

## **CT Artist Bio - Rebecca Atkins**

Rebecca Atkins is the Executive Director of Artreach, Inc., a 501(c)3 which provides creative opportunities to adults who have psychiatric disorders. She is the Artistic Director of The Second Step Players, Artreach's Applied Theater troupe, one of the only groups of its kind in the country.

2013: Recipient of a Reintegration Award for Artistic Contribution from The National Council of Community Behavioral Healthcare. This award honors artistic expression that leads to greater sensitivity to and understanding of people struggling with mental illness.

2013: Nominated for a SAMHSA Voice Award, honoring community and entertainment leaders who give a voice to behavioral health recovery.

### **As Director of Second Step Players (since 1993):**

- \* Sketch comedy writer and performer
- \* "Script doctor" for all scripts submitted to Second Step Players
- \* Stand-up comedy writer and performer
- \* Produced and directed at least 2 large local Second Step Players shows annually for the last 20 years at venues such as the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, The Spirit of Broadway Theater, and the Donald Oat Theater
- \* Produced annual Come Together Coffeehouse (local), coordinating all aspects of production and playing in the Artreach "House Band."

### **Touring Performances:**

Since 1993, Rebecca Atkins has presented from 10 - 30 educational touring productions each year, featuring actors who have mental illnesses (The Second Step Players). Local and national audiences include:

- \* Mental health providers (Psychologists, Psychotherapists, Social Workers)
- \* Graduate students in Psychology, Nursing, and Social Work.
- \* Mental health conferences for groups such as the National Alliance for Mental Illness
- \* Family members of people who are diagnosed with psychiatric disorders
- \* Community audiences

### **Singer/Songwriter:**

Rebecca is a Connecticut singer/songwriter, comedy writer/performer, and poet.

She has studied songwriting with teachers including:

- \* Jimmie Dale Gilmore (The Flatlanders) \* Jimmy Kachulis (Berklee School of Music) \* Neil Dierks (Berklee School of Music) \* Mary McBride \* Lauren Agnelli \* Laura Herscovitch

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### **Performing (Music/Bands)**

- \* Driven By Dreams, singer/backups/guitar
- \* Blue Blazes, singer/backups/acoustic guitar
- \* Healing Hearts Through the Arts House Band, singer/backups
- \* Shrink Rapt, singer/backups/guitar/bass guitar
- \* Currently playing bass and singing for the band Gypsy TimeSurf.

Rebecca is currently recording her first CD at Dirt Floor Recording Studio.

### **Poet:**

- \* Berklee poetry class and creative writing with Caroline Harvey (Season 5 of HBO's Def Poetry).
- \* Teaches writing classes in poetry and musical parody writing at Artreach
- \* Currently working on a poetry book to publish

### **Specialty in Mental Health**

A skilled group facilitator, Rebecca's experience as a Licensed Professional Counselor informs her work with groups and in leading audience discussions. Her work with many forms of creativity informs her therapeutic work.