

## Thank You, Mayor Parker!

The Houston Recovery Center is grateful for the support of Mayor Annise Parker, who has recognized the multiple benefits of having a sobering center in Houston. Mayor Parker understands the value of the Sobering Center to the clients who come through the center, the Houston Police Department, and the Houston community as a whole.

As a part of her plan to reduce overcrowding in the city jail, Mayor Parker recognizes that the sobering center is beneficial for individuals whose only criminal behavior is public intoxication. Clients are diverted from jail, provided with a safe place to sober up and sleep, and are then referred to long term treatment services as appropriate to social service agencies in the Houston community. As a part of the Sobering Center's ribbon cutting ceremony, Mayor Parker expressed her hope that individuals who come through the center will have the opportunity to change their lives.

Mayor Parker has also described the Sobering Center as an innovative solution to the costly problem of incarcerating large numbers of individuals for public intoxication. The annual operating costs of the Sobering Center are expected to be \$1.5 million, compared to the \$4-6 million it currently costs to process public intoxication cases at the city jail. Not only is incarcerating individuals for public intoxication costly for the city of Houston, but it also takes up much of the time of police officers. By bringing individuals to the sobering center instead of jail, police officers will be able to return to the streets to handle more serious and life threatening crimes.

The support of Mayor Parker has made it possible for the sobering center to make a positive impact on the Houston community and in the lives of the growing number of clients that come through our doors.

*Pictured left to right:*

*Leonard Kincaid,  
Betty Nunnally, Mayor  
Annise Parker, Mayor  
Pro-Tem Ed Gonzalez,  
Andy Icken, and  
Lt. Mike Lee*



## Press Releases from the Mayor's Office

### *Mayor Parker Cuts the Ribbon at City's New Houston Recovery Center*

"This is an innovative solution to a costly problem that diverts our police from other matters and crowds the city jail," said Mayor Parker. "It is the first step toward the city's long-term goal of getting out of the jail business. My goals are reduced costs, easing of jail overcrowding and safer streets. My hope for the individuals who wind up here is real change in their lives."

### *Mayor Parker Unveils Plan for Sobering Center*

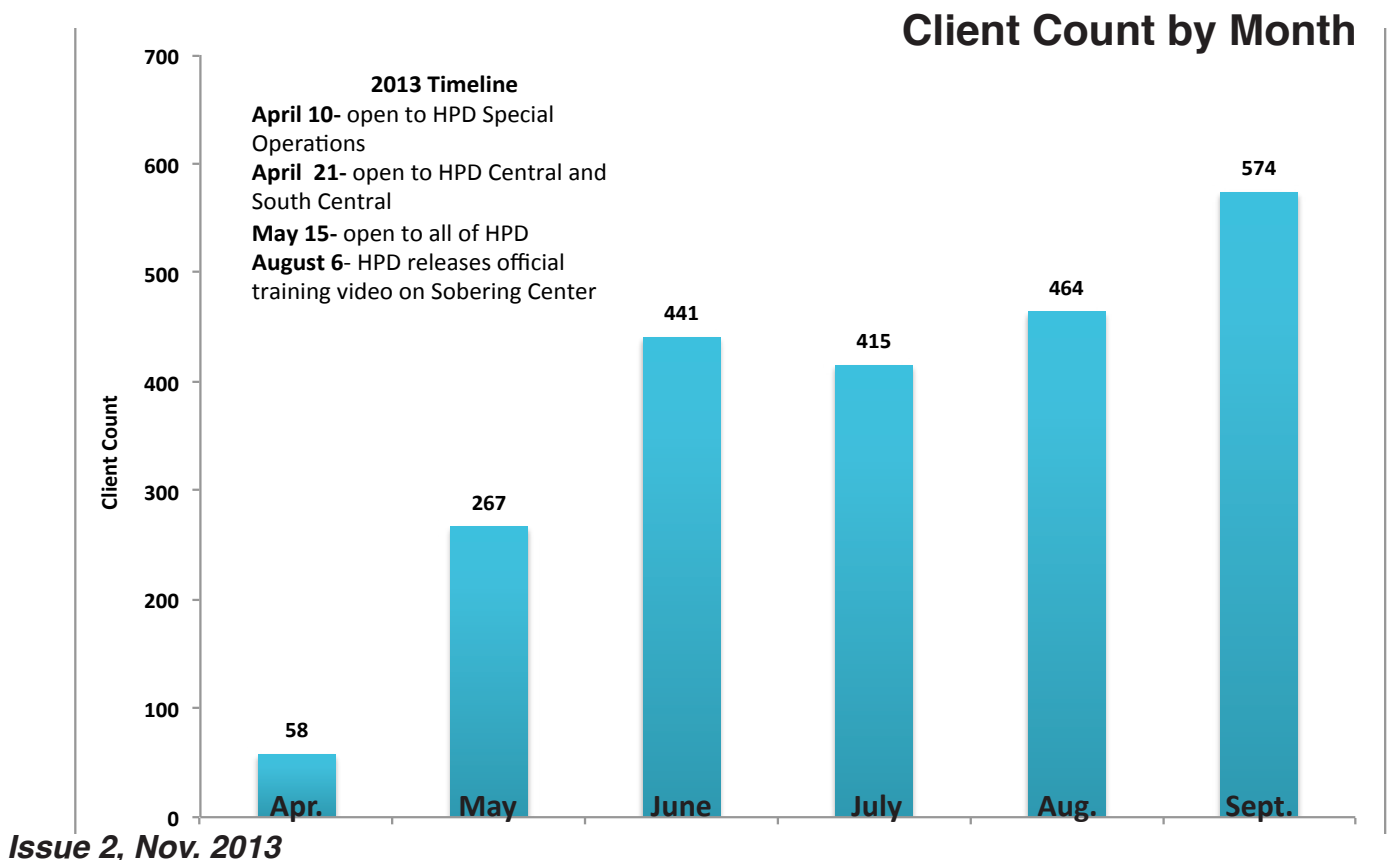
"Incarcerating individuals whose only criminal behavior is public intoxication diverts law enforcement from more serious or life threatening crimes," said Mayor Annise Parker. "Sobering centers in other cities have proven to be time savers for patrol officers, allowing them to quickly return to their assigned neighborhoods to deal with more serious crimes."

### *City Council Approves New Houston Sobering Center*

"This will help reduce the city's financial burden for handling public intoxication cases, ease crowding in our city jail and make our streets safer," said Mayor Parker. "There will be services for those who need them, whether in the short term or the long term, and hopefully we'll see real change for them. We hope it eventually also creates savings in the form of reduced operating costs at the city jail."

## By the Numbers

The sobering center continues to serve a diverse sampling of the population.  
We welcome all clients in need of our services, regardless of race, gender, age or living status.



## Staff Success Story - George L. Shea

From my earliest recollections of childhood to the last days in my addiction, alcohol and drugs were always prevalent. My family members were always drinking in the home in which I was raised so I grew up believing that was normal. Being drawn to the counter-culture of the late '60's was the spark that fanned the flames of my addiction, which lasted three-and-a-half decades.

I was first exposed to drug and alcohol treatment in my early 20's while attending family classes on the disease of alcoholism/addiction during my father's stay at a residential treatment center. For many years afterward, I was acutely aware of my condition but not willing to take the steps that had been outlined to me as necessary to recover.

Roughly 30 years later and with the support of family members - some of whom had found sobriety - I returned to Houston in 2009 and willingly began taking those steps to live a life that is alcohol- and drug-free. I have been sober ever since.

*"I was acutely aware of my condition but not willing to take the steps that had been outlined to me as necessary to recover."*

In sobriety, I began to really see the extent to which my life was severely compromised due to my addictions and that other peoples' demands for me to change were counter-productive. And, I came to believe that my experiences might be useful to those who are going through the struggles I endured for years.

I have also learned through 12-step programs, the writings of William White, and multiple stories and studies on addiction and alcoholism, that addiction is a complicated public health issue. An issue that is better served with compassion, understanding and social services rather than the threat of fines and incarceration.

As a Recovery Support Specialist at the Houston Center for Sobriety, I am afforded a forum in which my professional training and genuine care for people may benefit those who suffer from the same condition I do; those who cannot envision the hope of sobriety and the promises it brings.

*Fourth generation Houstonian,  
George Shea,  
finds his place within the city's  
recovery community.*



## Client Success Story

*The following is a letter that the Houston Recovery Center received from a former client who is currently working on her sobriety.*

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to say "Thank you" for the Center for Sobriety.

I am truly grateful for the care that was given to me by the staff when I didn't know what I was doing or where I was going in my life.

The care that was given to me was the best anyone could ask for. Everyone was professional, courteous, attentive, caring, and understanding.

I felt safe and I also felt a lot of compassion at the time when I was in a drunken stupor.

I was not left alone wondering what was going on around me.

Mental and wellness care was given the utmost attention, as well as helping me recognize what got me to where I was. That was a main part of what the Center for Sobriety made me acknowledge about myself.

The outpatient care that is offered and provided at the center helps those of us suffering with the disease of alcoholism drug addiction, mental illness, loneliness, as well as housing issues, and gets us the help we need for our Recovery. Also, our meetings help us and point us in the right direction, giving us the tools we need to better our future to have a clearer outlook on life. Living in sobriety, also taking care of our mental, wellness, drug addiction, or alcoholism, with long or short term care and help.

Recovery. Sobriety. Wellness. It's what it's all about at the Center.



*Houston Recovery Center  
Client  
Amelia D.  
September, 2013*