

[Osborne Association Hosts Annual Breakfast](#)

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Over 500 New Yorkers turned out for the Osborne Association's Annual Breakfast on June 6th. They were treated with inspirational stories of personal transformation and the agency's plans for the future.

The Osborne Association hosted its Annual Breakfast on June 6th. Over 500 New Yorkers from throughout the city heard stories from people whose lives have been restored through the transformative support of the agency which works with people who have been incarcerated and with their families.

The first speaker was a 60-year-old woman who was incarcerated for selling crack cocaine to support her habit, who later contracted HIV. "Osborne's Living Well program offers special substance treatment programs for people like me who are HIV positive," she said. "The groups were not like the regular mandated groups I had to do in the past. They taught me everyday coping skills and have offered real one-on-one counseling. I now take care of my HIV better than I did before and am healthier and happier than I ever thought I could be."

Another speaker was a young man whose mother was arrested while he was away at college, and at age 23, had to leave school to parent his siblings, one of whom is developmentally disabled. "Osborne made it possible for my mom [who is incarcerated 400 miles away near Rochester] to hold and hug her little girl and little boy," he said. "Now my siblings get the chance to tele-visit and bond with my mom in a unique way. Through Osborne's connections, I'm now completing an internship where I help create advocacy films about the impact of incarceration around the world."

"If you change your thinking, you change your future," said Executive Director Elizabeth Gaynes.

Osborne also revealed its future plans at the June 6 event, including the transformation of a closed Bronx prison into a 7-story model reentry center for those returning home to NYC from prison and jail. Not only will the re-purposed facility provide transitional housing, counseling and family reunification services, it will also incubate budding businesses that will ultimately hire people with criminal records.

Emceeding the event was the Rev. Dr. Alfonso Wyatt, an Osborne board member and Founder of Strategic Destiny: Designing Futures Through Faith and Facts. Rev. Wyatt has worked with three generations of young people as an educator, counselor, program developer, administrator, mentor and advocate.

Also taking the stage was Brian Fischer, the recently retired Commissioner of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, who received the Thomas Mott Osborne Medal for his vision and compassion during his 44 year career.

"Selecting Mr. Fischer as this year's award recipient is fitting for many reasons," said Ms. Gaynes, "including the fact that our founder served as warden of Sing Sing Prison 90 years before Brian Fischer served as its Superintendent."

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