



The Starry Night Gazette

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



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New Supported Employment Program Brightens Our Future

A Clubhouse member once reflected, "If I have a job, I have a chance." Where would many of us be without our jobs? Or without our careers? For members at Vincent House, having the chance to take on a real job and be paid real wages is often the way to a brighter future. Work builds dignity and self-worth: It's the way to fulfilling dreams and aspirations. It also means having an answer when people ask: "So, what do you do for a living?"

Thanks to a recent grant awarded by The Able Trust, Vincent House will now support members in obtaining and maintaining permanent employment positions at area businesses. Through a one-year, \$43,000 grant, Vincent House will provide supported employment opportunities for members as they take another big step toward career fulfillment, independence and financial security. It's certainly an exciting time for Vincent House members and staff!

We are indebted to The Able Trust for its continued support of Vincent House Employment Programs: In 2003, The Able Trust awarded Vincent House a \$35,000 grant for Transitional Employment. In the following year, Vincent House exceeded its goals and was subsequently honored with the 2005 Beverly Chapman Award for Outstanding Employment Placement Program. It was the first time a mental health provider received the award. The Able Trust awarded Vincent House a second grant for \$35,050 to fund the development of a Group Employment Program. Here again, Vincent House doubled the employment outcomes targeted in the grant. Thanks to The Able Trust for supporting Vincent House in every step in the development of our Employment Programs – our members are using Transitional, Group and now Supported Employment opportunities to rebuild their lives and achieve their dreams.



Pictured at left: Vincent House members Ron Ritchie, Judy Wilson, Karen Maloof and Michael Ralston recently joined the Supported Employment Program. They were hired as transportation assistants at Windmoor Healthcare. Clubhouse Supported Jobs are permanent part-time or full-time jobs that are established in collaboration with area businesses. Working members and Vincent House staff determine the type of supports needed to ensure member success on the job.

A PLAQUE ON THE WALL

By Ron Ritchie

A plaque on the wall at Vincent House says, "Our greatest glory does not consist in not ever falling, but in getting up each time we fall." It's not easy to get up after falling sometimes. It's easy to think..."why try?" "What is the sense in trying if I'm only going to fall down trying?" "Look at how bad I've been hurt falling and besides, I didn't deserve to fall down." All of these feelings about falling can sometimes keep us from trying. Whatever reason we have for not trying again is probably not good. The number one reason people stop trying is the FEAR of FAILING. Let's not let this stop us from trying.

I am about to start working my very own job. I haven't been sleeping well at night, and I'm having a few headaches. Yes, I am afraid that I will fail. I have failed at too many jobs. I'm afraid I will do or say the wrong thing and have symptoms from my illness. I'm going to try my best at my new job. It's wonderful to have Vincent House support.

FEELING BLESSED

By Karen Maloof

I came to Vincent House in January, 2006, and began to volunteer in the Business Unit and Food Services Unit, learning a lot about teamwork and how to keep a daily routine. In June 2006, I started my first Transitional Employment job at the Liberty Lanes Bowling Alley. I learned how to be punctual and perform properly on the job by communicating with the customers. To tell you the truth, there were many times that I needed medication adjustments. At work, I cleaned tables, bowling balls, windows, the parking lot, etc.

In March of 2007, I started a new Transitional job at the Raytheon Corporation with Tri-Glo. My duties included cleaning floors, mopping and working as part of a staff/member team every day. I feel blessed with the opportunity to work these two jobs. I have truly enjoyed the experience and learned a lot about how to work.

I now have the chance to hold my very own Supported Employment job at Windmoor Hospital. As transportation assistant for the van drivers, I will assist with the transportation of clients going to and from the hospital. I am looking forward to my new job!

A Special Tree's Meaning



When Vincent House first relocated in 2005, the clearing of Brazilian pepper trees from the backyard exposed a determined and resilient palm tree. It has since become a symbol for our members and staff.

By Chris Schaer

When I look at trees, I usually see only plain trees that grow from the ground upward - and that's nothing special at all. But this particular tree, as seen at left, has great sentimental value to a lot of Vincent House members. I guess you could say that it has become a sort of mascot here at Vincent House. This tree and its shape shows to me what Clubhouse does for its members. The base represents when you first become a member and your mental illness has you down. Then, as it curves, it represents how you become uplifted by Clubhouse and with that, your confidence gets built up. Finally, it goes straight upward, and this represents our awesome recovery from a mental illness. The post is the family environment at Vincent House that keeps us going through the tough times, with the support, community and love we find here. So this tree means a lot to me. When I look at it, I get emotional knowing that this is how Clubhouse works!

MENTAL ILLNESSES DON'T STOP US FROM HAVING FUN!!

By Gayle Marchiniak

On Saturday, October 6, 2007 NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness) had a banquet feast which included an award ceremony, raffles, and a wonderful buffet. There was a pirate theme and prizes were given to the best costumes. About 250 people and about 40 members from Vincent House attended.

The evening started with a prayer and the pledge of allegiance which I really liked. It gave me a feeling of gratitude and hope for our country and for the men and women fighting for our freedom.

The tables were decorated with white linen and pirate party favors, including beads and fancy little cups with skeletons on them. The buffet was incredible and offered salad (and the best ranch dressing I've ever had!), potato salad, green beans, roast pork, and salmon. The dessert table was overflowing with a sea of wonderful mouth-watering, exquisite delicacies. I enjoyed the cappuccino cake and the chocolate soufflé.

After dinner, the raffle began. There was a wide variety of exciting prizes, including a beautiful display of cookies

made by Chef Extraordinaire, Elliott Steele. Stacy Freskos won a beach resort package at a Bed & Breakfast for 4 days and 3 nights in Tierra Verde. Another weekend getaway included a night on the town driving a Mercedes Benz.

After the raffle, the music kicked in and the judging for the costumes took place. There were many Buccaneers & Wenches. One of our members, Alex Houser, won first place in the costume contest. Elliott Steele won second place. Congrats to them both!!!

The dancing finally began. There was a variety of music and everyone was enjoying themselves! The electric slide was the most enjoyable dance. There was a lot of audience participation and everyone was having a great time.

Overall it was a magical evening and we all had a great time! I'm looking forward to the next NAMI event.



NAMI PIRATE-FEST

"RAISE THE SKULL AND CROSS BONES!" "AVAST! PREPARE TO BE BOARDED!!!" So it was upon the galleon "Banquet Masters" for the Annual NAMI "End the Mystery" awards banquet.

"Me hearties... we come tonight to honor the hard working, the selfless, and the dedicated... men and women who helped others face fear easier, breathe easier, and live life a bit more comfortably... by letting them know... they are not alone.

"SHIVER ME TIMBER! MAKE THE MYSTERY, WALK THE PLANK! IT'S ALL UP TO ME!" Many honored tonight have mental health issues of their own. They know the struggles... but they also know hope. SO LET'S RAISE OUR TANKARDS AND TOAST THEM ONE AND ALL!

HAPPY ADS

Make a member happy! Vincent House member, living independently, envisions upgrading to a chest of drawers in which to keep his clothes. If you can help, call Elliott Steele, Director, at (727) 541-0321.

Destiny with Mental Illness

By Justin Shea

Do you know someone with a mental illness? Do you look at them any differently than a normal human being? My name is Justin and I function just as any person in life but with a mental illness. Sure only a small percentage of the population has this illness but I have built my life around this illness and become my own unique individual.

Sometimes in life every situation, every word spoken, every movement and every wonder contains the path you choose to live. Sure I'm only twenty-three with a mental illness and was diagnosed in my late teens. But the one thing I love is music. I have had it throughout my whole life and it has been there to comfort me, cherish me, and love me. The piano is like my medication...it heals me. It's my true love. When I play a piece of music just the sound in my mind becomes clear and it's the only thing I want to do. It's my heaven. In music, just like my life, I can project my character through the notes I play. I'm always learning and have grown to adapt with music and life. It brings out my inner passion, my self and my soul. This has consumed the voices in my head and my true self has come aboard.

The one thing that has always been there for me is my family and friends. They have always been encouraging. Without them I would never have a life. I love them and know they are behind me 100%. They are my guardian angels and I have learned a lot from them. I love them and forever will.

Here at Vincent House, we are a huge family embarking into the unknown together. We are a community of people



Justin Shea is currently attending St. Petersburg College and is pursuing a degree in Music.

who are unique in so many ways. It's amazing that we can change the world one person at a time. Sometimes it takes two steps backwards to make a giant leap forward. I believe that you can start to adapt and just try to cope with mental illness. Stress is a trigger for a lot of people. Vincent House is different because there is no stress, no stigma and just great people. I wish every person in the world could see how Vincent House is a stepping stone to the future for each and every member. The gift is priceless.

Vincent House Members

CELEBRATING RECOVERY THROUGH WORK

during October - 2007

TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Gigi Behar	Liberty Lanes
Bill Champion	Senior Services
Brian Craver	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Larry Haines	Seashell Books
Gary Hinkson	Pro-Clean/Raytheon
Alex Houser	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Carol Jackson	Galleria Plumbing
Cindy Kelly	Suncoast Center
Stephen Gregosky III	Seashell Books
Carla McPherson	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Jason Michaud	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Lisa Sanders	Liberty Lanes
Allyn Spidella	Tri-Glo/Raytheon
Joe Stabile	Pro-Clean/Raytheon
Athena Steele	Suncoast Center
Michael Taddeo	Suncoast Center
Ed Wohlford	Tri-Glo/Raytheon

Supported & Independent Employment

Susan Alvey	Karen Maloof
Nancy Brown	Philip Noonan
Nicholas Cercone	Rand Pierce
Debbie Cibik	Bob Pitts
Tess Daniels	Warren Prince
Don DiCarlo	Michael Ralston
Eddie Gares	Shannon Riley
Art Hallman	Heidi Rippen
Kim Harrell	Ron Ritchie
Kathleen Hartwell	Beth Schweikert
Elizabeth Hoff	Theresa Stabile
Eileen Jones	Michael Taddeo
William Kuropatwinski	Terry Taggart
Bonnie Lawniczak	George Torrence
Gayle Marchiniak	Judy Wilson

Casual Employment

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

Continuing Education

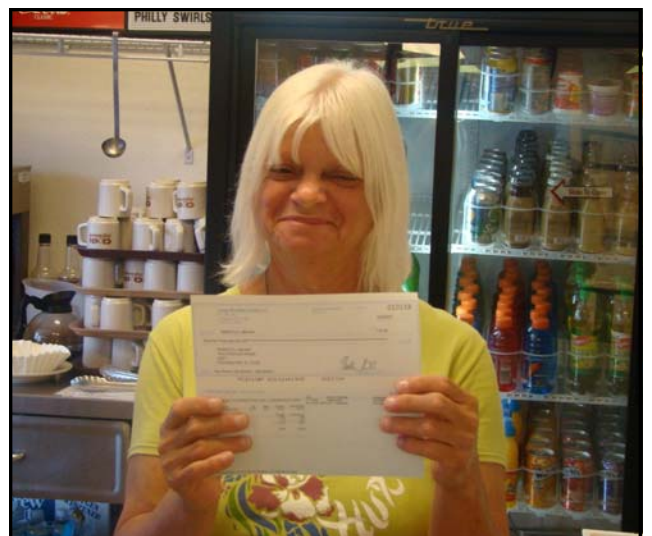
Bridgette Elias
Kathleen Hartwell
Steve Scofield
Michael Serkes
Justin Shea
Jeff Suzanne

WORKING IS GOOD FOR MY BRAIN

This member is holding her first check after beginning one of Vincent House's Transitional Employment Positions. These are part-time jobs at area businesses. Members work at the employer's place of business and are paid directly by the employer.

By Gigi Behar

I'm so happy to have a job. I have taken a Transitional Employment Position at Liberty Lanes Bowling Alley. I work Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Eventually, I will have the chance to work five days a week. I started this past month and I feel so happy. I have to take two busses and then walk a mile to get to work, but it is worth it. My duties at Liberty Lanes Bowling Alley are varied and there is a lot to do. I will continue coming to the Club-house to volunteer in Casey's Café on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I'm happy to be working because working is good for my brain.



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What's so special about this tree?
 Find out inside!



NOVEMBER 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				Johna's Fried Catfish with Fries & Okra <i>Irma Diaz, Leon Scher Luis Gonzalez Keith Burton</i>	Chef's Surprise Pizza & Movie 4:30 - 7:30pm	Pier Fishing Trip
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>James Briggs Donna Engels</i>	Sweet & Sour Chicken with fried rice	Vegetarian Minestrone Soup <i>Elizabeth Cook Vincent Michael Hodges Peggy Parker Linda Wallace</i>	Chicken Cordon Bleu <i>Stephanie Freskos</i> Employment Dinner— Meatloaf	Beef Burritos, Nacho chips & cheese	Chef's Surprise	Mini Golf <i>Leslie Day</i>
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<i>Darrell Jones</i>	Chris' Vincent Burgers <i>James McCaa</i>	Tess' Chicken Alfredo <i>Sally Fullerton Gary Hinkson</i>	Vegetarian Chili <i>Veronica Coxhead</i> Employment Dinner— Stuffed Talapia	Egg Salad Sandwiches <i>Melissa Crockett</i>	Chef's Surprise	Pirate Festival
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<i>William Whidden</i>	Baked Ziti	Boca Burgers & Cole Slaw	Chili Cheese Hot Dogs with Nacho Chips <i>Dawn Rowe</i>	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY FEAST	Chef's Surprise <i>Mark Guy Jane Terrin</i>	Vet Clinic <i>Bring your pets!</i> 1:30
25	26	27	28	29	30	
	Gyros	Chris' Macaroni & Cheese	Stuffed Green Peppers	Chris' Enchiladas	Chef's Surprise	

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