



November 2017

Being a Team Player at the Clubhouse

By Mary Jane S.

Recipe for Friendship

by Nancy J. Baum

What a friend means to me: Someone you can tell your secrets to, knowing it will never leave their lips. A friend is someone who will be on my side and listen to my problems without judging me. It's someone who will help me to make the right decision with a problem. Some who is honest and loyal. Someone who doesn't judge me.

I came to the clubhouse on July 3rd of this year, after my group home referred me to do something outside of the house. I felt scared when I first walked-in to a new place and meeting new people I didn't know. I overcame this fear by just getting involved. I joined the Culinary Unit, helping in the kitchen, and I have also done some of the maintenance work in the Building Unit. I also tried the Reception Unit, but realized it was not the right fit for me, and knowing yourself can be a strength. I do chair exercises, lead morning meeting sometimes, and play bingo. I get along with other members, and I even referred a friend who has mental health issues. I enjoy reading, doing work, and I also like art. At the clubhouse, I get a chance to try new things. I am working with our job coach, Jenny, to get work, hopefully in a manufacturing setting. At the clubhouse, I know that the team can count on me to help wherever it's needed.

Not Lonely Anymore

Steve M.

My roommate passed away, and I was lonely. I heard about the clubhouse from Jerry B. and Kim F., clubhouse members. I was wondering if people would accept me here when I joined— and they did. Now, I've even made friends outside of the clubhouse, such as Brian and Paul. When we do scrapbooking, I'm in most of the photos, because I'm so involved! I'm working with Jenny on job-readiness, and serve in the Building Unit for janitorial tasks at the clubhouse. I represented Racine at the Clubhouse WI coalition, meeting with all the clubhouses in the state. I also enjoy attending activities, and went to Brewers games, giving me something to do to get out of the house. I think the clubhouse is doing a great job to help people with mental illness get on their own.

Mission: Racine Friendship Clubhouse inspires hope and opportunity for persons with a mental illness .

Vision:

Working together to rebuild lives affected by mental illness.



No Longer a Scared Cat Up A Tree, by Alice W.

I remember when I first came to Racine Friendship Clubhouse in March 2016. I had a membership tour, and it was very busy as someone walked me from room to room. I thought to myself, "There is no way I can come here with all these people!" I was like a scared cat up a tree. My therapist, family and friends kept encouraging me to get out of the house. I thought, "Where am I going to go?" And then I remembered, I can go to the Friendship Clubhouse.

At first, I was shy and kept an eye on everything that was happening around me. The food was good! I sat in many groups, but didn't say anything, just listened. Slowly, as I felt more comfortable, I started to participate more. I started doing tasks, but was afraid that someone was going to yell at me for doing it wrong. But that didn't happen, so I thought "I guess I'm doing ok!" Instead, the program director, Chris Rosin, thanked me for my work, which I appreciated and helped keep me motivated. Other members inspired me and gave me confidence by their example of good communication skills, leadership, grace and strength. I am grateful to them all.

In July, I started working with Jenny Marx, vocational coordinator at the Clubhouse, who talked to me about job goals. She was very positive and uplifting. My self esteem was not there yet, but she helped me see how much progress I had made, and all the skills I had developed while working at the Clubhouse. I began to think that maybe she was right, and that I can work. So I stayed open to see what we could do together. Nobody had ever sat me down and explained all that went into getting ready for a job. I didn't know all the things I needed to learn in order to work again. So took a leap of faith, and I eventually got a job at Belle City Resale as an associate. growing. Because now I have hope for my future, where there wasn't hope before.

The Clubhouse is My Second Family, by Robert S.

I came to know about RFC through the SAIL unit. They referred me to the clubhouse about 2 years ago for support and community. I was a little bit nervous. By starting to socialize with the clubhouse members, I came out of my shell and started to get involved in clubhouse activities, such as groups, outings, and facilitating groups, as well as offering peer support. The clubhouse is like a family. My first time doing karaoke at RFC I was really nervous by getting up in front of people, and my nervousness didn't stop me from singing in front of people.

Realizing I'm Not Alone, by Mary N.

I heard about the clubhouse from my therapist at All Saints, to get out of my shell and to deal with the way I feel. I was able to talk about my problems, get to know other people dealing with the same sort of thing, so I don't feel alone. I've been on some outings, such as bowling and the movies, as well as Women's Group, Recovery Strategies and Meditation. I volunteer at my church, stuffing envelopes, and the hospital gift shop. I've helped in the Building Unit. I'm interested in the Office Unit at the club-

Keeping Busy

Ramon G.

I'm a new member at the clubhouse! I am staying at the SAIL program, and they told me about the program. I needed something to do. I enjoy cleaning and washing dishes. I like to keep active— for example, I cleaned all the restrooms at the clubhouse, swept and mopped the front hall and stairs, and took out trash -all in one day! I also went to “Go Green” for mental illness awareness at Monument Square, holding signs downtown! I look forward to getting involved in groups and activities. I like it here, and it's nice and comfortable. I concentrate on the jobs I'm doing.

Looking to go Back to Work

Rudy R.

I came to the clubhouse when Kismet Club closed due to funding a few years ago. This is a good program. I like it better here than Kismet because it is more structured, with chores. We have a nice staff. I enjoy talking, drinking coffee, the donuts, and lunch. I like doing the chair handles, and bathroom in the Building Unit. It helps my self-esteem. My mental health recovery is going well. I feel like my memory is better. I was diagnosed by Dr. Bjerragard at St. Luke's with Bipolar and Schizophrenia. In 1994 I also have seizures. What's helped me is activities. I want to go back to work, at least part time. I was working for a while at Careers and then had surgery for my lungs and foot fractures. They're healing well, and I can walk. I'm planning to go back to work soon. Family also helps me out, when they visit, and I enjoy their company.

Continuing to Make a Contribution

Jordan S.

I first came to the clubhouse as a Gateway Intern for Human Services. I enjoyed it so much that I did a second internship here, and that's when I began leading groups, including Men's Group, and helping members co-lead groups. After that, I continued volunteering, helping wherever needed as a team-player— everything from data entry, to assisting in the work-ordered day. As a former intern, it's been like a tradition for our interns to love the clubhouse so much they continue volunteering after their hours! Even former staff that have retired have stayed on as volunteers! I felt like it was a community of belonging. As far as having a physical challenge to overcome, I relate to members who have experienced stigma or feeling different. I got to see success stories firsthand and that's what brought me back. I was hired as a staff for the Young Adults Facilitator, helping the peers in that age group build friendships. They were able to create brochures for the program with me, going bowling, out for pizza, writing a song, and sharing my musical talent with other members who have music interest. When the clubhouse collaborated with the Racine County Comprehensive Community Services (CCS), I began expanding my duties by helping people with mental illness to achieve their goals to live independently and take steps towards a successful recovery. It's been a pleasure to make an impact on the clubhouse members, and I'm looking forward to continuing to making a contribution.

Self-Esteem

Ann E.

It's important to have love for yourself. It helps to talk about positive things, and think positively. When you look good, you feel good. Use positive affirmations and positive self-talk, telling yourself things like, "I'm beautiful," or "I'm intelligent." Sometimes we all make mistakes, but we have to learn from the past. In order to have accomplishments, set goals and the steps to achieve them. Doing good for others can also boost self-esteem. Also, forgiving others and yourself.



Kiwanis Club Outreach , by Tonya S.

It started out as a rainy, gloomy early morning (I met Chris at 6:30a.m.), when we did outreach at Kiwanis Club West, which meets at Ascension on Spring St. (in the lower level conference rooms). We had a wonderful, hot breakfast, followed by listening to things Kiwanis Club does in their business meeting. We showed the clubhouse video (www.tinyURL/RacineFriendshipClubhouse), followed by a Power Point presentation, and then I shared my story. I spoke about dual diagnosis and how far I've come in my recovery. We also answered questions from the group. They presented us with a certificate of appreciation, and Kiwanis pens!

I gave out brochures, and several people came to thank me for speaking afterwards. I enjoyed myself and had a blast! I was nervous before, but afterwards, I felt like a rock star, and I would do it again! I might even volunteer with the Kiwanis!

Meet Our New Intern, Denise S.!

Hi, My name is Denise. I am an Intern with Gateway Technical College. I am going to school for Human Services and will Graduate in 6 months. I first learned about the clubhouse because I had to observe a meeting and the clubhouse was so nice, and the members and staff were great. I am helping Jenny in the Vocational Unit and with the Job Club.

A Wonderful Gift from A Stranger, by Nancy J. Baum

On Friday October 20, 2017, at the Wine Tasting Event, I, Nancy J. Baum received a picture from a stranger that bid on a picture. After she bid on it I was called to go by the picture. I was told by her, that she was donating the beautiful picture that was made by myself and other members at the clubhouse that the picture was for me to take to my house. I was so amazed by her generous gift to me that I had a lot of tears for a long time. I am so happy and grateful, because she thought of me. The picture is hanging in my kitchen, which is the first thing I see when I walk in my front door.

Indoor outdoor

She was a tiny little cat born to a litter of others. One day though she got scooped up and sent to the pound. Her mother told her she had 5 days or else they will put her to sleep. So she tried, not knowing how to act so she acted like all the other cats. She was looking for a forever home. Finally someone choose her and gave her that forever home. So she loved her home and her owner. One day she noticed an ally cat outside the window. They would talk. He would tell her all about all the wonders of the outside. She began to long to go outside to be with him. She became sad because she couldn't get her owner to understand how badly she wanted to be an outside cat. So he took her to a vet who happen to speak cat, so she learned what the problem was that made her so sad.

The cat and the owner went home and soon reluctantly let her go outside. She and the ally cat loved the out doors. But after a while she became tired and wanted to go back to being a indoor cat again. And the owner took her back. They lived happy together till she again became tired again but a different tired. Her family gathered around her. And she finally passed away.

The End.

It was a funny story one of the Theater Guilds has given. I encourage all members and staff to attend the plays, its fun to see other members there to wave at and smile. So come join us for the next one in November.

Alice Watson.

Who says who gets to be loved and who doesn't get to be loved? Who gets to be remembered and who doesn't get to be remembered? My past boyfriend, Curtis, suffered from mental illnesses which led to substance abuse and I think also was the cause of him being emotionally and physically abusive. I think when a person doesn't get proper treatment and support that they become dangerous people to themselves and others. I too have been abusive mentally and physically to the point where I sat jail time and was on probation for disorderly conduct. I'm not proud of what I did but wonder if it means that I don't deserve to be loved for I hear plenty of people talking bad about Curtis and thinking that he doesn't deserve sympathy or remorse after what he did. Why should anyone think that an abusive person should deserve to be mourned and grieved over? He dealt with negative thoughts, voices that told him negative things (don't trust her she's lying and cheating on you and should be killed), hallucinations that scared him to death, panic attacks, and couldn't trust anyone not even himself yet still had such a kindness in his heart to help people around him in their time of need. I remember him helping out the local Methodist Church with their rummage sale and bringing the items that didn't sell to the second hand store in his truck. I remember him helping people with their vehicles when he saw them stranded on the side of the road. They would offer him cash and he would decline and tell them to pay it forward and God bless! He helped old women put heavy groceries into the trunk of their cars or hold a door open for them so that they could feel special that a young, handsome man held a door for them. He even took people into his home that had no where to go that lost their jobs and helped them get back on their feet. He helped me get my driver's license and told me to keep pushing to get onto disability which I finally got on in 2008 after almost ten years of waiting. He dealt with such severe demons that he decided to take his own life on August 28, 2012 overdosing on the pain pills the he became addicted to after being put on them for three deteriorated disks in his back. He was 40 years old. I'll never forget that day when I found out he was gone. I vow to never go down the same road and to get the help that I need for my mental illnesses and I hope that everyone will try to get help instead of letting your mental illness ruin your life and possibly even end it. Get help and support from family, friends, a church community, support groups, anywhere you can find support and if you're really bad don't be afraid to admit yourself into a hospital. Just pick a good one if possible. I still struggle with my mental illnesses but have found a man to love me and treat me with the respect that I deserve and I have been able to give him the same respect and love that he deserves in return.

Thanks! Angela Provenzano

