

**For Immediate Release**

The National Council for Behavioral Health Awards Felton Institute's PREP Program Coordinator of Peer and Family Support Services with the Prestigious Peer Specialist of the Year Award for Excellence in Mental Health



Honorees to Receive the Inspiring Hope Awards on  
April 21, 2015, in Orlando, Florida

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** ( April 21, 2015) - The National Council for Behavioral Health (National Council) will honor Dina Tyler, Felton Institute's Coordinator of Peer and Family Support Services for PREP (Prevention and Recovery in Early Psychosis) Program in Alameda County, California, with the National Council Award of Excellence: Peer Specialist of the Year Award at the National Council's NatCon15 awards ceremony, known as the Oscars of behavioral health.

The Inspiring Hope Awards, supported by Eli Lilly and Company, recognize individuals who've shown extraordinary tenacity and courage in battling serious mental illness and are living full lives and pursuing their goals.

The conference will include renown leaders and prominent advocates in the mental health field, including General Colin Powell (retired) and former U.S. Representative Patrick Kennedy. PREP is an evidence-based program founded and operated by Felton Institute in partnership with the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF). The innovative Felton Institute, founded in 1889, has a rich tradition of being at the forefront of social service innovation and pioneering development of new approaches to meet emerging needs of under served populations with cultural sensitivity, deep respect for the consumer, and a commitment to social justice.

For Dina Tyler, receiving Peer Specialist of the Year award for the work that she considers part of her life's vocation, is an incredible milestone in both her professional career and personal

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journey. For years, after her diagnosis of mental illness, Tyler feared that she would never be able to have a career. Instead, it is her lived experiences that have shaped her empowering advocacy and implementation of effective strategies, through Felton Institute's PREP Program.

As Dina recalls, "When I read the PREP job announcement, and saw those words 'person with lived experience of the mental health system preferred,' it was life changing. I had no idea that all of my history, all that I had been through could be a job qualification. I provide individual peer support and facilitate a mutual peer support group. I also have mentored young adults that have graduated PREP to take on roles within our program.

We currently have graduates that have been trained to facilitate Hearing Voices Network groups, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) groups, and the Coming Out Proud program, a disclosure program for stigma reduction of mental health. None of this would have been possible if I had not seen a job description that encouraged those of us with lived experience of the mental health system to apply."

Felton Institute President and CEO Bob Bennett notes, "We at Felton Institute are proud of the work that Dina does to advance PREP's vision of transforming the treatment and perception of psychosis. We celebrate this prestigious recognition of her extraordinary tenacity and courage in battling mental illness and her dedication to PREP's practices of early intervention with culturally competent diagnosis and treatment, creation of a sense of community, and the goal of achieving sustainable remission. When we see our patients, young adults ages 16-24 in the program, managing symptoms so that they can form meaningful relationships, live full lives, and chart career courses, we see viable success."

Serving over 300 clients each year, PREP is one of the largest outpatient treatment programs for early psychosis in the United States. PREP currently operates in community-based settings in five California counties serving over 300 clients each year. In 2015, PREP will expand to three more California counties. In 2013, Felton established the BEAM (Bipolar Early Assessment Management) program to take a similar approach to bipolar I disorder.

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For interviews in Orlando, Florida during the NATCON2015 conference, call 510-872-6510 and in San Francisco, CA, call 415-261-2199. To see a complete list of honorees, visit [www.thenationalcouncil.org/about/awards/](http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/about/awards/).

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#### About Felton Institute

Felton Institute responds to human needs by providing cutting edge, evidence based social services that transform lives. Felton Institute was founded in 1889 by Katharine "Kitty" Felton, with the mandate that children and families in crisis must have access to social services and resources in order to help them build upon their inherent strengths and develop self-sufficiency.

#### About Felton's PREP Program:

Felton's PREP program provides services in five Northern and Central California Counties: Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo, San Joaquin, and Monterey. A rigorous, data driven program using five evidence-based practices in synergy, PREP's comprehensive treatment approach includes care management, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Psychosis (CBTp) algorithm guided medication management, individual and family group therapy, and educational and vocational counseling to help clients and their families manage the disease over the course of a lifetime.

Key program partners include UCSF, East Bay Community Recovery Project, Sojourner Truth Foster Family Agency, the Mental Health Association of Alameda, and the behavioral health services departments of the five California counties with PREP programs The Mental Health Association of San Francisco was also a founding partner. Learn more at: [PREPwellness.org](http://PREPwellness.org) and [Felton.org](http://Felton.org).

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