



ENDING CYCLES OF DEPENDENCY

I'm Lucky to be a Part of Vincent House

Lucy Monette is a new Rehabilitation Specialist at Vincent House. She was hired to replace staff now working under our new Vocational Rehabilitation contract and is working in the Business Services Team.

By Lucy Monette

Since I can remember, I have always enjoyed volunteering because I felt like I could change the world, even if it was just one step at a time. Volunteering led me to work as a Volunteer Coordinator while at the University of Tampa where I learned about working with non-profit organizations. After completing my B.S. Degree, I decided to pursue a career with non-profits. It is my passion and I feel alive when helping others, so working at Vincent House feels like a fairy tale.



Lucy (right) works with member, Dawn Scherer, at the reception desk.

Vincent House is an extraordinary organization that I am lucky to be a part of. Coming to work creates a rush of excitement and gratification because I know I can make a difference. Each day I wake up ready to take on the day and excited to know that I am improving, learning more about Vincent House and its members, and thus increasing my effectiveness to help others in their recovery process. The values at Vincent House give me the energy and motivation I need to succeed in helping its members. This type of service is invaluable in a world where people with disabilities often get lost in a complicated system. Our *Recovery through Work Partnerships* helps members better their lives and achieve their dreams.

Advocating to New Heights

By Gordon DeLonay

Vincent House traveled to the State Capital in Tallahassee, FL, to meet with staff members from the Governor's office and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The first meeting was held with Jane Johnson and Jackie Gray, both from the Governor's Office of Health and Human Services. The more they heard about the Vincent House story, the more they became engaged in desiring to know more. With conviction, they communicated with enthusiastic assurance that all they heard, as well as the special invitation to come and see Vincent House, would be relayed to the Governor.

Next, the group met with Justin Domer, an aid to the Governor responsible for organizing Governor Scott's newly mandated Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities.

The culmination of the day came with an appointment with Secretary David Wilkins, Secretary of DCF. In attendance with Secretary Wilkins were Stephanie Colston and David Sofferin of the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and Thomas Pierce, Executive Director of the Office on Homelessness. The new and cutting edge mission, purpose and success of Vincent House's *Recovery through Work Partnerships* were received with intriguing interest and probing curiosity by all. The officials who met with the group left with compliments and encouragement, impressed with a new approach to mental health recovery and rehabilitation.

The exciting opportunity to advocate for *Recovery through Work Partnerships* is fulfilling. Also, the seed of having Governor Scott visit Vincent House has been planted. The good word about Vincent House continues—onward and upward.

My First Home: Transforming F.E.A.R.

By Justin Shea

Throughout my years of living life with a mental illness, I have had challenges that have tested my well-being as an individual. I have come a long way since the first day I attended Vincent House. At one point in my life, I did not want to continue living. I now realize that there is so much to live for and the relationships we build make us stronger as individuals.

A tool I have used over the years is to look at the word *fear* and apply it to my life. Before Vincent House, I looked at F.E.A.R. as Forget Everybody And Run. Now with the wisdom Vincent House has bestowed upon me, I look at F.E.A.R. as Face Everything And Recover. To think, if I had left everybody behind and taken my life, I would have missed what Vincent House has showed me. Myself. Before Vincent House, I did not like being me. I was like an askew line on a graph. I had no direction and did not make sense.



Five days after his 27th birthday, Justin Shea closed on his house and became a first-time homeowner! Justin currently attends Saint Petersburg College full-time and is the founder of JShea Studios.

But, with Vincent House I can live in my own skin and feel good about being myself.

In my eyes, I became a normal person while attending Vincent House. It did not happen overnight. I had to be willing to make that leap of faith and accomplish something; life is my accomplishment. At

first for me, it was something as simple as carrying on an intelligent conversation after the work-structured day. Now I feel successful knowing I can inspire others by the work I do. I love my life and everyone in it.

To think about where I was and where I am now is amazing. I never thought my life would lead to something great like owning a house and that responsibility. Knowing my life started that first day I got involved at Vincent House keeps me keeping on. The work I did had meaning to it. Even a simple cleaning task made me want to live for the future. If you had asked me, "Would I own a home?" when I walked out of the psychiatrist's office after being diagnosed, my answer would be, "No, I don't even own a life, let alone a home." Vincent House gave me a life. A life knowing that I am a needed piece to a wonderful puzzle. Life is a puzzle. Vincent House is like the border pieces... once the border is put together everything falls into place and form.

Vincent House Presents at International Seminar

Every two years, the International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD) hosts a seminar. This year, Fountain House in Stockholm, Sweden, hosted the 16th International Seminar (16 IS). Over 4 days, participants from across the world gave presentations on a myriad of topics relating to mental health rehabilitation.



Gayle Marchiniak (left) presented on how to create a vibrant recovery-based community at the 16 IS in Sweden.

A Trip of a Lifetime

By Gayle Marchiniak

When I found out that the 16 IS was to be held in Sweden, I was so excited. I've never traveled abroad before and I thought that this could be the trip of a lifetime. Although, I have to admit the idea of flying over the Atlantic Ocean pretty much scared me to death. When we did depart, we flew overnight and my light was the only one on—everyone else was sleeping while I worried about all that ocean under the plane. Despite my panic about flying over the Atlantic, I survived.

Indeed, I am a survivor. When I first came to Vincent House in 2006, I was depressed, shy and feeling alone. My

life had spiraled out of control and I had hit rock bottom. I forced myself to go to Vincent House every day. I started working in the Business Unit and I got the hang of writing the daily Newsletter and I loved it. Finally I felt like I had a purpose again. I made friends quickly and started to enjoy my life again. Vincent House helped me get my life back. The work-structured day works! I gained confidence by running the unit meetings and signing up for jobs. I slowly began to come out of my shell. I look back at my life 5 years ago and I see how far I've come. I've never liked speaking in front of groups and I hated having my picture taken. With fears aside, I have now traveled all the way to Sweden, given two presentations to international audiences, and have even allowed my picture to be taken for this Gazette. Thank you, Vincent House, for believing in me.

What has made the 16th International Seminar possible for me?

By Steve Scofield

Before coming to Vincent House I was a Vietnam Combat Veteran diagnosed with PTSD and major depression. In 2004, I came to Vincent House through Bay Pines V.A. outpatient program. At Vincent House I was encouraged to participate in the work day, and eventually worked in all the units. I got back my courage and self-esteem by participating in the work-structured day. Eventually I finished college with a Master of Arts with honors! Without Vincent House I could have easily been one of the homeless

Vets you see on the streets mumbling to themselves. At Vincent House even a person like myself who has suffered for over 40 years with severe and persistent mental illness can be successful. Anything is possible in life when you have your hope and dignity.

In July, Vincent House was asked to present at the 16th International Seminar in Sweden. It has been about 40 years since I traveled overseas during my military service and I thought it would be a unique opportunity to travel again. I saved up and helped contribute toward the cost of my airfare to get to Sweden. While in Sweden, I presented a session on advocacy to member and staff representatives throughout the world! Because of Vincent House, I have a new life filled with hope and new possibilities. None of this would have been possible without the *Recovery through Work Partnerships* at Vincent House. I am a prime example of how Vincent House can change a life.



About four hundred people from twenty countries from around the world participated in the 16th International Seminar.

Investing in Vincent House

Vincent House welcomes our new Development Director Larry Gilhousen.

"I learned about Vincent House from a fellow Barbershop Harmony singer and after researching the operation and meeting Elliott and Dianne I just knew I was meant to be here. One of my first goals is to educate staff, members, volunteers and community investors on how to create an endowment to provide long-term financial sustainability so Vincent House can continue to serve members in the future," states Gilhousen. Larry has some 3 decades of development experience including more than 10 years specializing in planned giving.

To learn how you can donate personal property or designate a legacy gift to Vincent House, call Larry Gilhousen at 727-541-0360.



Larry Gilhousen (second from right) is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) and a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Suncoast Chapter where he served several years on AFP's Board of Directors. Larry is also a member—and past Board member—of the Partnership for Philanthropic Planning (formerly the National Committee on Planned Giving) and he serves on the Board of Directors of Boys & Girls Clubs of the Suncoast (Pinellas County).

Your Support Makes Recovery Possible for our Members

The continued encouragement, assistance and donations from all of you - our families, friends and supporters - makes a real difference in the lives of our nearly 600 members. We thank you for joining with us in our daily endeavors as we strive to make our world a better place - one member and one life at a time.

Our Current WISH list:

- Part-time Jobs for Members
- Paper and Office Supplies
- Portable Sound System
- New & Used Clothing
- Printer Ink Cartridges
- Portable Projector
- Scanners

Ed Dyer Named Employee of the Month



Ed met his current employer, Gulf Coast Enterprise, at a Discovery Tour at Vincent House. He has been working at GCE for 8 months now. Ed has received many awards, but this is the first time he has won the coveted "Employee of the Month."

Ed Dyer (far left) was named Employee of the Month in August 2011. He works for Gulf Coast Enterprise at the Clearwater Coast Guard facility. He is shown in the photo with Bill Dietz, the manager, and his supervisor Tarita Williams.

Celebrations in Education

- **May 2011**-Gayle Marchiniak received an A.S. in Human Services from Saint Petersburg College.
- **May 2011**-Jennifer Palm received an A.S. in Crime Scene Technology from SPC.
- **July 2011**-Cindy Kelley received her CNA license from Prometric CNA.
- **August 2011**-Brittaney Spaulding received her High School Diploma.

CELEBRATING RECOVERY THROUGH WORK

CONTINUING EDUCATION IN 2011

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Ashley Burch | Jennifer Palm |
| Michael Ballenger | Aloysia McPherson |
| Jesse Finkel | Heidi Rippen |
| Latoya Johnson | Justin Shea |
| Cindy Kelly | Brittaney Spaulding |
| Bob Krehbiel | Jason Sulimay |
| Gayle Marchiniak | Jackie Williams |
| Virginia McCann | |

TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Shannon Braley | Sirata Beach Resort |
| Gordon DeLonay | Suncoast Center |
| Shana Gillette | Sirata Beach Resort |
| Patricia Hightower | Sirata Beach Resort |
| Chiquita Ivory | Sirata Beach Resort |
| Jennifer Kraus | Sirata Beach Resort |
| Julie Leding | Public Defender's Office |
| Elizabeth McCollough | Senior Services |
| Dawn Scherer | Suncoast Center |
| Spencer Wallace | Public Defender's Office |

Members Employed during July - August 2011

SUPPORTED & INDEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Dan Adams | Courtesy Clerk | Avishan Lashgari | Service Clerk |
| Josh Babcock | Mail Clerk | Bonnie Lawniczak | Machine Operator |
| Michael Ballenger | Irrigation Specialist | Karen Maloof | Filing Clerk |
| Ann Barker | Prog. Support Specialist | Gayle Marchiniak | Kennel Assistant |
| John Brake | Service Clerk | Jason Michaud | Environment Services |
| Nancy Brown | Medical Records Clerk | Joseph Moffie | Bead Blaster |
| William Champion | Peer Counselor | Philip Noonan | Maintenance |
| Robert Comiskey | Service Clerk | Angela Parker | Transportation |
| Pat Curtin | Recovery Intern | Michael Ralston | Transportation |
| Tess Daniels | Administrative Assistant | Shannon Riley | Recovery Coach |
| Jennifer Dean | Dining Services | Heidi Rippen | Service Clerk |
| John Dean | Laundry | Ron Ritchie | Transportation |
| Edward Dyer | Food Service | Chris Schaer | Telemarketer |
| Stephanie Freskos | Gift Shop Cashier | Elizabeth Schweikert | Laundry |
| Eddie Gares | Recovery Coach | Justin Shea | Recreation Leader |
| Craig Hayden | Ground Maintenance | Catherine Smith | Deli Clerk |
| Brian Howe | Prep Technician | Michael Taddeo | Grounds-keeping |
| Patty Kremzier | Housekeeping | | |

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Vincent House Calendar of Events

October

6	3:15 pm	Friends of Vincent House <i>meeting</i>
11	5:00 pm	Discovery Tour
13	6:00 pm	Family Group <i>meeting</i>
20	3:15 pm	Friends of Vincent House <i>meeting</i>
26	8:00 am	Board of Directors <i>meeting</i>
26	10:00 am	Discovery Tour
27	3:15 pm	Friends of Vincent House <i>meeting</i>

November

3	3:15 pm	Friends of Vincent House <i>meeting</i>
8	5:00 pm	Discovery Tour
9	8:00 am	Legislative Breakfast
10	6:00 pm	Family Group <i>meeting</i>
12	11:00 am	2nd Annual Fall Festival (until 3:00 pm)
17	3:15 pm	Friends of Vincent House <i>meeting</i>
30	8:00 am	Board of Directors <i>meeting</i>
30	10:00 am	Discovery Tour

December

1	3:15 pm	Friends of Vincent House <i>meeting</i>
8	6:00 pm	Family Group <i>meeting</i>
13	5:00 pm	Discovery Tour

How to Become Involved at Vincent House

- ◆ **Discovery Tours**
 Twice a month, everyone is invited to tour the facility, see the work of the units, and meet the founders, several members and a representative of the Board of Directors.
- ◆ **Friends of Vincent House**
 Three times a month, anyone in the community that would like to volunteer their time can join this group and help serve as an auxiliary to augment Vincent House projects and fundraising.
- ◆ **Family Group**
 Once a month, the family and loved ones of our members meet to discuss current issues such as funding, advocacy, and providing any other additional supports to Vincent House.
- ◆ **2nd Annual Fall Festival**
 Every year, Vincent House hosts an Annual Fall Festival that is open to members, families and supporters.

If you are interested in any of these activities, please contact Larry Gilhousen at (727) 541-0360 or by email at larry@vincenthouse.org

NEW! Receive Starry Night Gazette in Electronic Form! Contact Larry@vincenthouse.org