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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **MHA-NYC Gala Calls Upon Public to Start Talking Openly About Mental Health**

*Honoring Outstanding Mental Health Advocates including: New York Giants Wide Receiver Brandon Marshall and his wife Michi Marshall, and the Zirinsky family: health visionary Cynthia Zirinsky; legendary CBS News producer Susan Zirinsky; TV news innovator, Joe Peyronnin; and Morgan Stanley Executive Director, Cynthia Eckes*

*Bill Ritter, award-winning journalist, Co-Anchor of WABC's "Eyewitness News," and Correspondent for ABC News's "20/20" to Host*

**NEW YORK, N.Y. (May 10, 2017)** – On Wednesday, June 7th, the Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA-NYC) will host its 25th Gala Celebration, "Just Talk About It: Stories of Recovery and Success" at

Gotham Hall in Manhattan. The benefit will focus on the power of "just talking about" mental health and will celebrate people who, through public words and deeds, have helped thousands find hope and care.

- New York Giants Wide-Receiver **Brandon Marshall and his wife Michi Marshall** will be honored for their passionate mental health advocacy since 2010, when Brandon disclosed his lifelong struggle with Borderline Personality Disorder and became an inspiration and role model to football fans everywhere. Today, Brandon and Michi are the Co-Founders and Chairs of PROJECT 375, an organization dedicated to eradicating the stigma surrounding mental health by raising awareness and improving care for those in need.
- The event will also pay tribute to **the Zirinsky family**, whose commitment to improving mental health services has spanned 50 years and 3 generations. Cynthia Zirinsky -- founder of Gracie Square Hospital and the Richard and Cynthia Zirinsky Center for Bipolar Disorder at Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital -- will be honored along with her daughter, legendary CBS News producer Susan Zirinsky; her son-in-law, TV news innovator, Joe Peyronnin; and her granddaughter, Morgan Stanley executive Cynthia Eckes. For 5 decades of leadership and generous philanthropy, a member of the Zirinsky family has served continually on the MHA-NYC Board, changing the face of mental health care.
- For the second year in a row, **Bill Ritter, Co-Anchor of WABC's "Eyewitness News," will serve as Master of Ceremonies**, lending his support to underscore the prevalence of mental health problems and the importance of sharing our stories so we can improve service, reduce stigma, and offer encouragement to those who are struggling.

This year will mark the **25th anniversary of MHA-NYC's Gala**, the premier mental health event of the year. The event will bring together over 500 influential leaders in business, government, health, and mental health who are committed to making a difference in the lives of people dealing with mental health challenges.

"By just talking about mental health issues, we can help others get support," shared Kimberly Williams, President of MHA-NYC. "One in four American adults and one in ten American children has a behavioral health condition in any given year, and over 40,000 Americans die by suicide

annually, but many still do not like to talk about mental health. With this event, we hope to bring the conversation into the open and demonstrate how simply talking can lead others to take action and achieve wellness."

MHA-NYC Board Chair Kevin Danehy agreed. "We all know people who have struggled with mental health challenges, but with less than 40% getting treatment, not enough people are getting the help they need. MHA-NYC is a leading provider of innovative mental health services, advocacy, and education not only in New York City but nationwide. While a lot of great care is presently available, we need to get people talking so more people reach out for help."

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [mhaofnyc.org](http://mhaofnyc.org).

**About the Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA-NYC):**

The Mental Health Association of New York City is a non-profit organization with local roots and national reach. For over 50 years, MHA-NYC has been leading the way in mental health through our three-part mission of service, advocacy and education. Our mission is to identify unmet needs and develop culturally sensitive programs to improve the lives of individuals and families impacted by mental illness while promoting the importance of mental health. Among other life-saving work, MHA-NYC administers the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Veterans Crisis Line, and the NFL Life Line. MHA-NYC is also a key partner in Mayor de Blasio's ThriveNYC mental health initiative, administering NYC Well, the connection to free, confidential mental health and substance misuse support for all New Yorkers via phone, text or chat.

[www.mhaofnyc.org](http://www.mhaofnyc.org)

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