



The Starry Night Gazette

Vincent House, 4801 78th Avenue
Pinellas Park, FL 33781
Telephone 727- 541- 0321



Volume 5 Edition 8

www.vincent-house.org

AUGUST 2007

Vincent House Assists Area CIT Training

The Vincent House community played an active role in a recent Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for Pinellas County Law Enforcement Officers. As part of their 40-hour training, nearly 30 area Officers toured Vincent House, talked with members and staff, and learned about the ICCD Clubhouse Model of rehabilitation. Vincent House has been a regular collaborator in periodic CIT programs for Pinellas County Law Enforcement Officers.

The CIT Program originated as the Memphis Police Crisis Intervention Team in 1998 as a response to the growing need for partnerships between local police, persons living with mental illnesses and their families, and mental health providers. CIT provides Officers with sensitivity training on the effects and symptoms of mental illness; likewise, it instructs them on response and intervention techniques for persons who may be experiencing a mental health crisis. Officers learn to defuse situations that may have the potential to escalate. To date, the CIT Program has been successfully implemented in hundreds of communities across the country, including metropolitan areas in Florida such as Orlando, Miami, Tampa, Jacksonville and Ft. Lauderdale. Currently, 3,000 Florida Law Enforcement Officers are CIT trained, with over 600 Officers in Pinellas County alone! Pinellas Park Police Chief Doreen Thomas is the first and only Police Chief in Pinellas County to complete CIT training.

CIT Program outcomes over the past twenty years have been outstanding:

- * Reduction in number of unnecessary arrests of persons with mental illnesses.

- * Increase in safety of officers responding to psychiatric emergencies (less sustained injuries).
- * A reduction in response time to psychiatric emergencies.
- * Higher satisfaction of officers with police intervention.

At the end of their week-long, 40-hour training, most officers agree that the most important aspect of the experience was the opportunity to meet with members and consumers. Upon graduation from the CIT program, Pinellas County Law Enforcement Officers surprised Vincent House with a donation.



Elliott Steele and Vincent House members receive a \$200 donation from Sergeant J. Thomas Acker, Psychological Services Coordinator of the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office. We are grateful indeed!

Well, You Just Never Know!

The development of business partnerships in Transitional Employment can be a daunting task, especially given the stigma of mental illness. Yet, sometimes these employment partnerships begin quite magically. Here is one such story:

First, please allow me to introduce myself. I am Warren Carew, Director of Acquisitions for Seashellbooks.com, Inc, one of the larger Internet booksellers around. I am always on the lookout for used books and have had some small success in buying from larger community based and non-profit organized yard sales.

Two months ago I visited Vincent House's yard sale and, when I asked for the person in charge, had the pleasure of meeting Elliott Steele. We talked for a few minutes and I made arrangements to purchase all left over books at the end of the sale, which I did the next week. I also gave Elliott a business card and indicated I would be happy to purchase

any remaining books from future sales. Little did I know at that time the use to which Elliott would put my little business card. HE PUT ME ON THE VINCENT HOUSE MAILING LIST FOR THE MONTHLY GAZETTE!

So, that's really OK since I do like to read (you may guess this from my occupation). And I especially enjoy learning as much as I can about community events and services.



Owner, Lane Dumser, and Warren Carew of Seashell Books, one of the 25 largest bookstores in the world.

In the second Gazette I received, I learned that one of the services Vincent House provides to its members was employment training and transitional employment in partnership with local businesses. Now the wheels started turning.

A second phone call to Elliott led to a meeting with him, his wife Dianne, William, me and our company president, Lane Dumser, where Elliott gave a detailed presentation of the nature and workings of Vincent House's program. To shorten this rather lengthy story, we agreed to work with Vincent House in their Transitional Employment program. At this time we have partially trained the Vincent House placement managers (Dianne and Dave) and are looking forward to our first group of Vincent House members seeking to re-enter the employment world.

Please check-out Seashell Books at www.seashellbooks.com or via any major Internet Bookseller. Supporting the business of our employers is another way to support Vincent House!

Any area employers interested in a partnership with Vincent House, please call Elliott Steele at 727-541-0321

Reflections of a Founding Member

By Clyde Kobayashi

Clyde, one of Vincent House's first members, reflects on our early days.

It's hard to believe that in just six months Vincent House will be five years old. The doors opened on January 20th 2003; my first visit was on February 3rd of the same year. Back then, things were just starting. Imagine, there were only six people at lunchtime!

I was leery my first day at Vincent House because I remembered someone at a homeless shelter who had loony ideas that medication alone turned mental illness into "minor inconveniences." When I failed to find a job while living at the shelter, I was forced to live out on the streets. Work became repugnant; I was convinced I would never work again... I was wrong.

It took a lot to rebuild my confidence and self-esteem but I got a lot of "moral support" to keep trying when I wanted to quit. On my one-year anniversary as a

member I took on my first Transitional Employment job. It was great!

Prior to our first Open House at Buccaneer Plaza, the St. Petersburg Times did a story about us. I was interviewed for that story and a year later I got a phone call from my sister who had read the article. That was a milestone, ending forty years of bad feelings and conflict. Lovingly, I can now call her a friend.

My years at Vincent House have brought good fortune. It was humbling to be part of the ceremony when Vincent House received the Beverly Chapman Award for Outstanding Employment Placement. I was thrilled to be invited to a dinner hosted by the Florida Mental Health Institute with former football star turned broadcaster, Terry Bradshaw, as guest speaker. And I was honored to be one of three members selected to represent Vincent House at the 13th International Clubhouse Seminar in Finland.

I've seen Vincent House grow from two rooms at Buccaneer Plaza to three,

then into its own building. These years have taught me that Clubhouse is a process with its "ups and downs." It is a place that never "coddled" but challenged, helping me to realize that I am far more capable than I thought I was.

I am overjoyed by seeing new faces or members I've not seen in a while. News of a Clubhouse on the verge of certification or in its infancy always brightens my day. Here at Vincent House there are always brighter days ahead.



Vincent House, circa 2003, located at a storefront in Buccaneer Plaza. Member Ed Wohlford is in foreground.

Gratitude and Memories

By Suzanne Marcantoni

Suzanne recently completed an internship experience at Vincent House as part of her graduate studies. She is pictured in the center of the photograph below.

I've had the great privilege of doing my intern practicum here at Vincent House. I am working on my Masters in Counseling at Saint Leo University. I chose Vincent House because it offers a positive, alternative approach to traditional mental health treatment. I have been embraced by both members and staff, given many opportunities to interact in the Clubhouse, and provided with many possibilities to learn. Members have openly shared their knowledge of different jobs here at Vincent House. Everyone has taught me with patience, offered their friendship, and made me feel at home. Vincent House and other Clubhouses offer hope and understanding to persons with mental illnesses; Clubhouse members stand out because of their strengths and dignity, their unique personalities, and their generosity. I have learned so much from each one of you and can truthfully say that I will take all I have learned with me into the counseling profession. Thank you, Vincent House, for making my practicum such a rewarding experience!



We are sad to announce that Melinda Johnson (third from right), advocate for young adult participation, will be leaving Vincent House.

When I started at Vincent House on September 28, 2006, I had no idea what I was getting into. I was just happy to have found a job so quickly. Little did I know when I accepted the job offer that it would be a perfect fit for me and I would have more fun than should be allowed at work. The members and staff at Vincent House made me feel so welcome as soon as I walked through the door on my first day. I was greeted by Allyn Spidella, who I had never met before, with arms wide open for a hug. I knew I was at home.

This was my first job out of college in the mental health field. I think it was very important for me to have a job in the Clubhouse at this young stage of my career. I have seen the good side of the mental health system, without stigma and without barriers, before I have seen the other side, with its limitations to those with mental illness.

I am now moving back up to Cleveland, Ohio, and I wish I could take Vincent House with me. I have made so many friends here among the members and staff. Thank you all for giving me a wonderful experience in the first step of my career. I consider myself very lucky to have worked in such a wonderful and unique job.



Vincent House Members

CELEBRATING RECOVERY THROUGH WORK

during July - 2007

TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Jeffrey Albertson	Skate Park/L. Lanes
Bill Champion	Senior Services
Brian Craver	Skate Park
John Diede	Skate Park
Gary Hinkson	Pro-Clean/Raytheon
Carol Jackson	L. Lanes/Galleria
Cindy Kelly	Suncoast Center
Karen Maloof	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Gayle Marchiniak	Galleria
Ron Ritchie	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Lisa Sanders	Liberty Lanes
Chris Schaer	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Allyn Spidella	Liberty Lanes
Joe Stabile	Pro-Clean/Raytheon
Athena Steele	Suncoast Center
Michael Taddeo	Suncoast Center
Jackqueline Williams	Skate Park
Judy Wilson	Suncoast Center
Ed Wohlford	Tri-Glo/Raytheon

Supported & Independent Employment

Susan Alvey	William Kuropatwinski
Alice Bongiorno	Bonnie Lawniczak
Nancy Brown	Philip Noonan
Nicholas Cercone	Rand Pierce
Debbie Cibik	Bob Pitts
Tess Daniels	Warren Prince
Don DiCarlo	Shannon Riley
Eddie Gares	Heidi Rippen
Art Hallman	Beth Schweikert
Kim Harrell	Justin Shea
Kathleen Hartwell	Theresa Stabile
Elizabeth Hoff	Terry Taggart
Eileen Jones	George Torrence

Casual Employment

Kerry Birchett
Gerard Caldarise
Christine Dotson
V. Mike Hodges
Aimee Hunnell
John Markle

Continuing Education

Bridgette Elias
Kathleen Hartwell
Brian Rivard
Michael Serkes
Jeff Suzanne

JAWS comes to Vincent House!

People with mental illnesses and a second disability often encounter difficulty finding the services and opportunities they need to achieve life goals. We decided to take a pro-active approach for members who have visual impairments.

By Melissa Crockett

Many people don't know or understand that visually impaired people like me need certain tools in order to understand what is on the computer screen. People in regular society need to understand more about totally and legally blind people, who have to use special note takers, laptops, and other devices for learning. It is necessary to educate everyone in the sighted world about the use of speech synthesizers.

It is best to say that I'm glad to have the use of the JAWS program, which stands for Job Access with Speech. It's also very user friendly towards people who have poor, or no vision at all. JAWS has helped me through the difficult times and I would never trade that. Others use this program to educate many people who have lost their vision due to an eye disease.

It's nice to be at Vincent House and in a good part of the world where people think about each other needing special tools for the visually impaired. JAWS is a wonderful thing for me and others who have vision loss.



Van Gogh's Palette, Inc.
 4801 78th Avenue
 Pinellas Park, FL 33781
 Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 ST. PETERSBURG, FL
 PERMIT # 2401

We now accept donations online!
 Visit us @ www.vincent-house.org



AUGUST 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			Ginger's Beans and Weenies <i>Employment Dinner—Swiss Steak</i>	Chris's Macaroni and Cheese <i>Matt Lewis</i>	Chef's Surprise <i>Clarence Case</i>	Exotic Bird Show "The Coliseum" \$4.00 <i>Robert Pitts</i>
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Roasted Turkey and Mashed Potatoes <i>Eric Peek, Hayes Warren</i>	Vegetarian Chili <i>Craig Haydon, Jeff Suzanne</i>	Kielbasa with Green Peppers and Onions <i>Mike Erland</i>	Bacon Cheese Burger <i>Carla McPherson</i>	Chef's Surprise <i>Bruce Fowler, Athena Steele</i> <i>Pizza & Movie 4:30 - 7:30pm</i>	Mosi Museum & Imax movie \$11.75 <i>Nancy Weaver</i>
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<i>Patricia Herbein</i>	Chili Macaroni <i>Eric Seigfried</i>	Fried Chicken <i>Theresa Pearson, Rodney Bell</i>	Grilled Cheese Sandwich <i>Eileen Jones</i> <i>Employment Dinner—Stuffed Tilapia</i>	BLT Wrap and Chips	Chef's Surprise	Dali Museum <i>Clyde Kobayashi, Maria Pierce, Ray Dunning</i>
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
<i>Chris O'Hagan</i>	Salisbury Steak and Baked Potato <i>Ed Wohlford, Steve Helgeson</i>	Crab Salad Sandwich	Chili Dogs and Cole Slaw <i>Dave Scanlon</i>	Baked Chicken <i>John Markle, Nancy Brown</i>	Chef's Surprise <i>Jean Johnson, Sheila Geiger, Karen Maloof</i>	Dunedin Historical Museum FREE!
26	27	28	29	30	31	
<i>Stephanie Harrell</i>	Curried Vegetables with Rice	Jeff's Lasagna <i>Jerry Keilb</i>	Submarine Sandwich and Potato Salad	Taco Salad	Chef's Surprise <i>Elliot Freeman</i>	

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