



Carrying the Torch for ICCD Clubhouse Expansion in Florida

As Told to Our Legislators



Vincent House members, Chris Schaer and Clyde Kobayashi, at State House advocacy event.

By Chris Schaer

I am a young adult living with a mental illness and it's not easy. Vincent House is helping me transition from being a hopeless kid to being a successful young adult in the community. Clubhouse is giving me the opportunity to develop my skills in the workplace. Transitional Employment represents my road to recovery and I refuse to be complacent because the opportunities in life are ongoing. Right now I reach out to other young adults with mental illnesses through my leadership with the Young Adult Committee at Vincent House. I want to help other people between the ages of 18 - 25 get the same kind of help that I found when I was down and out. I want to show young adults with mental illnesses that there is hope and support available at Vincent House!

By Clyde Kobayashi

Thanks to Vincent House I learned new computer skills, discovered my passion for writing and the desire to work. No words can describe the bliss I felt upon getting my first paycheck...in over a year. I take pride in being a taxpayer, knowing once again that I am contributing to society. Like a proud Phoenix I rose from the ashes... knowing it is I, not my illness, that prevail.

Clubhouse Coalition Joins Legislators at State Capital

Wednesday, March 14, 2007 was a great day in Tallahassee. After nearly 5 hours of driving the night before, Chris Schaer, Clyde Kobayashi, Elliott and Dianne Steele began the day with a meeting of the Florida Clubhouse Coalition. Fourteen people attended in representation of Focus House of Miami, Sedona House of Lake Mary, Vincent House, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Medicaid. Clint Rayner, Chief of the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs with DCF spoke about recovery and the role of peer specialists. He is quite supportive of the Clubhouse movement and eager to promote the development of ICCD Clubhouses throughout Florida. Michelle Comeaux discussed Medicaid funding for Clubhouses. Many changes occurred in the past year and all districts now provide Medicaid services under the managed care system.

arranged by Vincent House, our delegation made additional contact with eight aides, either through walk-in meetings or by dropping off information about ICCD Clubhouses and the current legislative agenda.



Chris and Elliott were teamed up for several State House visits while Clyde and Dianne paired up to meet with other legislators and aides. We promoted the Clubhouse Model, discussed the success of orientation activities aimed at expanding Clubhouses across Florida and presented the other items on the Florida Clubhouse Coalition's legislative agenda.

We were proud of Chris and Clyde who gave eloquent presentations of their personal stories! Our legislators gave us the opportunity to answer many important questions and inform them of the success of ICCD Clubhouses. We are advocating for continued funding of Clubhouse expansion through "Orientation to the ICCD Clubhouse Model". This funding will assist with the development of additional ICCD Clubhouses across Florida and even more opportunities for member recovery.



Our next stop was the State Capitol. Florida Clubhouses collectively met with 18 legislators or their aides. This represented a considerable increase over the number of advocacy meetings last year. In addition to six scheduled appointments

Vincent House Joins Sedona House at its Grand Opening

By Kay Shakeshaft & Peg Parker

On Wednesday, March 21, 2007 ten members and staff visited Sedona House at the Grand Opening of its beautiful new facility. We were greeted by the smiling faces of caring and loving people. Their new location is in the middle of town and easily accessible by bus. We liked the design of the work unit areas and loved the snack bar with its relaxing atmosphere. The kitchen was great and even had a walk-in cooler. Congratulations to the members and staff of Sedona House; they are on the road to seeking ICCD Clubhouse certification later this year!

Celebrating Life!

The following excerpts are from a memorial service for Vincent House member, Carey Shannon, who passed away on March 16, 2007.

The opportunity to remember Carey Shannon with his family and friends was a true celebration of life. We gained a deeper appreciation of the life and love of a wonderful man.



Carey first came to Vincent House over four years ago. He worked in the Business Unit and Member Services Unit. He also enjoyed going to social outings and many NAMI functions. He was a great Clubhouse ad-

vocate and represented Vincent House everywhere he went. Carey was a devoted member of the Democratic Party and earned the endearing nickname, "Senator Carey".

Carey was very excited about Vincent House's progress - reaching as far back as our first donated refrigerator (meaning no more daily ice purchases for the coolers) to the acquisition of our own building. He proudly supported our Legislative Budget Request for promoting Clubhouse Expansion throughout the State of Florida.

Carey had a spiritual side as well; he was a member of the Central Christian Church and participated in the Choir and Renewal Sunday School. He was also an outreach prayer partner.

Carey found it easy to express himself and always demonstrated his feelings for others. He often spoke of his love for fellow members and staff. In his passing, the memory of Carey fills us with those very same feelings of love and affection.

"Good night, Senator Carey, we love you". -Elliott Steele

Welcoming a New Young Adult

Vincent House is reaching out in the community to young adults living with mental illnesses. The following article is from a new young adult member:

By Heidi Rippen

Hi, my name is Heidi and this is what I would like to say. I think Vincent House has been a good experience for me so far. I like all the people in here, they are all really friendly and nice. I am now proud to say that I am a member of Vincent House. I now know so many interesting people! The staff treat me with respect and so do the members - and I like that! I look forward to spending more time at the Vincent House! Here's a poem from me to you:

Each day we have to face a big fight!
 We have to do it for it's only right.
 You've got to summon up your pride
 and find out how to continue this ride!
 We all at times face something
 called stress!
 If you try to believe then you will
 reach success!
 I'm not about to make it all pretend.
 It will all work out in the end.

Why I attend Vincent House

This member recently spoke at a live teleconference presentation for the Florida Department of Children and Families

By Mary Arauz

Hello Vincent House! You know me as Ginger. I became a member of our Clubhouse back when we were at Buccaneer Plaza. I did not go there with much regularity because it was such a long bus ride from my apartment in downtown St. Petersburg. Then I moved nearby our new building. I was here for the dedication ceremony and it was beautiful! The food was arranged so festively. Elliott and other speakers spoke so eloquently. I knew right then and there that I wanted to remain a member. Now I try to participate five to six days a week. I look forward to accepting tasks and following through with the work I choose and that makes me feel busy and useful. I've enjoyed some of the weekend outings with enthusiasm. The people here have become such good friends with me, the staff and members both. I know that we will be helping many others like ourselves improve their lives.

Things are looking up!

By Craig Haydon

Just like my Uncle once told me: "Life isn't filled with problems, but rather opportunities to make better decisions and improve". One of the areas that I am working to improve is attempting to make eye-contact with people and in that way, not allowing others to control me. In the past, I couldn't keep eye contact with people, especially when I spoke with them. I found myself unable to talk much. Now, I feel like I am starting to make progress on that, both at the Clubhouse and at my TEP. I am learning how to look at people without feeling awkward. Just the fact that I am writing about this situation is a big step for me. Being able to tell you all about what I am trying to do is a way to be conscious about what my goal is. It's also a way so that other members and staff can help me develop those skills and learn how to get past my difficulty. I don't want to make the same mistakes. As long as I am reaching out to people and asking for help, then I think that I can be successful. I can't do this by myself, but with help of Vincent House I can reach my goal. Right now things are looking up for me!

Vincent House Members

CELEBRATING RECOVERY THROUGH WORK

during March - 2007

TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Jeffrey Albertson	Skate Park
Larry Haines	Senior Services
Craig Haydon	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Gary Hinkson	Skate Park
Alex Houser	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Carol Jackson	Liberty Lanes
Cindy Kelly	Suncoast Center
Diane LeClaire	Pro-Clean/Raytheon
Karen Maloof	Pro-Clean/Raytheon
Gayle Marchiniak	Galleria
Michael Ralston	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Ron Ritchie	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Lisa Sanders	Pro-Clean/Raytheon
Chris Schaer	Skate Park
Danny Shellabarger	Skate Park
Allyn Spidella	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Joe Stabile	Liberty Lanes
Athena Steele	Suncoast Center
Michael Taddeo	Pro-Clean/Raytheon
Ed Wohlford	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Judy Wilson	Suncoast Center

Supported & Independent Employment

Susan Alvey	Eileen Jones
Alice Bongiorno	Kim Kobayashi
Nancy Brown	William Kuropatwinski
Nicholas Cercone	Bonnie Lawniczak
Debbie Cibik	John Markle
Amy Clark	Rand Pierce
Tess Daniels	Bob Pitts
Don DiCarlo	Warren Prince
Jennifer Dickey	Shannon Riley
Eddie Gares	Heidi Rippen
Art Hallman	Beth Schweikert
Kim Harrell	Terry Taggart
Kathleen Hartwell	George Torrence
Elizabeth Hoff	

Casual Employment

Kerry Birchett
Christine Dotson
V. Mike Hodges
Aimee Hunnell

Continuing Education

Nick Cercone
Bridgette Elias
Kathleen Hartwell
Steven Gregoski
Michael Serkes
Justin Shea

Eddie Gares begins his SEVENTH year of independent employment at Boley Centers Inc.!

Clubhouse Standard #23: *The Clubhouse assists and supports members to secure, sustain and subsequently, to better their employment.*

The Happy Bus Driver

Transitional Employment Placements last 6 to 9 months and can pave the way to successful Supported or Independent Employment. Here is one recent member's story:

By Debbie Cibik

The next time you are driving down the road take a good look at who is driving, because you just might see me! I've spent 3 weeks in training, driving, taking written tests, and learning skills with my bus. The hardest part was learning to do blind-side parallel parking (passenger side parking). I've been given my uniform and a route. Most of all, I want to thank everyone at Vincent House for being so supportive, for you all gave me the courage to try to go back to work full-time. I love how everyone was there for me every step of the way. I'm looking forward to a long and rewarding career as a Bus Driver. I'm glad to be back in the game, so to say. So make sure you follow all the rules of the road and respect those buses, for it just might be me that you see.

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Giant Yard Sale, April 14 & 15
Drop-off, Pick-up, Be There!
727- 541- 0321



April 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	SOCIAL 7
	Chicken Breast with Rice & Vegetables <i>Kerry Birchett</i>	Taco Salad <i>Danny Kilcrease</i>	Chicken Caesar Salad <i>Erin Lindsey</i> Employee Dinner - Bridgette's Spaghetti	Linguini & Clam sauce <i>Stacy Freskos</i> <i>Warren Prince</i> <i>Andrew C. Yantis</i>	Bean Burrito's with Nachos	
8	9	10	11	12	13	SOCIAL 14
EASTER LUNCH 11:00—3:00 <i>Elizabeth Hoff</i>	French Toast	Black Beans & Rice	Gyros	Angela's Crab Cakes <i>Pam Blake</i>	Ravioli	
15	16	17	18	19	20	SOCIAL 21
Giant Yard Sale <i>Eileen Pitman</i> <i>Victor Taylor</i> <i>Amanda Kmet</i>	Chris's Macaroni & Cheese <i>Roger Bland</i>	Chili	Fruit Salad Plate <i>James Gridley</i> <i>Richard Degarmo</i> Employee Dinner - Stuffed Peppers	Bratwurst & Pierogies <i>Jimmy Johnson</i>	Spinach Salad <i>Chris Creech</i>	After Yard Sale SALE <i>Zara Moore</i> <i>Jonathan Godwin</i>
22	23	24	25	26	27	SOCIAL 28
After Yard Sale SALE	BLT Wraps	Manicotti	Philly Cheese Steak	Meatloaf	Tetrazzini Pizza & Movie 4:30—7:00	Dino World Depart 9:00 am <i>Zakiya McNeil</i>
29	30					
<i>Sal DeBenedictis</i> <i>Diane Giddings</i>	Pork Loin w/ Stuffing & Mashed Potatoes <i>Christine Dotson</i>					

Menus are subject to change. Casey's Café offers alternative lunch – call to order before 11:00 A.M.