House serves more than 1,000 clients and their families each year and is funded by New York State, Monroe County, United Way, client fees and donations. For more information, contact Anne Mc Kenna at 256-3800, ext. 213.