



# The Starry Night Gazette



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

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www.vincent-house.org

JANUARY 2008



## What an ICCD Clubhouse is NOT:

Our Clubhouse *is not* part of a golf course membership.

Our Clubhouse *is not* part of a condo association.

Our Clubhouse *is not* a place to hang out.

Our Clubhouse *is not* a place where some people are elevated and others are excluded.

Our Clubhouse *is not* a place of idleness.

Our Clubhouse *is not* a Social Club, *nor* do we play table games to pass the time.

Our Clubhouse *is not* a place of rules and regulations or where one takes an oath in order to become a member.

And *no one* pays dues to join.

## Helping End the Secret

Vincent House will celebrate its five year anniversary on January 20, 2008. There are still many people that have not visited and observed the remarkable opportunities that Vincent House offers. Over the years, we have heard many comments from our readers about what they have learned about Clubhouses. Many have read our Gazette, but until they had the chance to visit Vincent House, they had no idea of all the wonderful things that happen here daily.

This year we have decided to open our doors to the public with the intention of sharing the uniqueness and excitement of Vincent House. As one of our State Representatives put it: "Visiting Vincent House is a life changing experience". We are offering short visits at the Clubhouse called "**Showcase of Vincent House**". These one-hour visits offer guests the chance to tour our Clubhouse, see our work units and meet our founders, several members and a representative of our Board of Directors. These *Showcases* will be offered two mornings each month from 10:00am to 11:00am and two evenings from 5:00pm to 6:00pm. The scheduled dates for the near future are as follows:

- Thursday, January 24 at 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, February 12 at 5 p.m.
- Thursday, February 28 at 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, March 11 at 5 p.m.
- Thursday, March 27 at 10 a.m.

**For inquiries and RSVP,  
call 727-541-0399**

*We encourage anyone reading the Gazette to schedule a visit and bring a friend. We hope to end the secret, share the miracles of Vincent House, and introduce the unique community that has arisen here.*

"It is not what happens to you that determines how far you will go in life; it is how you handle what happens to you."  
- Vincent Van Gogh



## What an ICCD Clubhouse really and truly IS:

A place to rebuild lives.

A place of opportunities and challenges.

A place to help each other realize our full potential.

A place to enjoy work, find acceptance and build community.

A place of hope, inspiration and rekindled dreams.

A place where diverse abilities, beliefs and cultures are valued.

A place to develop new skills, and the freedom to make mistakes.

A place to go where we feel useful and valued once again.

And it is here where we realize that it is not our mental illness that defines us, but rather, our indomitable spirit and resiliency.



## Annual Legislative Breakfast a Success!

By Clyde Kobayashi

It has become Vincent House's main event each autumn season. This year's Legislative Breakfast was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all! On Wednesday, November 28, our State Senators, Representatives and Legislative Aides took time out of their busy schedules to learn more about the rehabilitation opportunities offered at Vincent House. Members proudly gave tours of the Clubhouse and shared stories of triumph. We then offered a lavish bill of fare prepared by members and staff. As we gathered in the dining area, the presentations began.

**Paul Ziegler**, the President of the Board of Directors for Van Gogh's Palette and an administrator at Colonial Bank, gave the welcome address. He put the important work of Vincent House in the context of his son's struggles with mental illness.

**William McKeever**, Vincent House Program Coordinator, spoke of stigma and the common misperceptions that people living with mental illnesses face in their everyday lives. Vincent House offers hope, the means of recovery, the opportunity for meaningful friendships and a path to gainful employment.

**Bill Champion**, a Vincent House Member, shared his experiences of how mental illness had made him a pariah to everyone, especially family. Just as his illness was spiraling out of control and while on the verge of homelessness, he found Vincent House and a means to rebuild his life. Bill now has an apartment and a stable, full-time job.

**Bob Dillinger**, Pinellas/Pasco Public Defender and the longest standing member of the Van Gogh's Palette/Vincent House Board of Directors, presented the 2008



*Public Defender Bob Dillinger presents the 2008 Legislative Agenda. The future of ICCD Clubhouse Expansion in Florida hinges on increased funding through a DCF proposal.*

Legislative Agenda. He spoke dramatically of the power of Clubhouse and the wisdom behind investing in more programs like Vincent House.

**Bill Mischler**, Mayor of Pinellas Park, endorsed Vincent House as an asset to the City. A special friend and longtime supporter, he has participated in various Clubhouse projects including renovation efforts.

**Elliott Steele**, Executive Director of Van Gogh's Palette and founder of Vincent House, stated in his closing remarks: "Just **'imagine'** what life would be like if every person in the state of Florida with a psychiatric diagnosis had an ICCD modeled Clubhouse in their community where they could be treated with respect and dignity. Just **'imagine'** them participating in a restorative community where they could 'practice work' in the 'work-ordered day' and socialize in social outings in an environment that does not believe mental illness ends at 4:30 or on weekends and holidays. Just **'imagine'** what life would be like if everyone living with a mental illness could contribute to society instead of feeling like they are a burden. Just **'imagine'** more ICCD modeled Clubhouses throughout Florida."

## Vincent House Legislative Agenda 2008

**Budget Issue Proposal:** "Florida Clubhouse Expansion" Vincent House strongly supports the expansion of ICCD Clubhouses throughout Florida. This budget request was submitted by the Department of Children and Families, totals **\$3,325,000** and will provide the following:

- Start up and operational funding for eleven new Clubhouses across Florida. This will dramatically increase the recovery opportunities for a greater number of people living with mental illnesses throughout the state.
- Expanded capacity of the seven existing ICCD Clubhouses, thereby enhancing services to their members and increasing the total membership.
- Technical assistance to all Florida Clubhouses in their pursuit of ICCD Certification.

**Projected Outcomes:**

1. **Decreased Rate of Hospitalizations:** Clubhouses provide vocational and social rehabilitation opportunities that decrease the need for inpatient hospital care, resulting in huge cost savings to Medicaid and/or DCF general revenue. Ex: The cost of a one-day stay at Morton Plant Hospital is \$1,600 compared to \$45.00/day at Vincent House.
2. **Decreased Rate of Incarceration:** Clubhouse participation builds skills, self-esteem and purpose. By building productive lives, members decrease their risk of incarceration. Ex: Jail costs include a \$500 booking fee and a \$98/day incarceration cost, Vincent House costs \$45/day.

3. **Decreased Rate of Homelessness:** Pinellas County has about 5,000 people who are homeless, but thousands more live on the fringe of homelessness. Many Vincent House members are at risk of homelessness and some are chronically homeless. Ex: Homelessness costs taxpayers \$40,000/year per person. The cost per member at an ICCD Clubhouse averages \$3,500/year.
4. **Increased Employment Rates:** Unemployment rates for persons with psychiatric disabilities range from 70 – 95%. Clubhouses assist members with gaining or returning to paid employment. Under this budget request, 1,500 people living with mental illness will end a life of isolation and despair in order to find hope, recovery and employment. Many will work and pay taxes; some will decrease and even end their dependency on disability benefits.
5. **Hope for Persons living with Mental Illnesses:** How much more is possible with Clubhouse programs? Maybe the next John Nash will get his/her re-start at an ICCD Clubhouse.

**Action Requested:**

- Write or contact your legislators to ask them to support CBIRS Project tracking # 1372.
- Contact the Governor's office and ask for his support of this Legislative Budget Request.



**TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT**

**Jeff Albertson**  
**Richard Baker**  
**Gigi Behar**  
**Brian Craver**  
**Stephen Gregosky III**  
**Larry Haines**  
**Gary Hinkson**  
**Carol Jackson**  
**Gayle Marchiniak**  
**Jason Michaud**  
**Lisa Sanders**  
**Justin Shea**  
**Allyn Spidella**  
**Joe Stabile**  
**Athena Steele**  
**Michael Taddeo**  
**Jackie Williams**  
**Ed Wohlford**

**Tri-Glo/Raytheon**  
**Suncoast Center**  
**Liberty Lanes**  
**Tri-Glo/Raytheon**  
**Seashell Books**  
**Suncoast Center**  
**Tri-Glo/Raytheon**  
**Galleria Plumbing**  
**Senior Services**  
**Tri-Glo/Raytheon**  
**Liberty Lanes**  
**Seashell Books**  
**Tri-Glo/Raytheon**  
**Tri-Glo/Raytheon**  
**Seashell Books**  
**Suncoast Center**  
**Liberty Lanes**  
**Tri-Glo/Raytheon**

**Supported & Independent Employment**

<b>Susan Alvey</b>	<b>Ralph Morphew</b>
<b>Nicholas Cercone</b>	<b>Philip Noonan</b>
<b>Bill Champion</b>	<b>Rand Pierce</b>
<b>Debbie Cibik</b>	<b>Bob Pitts</b>
<b>Tess Daniels</b>	<b>Warren Prince</b>
<b>Don DiCarlo</b>	<b>Michael Ralston</b>
<b>Eddie Gares</b>	<b>Shannon Riley</b>
<b>Art Hallman</b>	<b>Heidi Rippen</b>
<b>Kim Harrell</b>	<b>Ron Ritchie</b>
<b>Kathleen Hartwell</b>	<b>Chris Schaer</b>
<b>Eileen Jones</b>	<b>Beth Schweikert</b>
<b>William Kuropatwinski</b>	<b>Terry Taggart</b>
<b>Bonnie Lawniczak</b>	<b>George Torrence</b>
<b>Diane LeClaire</b>	<b>Judy Wilson</b>
<b>Karen Maloof</b>	

**Casual Employment**

**Kerry Birchett**  
**Gerard Caldarise**  
**Aimee Hunnell**  
**John Markle**

**Continuing Education**

**Kathleen Hartwell**  
**Michael Serkes**  
**Justin Shea**  
**Jeff Suzanne**

**Celebrating Five Years at Vincent House**

*This space is usually dedicated to member accomplishments in paid work settings, but on this date in our history, we have decided to highlight the valuable contributions of one of our rehabilitation staff. Stacy Freskos was hired when Vincent House first opened its doors in a modest location at a small strip-mall.*

By Stacy Freskos

I've been a part of Vincent House since it became the realized dream of Elliott and Dianne Steele on January 20, 2003, in Buccaneer Plaza. Elizabeth Hazlewood and I were the first two staff members along with two Clubhouse members, Mitch and Steve, to receive one-week training in the Clubhouse model at Gateway House in Greenville, South Carolina. We returned from training...excited...full of enthusiasm and resolve to put our new knowledge into action. Members and I shared the honor of having our relatively new Clubhouse receive a 3-year ICCD certification on May 2005, two years after opening our doors. Our members, both new and those of long-standing, provide me with "life-lessons in courage" every day. I have been heartened by their numerous, daily successes and look forward to many great years ahead. On January 20, 2008, Vincent House and I will be celebrating 5 years...5 great years (for me) together!



Van Gogh's Palette, Inc.  
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 Pinellas Park, FL 33781  
 Address Correction Requested

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Why do we need more Clubhouses  
 in Florida?? see page two.



## JANUARY 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
		<b>New Years Day!</b>  Holiday Dinner 11:00 - 3:00	Submarine Sandwiches	Baked Tilapia  <i>Don DiCarlo</i>	Chef's Surprise <i>Elizabeth Hoff</i>  Pizza & Movie "Underdog"	Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Dave's Taco Salad  <i>David Geiger</i>	Black Beans and Yellow Rice  <i>Lee DeCillis</i> <i>Bonnie Lawniczak</i>	Ham & Cheese Sandwich with 3 Bean Salad  Employment Dinner Chicken Cordon Bleu <i>Susan Alvey, Scott Haire</i>	Arroz con Pollo  <i>Lavion Johnson</i> <i>Yvonne Killings</i> <i>Sabrina Moore</i>	Chef's Surprise  <i>Justin Migliozi</i> <i>Christopher Murray</i>	Sarasota NARSAD Conference
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<i>Debbie Cibik</i> <i>Theo Sederlof</i>	Sloppy Joes w/ Macaroni Salad  <i>Richard Baker</i>	Macaroni & Cheese  <i>Walter Jacques</i> <i>Chris Schaer</i>	Chicken and Dumplings	Turkey Rueben Salad  <i>Brittaney S. Spaulding</i>	Chef's Surprise  <i>Angela Parker</i>	Comedy Museum St. John's Pass
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
<i>Richard Stacy</i>	Philly Cheese Steak	Vegetarian Chili	Hamburger and Baked Macaroni & Cheese  Employment Dinner Joe's Lasagna <i>Rosie Parish</i>	Teriyaki Chicken wings with Yellow Rice  <i>Wallace Johnson</i>	Chef's Surprise	Picnic & Hiking Booker Creek Park
27	28	29	30	31		
<i>Erin Gleason</i>	Alex's Shepherd Pie	Vegetarian Fried Rice	Angela's Crab Cakes	Rice w/ seasoned Ground Beef and Vegetables		

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