



The Starry Night Gazette

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



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www.vincenthouse.org

March-April 2009

A Tribute to Stacy Freskos

Staff member Anastasia Freskos retired this past month after six years of employment at Vincent House. She was a founding staff member and witnessed our Clubhouse grow from just a few members at a small storefront to our current location with over 500 lifetime members. We are indebted to her loyalty, dedication and unwavering commitment to the recovery of our members.

Stacy is Special

By Jenny Beckus and Carol Delgado

Stacy is a unique woman. She has a genuine warmth and caring for people that makes everyone feel special. She is super friendly. She instilled courage and she motivated members to achieve their goals. She has a humorous, artistic, and brilliant mind. She also is very compassionate. Stacy is like family and was always on top of outreach and birthdays. Stacy is a very understanding teacher. Jonathan said, "I love her spirit." She always had a story to tell. She was calming when things were chaotic.

Stacy has been at Vincent House from the beginning. Vincent House started at Buccaneer Plaza in January 2003. She started in the Business Unit. She gave you the time you needed. Working at Vincent House was one of her passions; she is the heart and soul of Vincent House and she will surely be missed.



The Privilege and Pleasure have been all Mine

My past occupations have included: hospital admissions clerk, internet bowling sales/customer service agent, print shop manager, art instructor (in Pakistan) and proofreader of liturgical publications. As you can see, like you, until Vincent House came into my life, I lacked focus! (Joke) A little over six years ago Elliott and Dianne Steele offered me the chance, as staff, along with Elizabeth Hazlewood to share their passion and pursue their dream of opening the first ICCD Certified Clubhouse in Florida. In my heart I have thanked them every day for the opportunity of working with such wonderful people... you know who you are...our selfless staff...our incredible members...our loyal supporters in the community. With Elliott, Dianne and William McKeever's belief and heartfelt support I have tried to encourage rather than enable members in their journey. Our members, drawn from diverse talents and cultures, are the most courageous and persistent group of individuals I have ever met. I wish you "Good Luck" as I'm sure you wish me on my new journey of retirement...and I'm not retiring from life...I'm pursuing things I've postponed. I will surely miss days filled with the daily activity of our vibrant Vincent House...because of who? That's right you guessed it... you, our members and staff! You cannot be mentioned by name, there's not enough paper or wonderful, glowing adjectives to describe you. I will treasure forever the moments we have had together, the laughs, the goofy times, the tears and the successes. You can count on me being a frequent future visitor as our Clubhouse grows. Thank you, for sharing some of your most valuable gifts with me these past six years...your precious friendship, trust and time.

With warmest regards always, Stacy Freskos



There are two kinds of people: Those who don't do what they want to do, so they write down in a diary about what they haven't done, and those who haven't time to write about it because they're out doing it.

- Richard Flournoy and Lewis R. Foster

Stacy will be greatly missed!

Miami Working Group Plans to Open an ICCD Clubhouse

Recently members of the Miami working group paid a visit to Vincent House. They had this to say: "We visited Vincent House a year ago, and the first thing we noticed was how cheerful and happy everyone was. We went back to Miami and we said we are definitely going to start our own Clubhouse. We were fortunate to receive a scholarship that paid for a new Clubhouse Development Training held by the ICCD in Pinellas Park last year. It helped us realize what we had to do."

All of us at Vincent House were well pleased at their coming to see us, and were happy to share information with the group. We are glad to see the expansion of Clubhouses in the state of Florida. To learn more about the Clubhouse concept in the Miami area and how you can assist the new Key Clubhouse of South Florida call Amy McClellan at 305-757-4082, or send an email to keyclubhouse@earthlink.net.



Elizabeth Torres, Amy McClellan, Viccy Krawcheck, Carla Neufeld visited from Key Clubhouse of South Florida.

Vincent House Announces Important Changes

By Larry Haines

The work units known as Business and Member Services have been combined into one unit, called the "Administrative Business Unit". The wall between "Hidden Treasures" and the attendance room was removed to make one larger work space. However, "Hidden Treasures" is still receiving donations. Payment for your "treasures" can be placed in the "Building Fund" bottle, located on top of the water cooler.

Saturday Social Outings are now held only twice a month. We are also open on Wednesdays from 8 am – 8

Clubhouse is now open on Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. with 4 p.m. to 8p.m. serving as an evening program with social activities available.



Members are hard at work in the newly developed area in the Administrative Business unit.

pm, with Employment Dinners on the first and third Wednesdays, Pizza/Movie on one night a month and Wellness Walk & Nutrition and possibilities of other activities to come.

There are plans to sell the fifteen passenger bus, a.k.a "The Bus". So if you are interested or know someone who is, Let us know!

Coming Home

Vincent House follows the 36 International Standards of the ICCD. Standard #6 states that "members have the right to immediate re-entry into the Clubhouse community after any length of absence."

By Mary Warner



I have been a member since January 2004 but have not been coming for a long time. A couple of weeks ago I started coming back to Vincent House. It has been hard getting up early and spending time here away from home, but it has also been rewarding. I feel useful when I do a job that helps the Clubhouse.

I've felt overwhelmed with all there is to do at home but that is a part of working. I need to eventually get back to work so the Clubhouse will help me reach that goal. Seeing all the members I used to know, meeting members I didn't know, and getting to know staff I hadn't worked with before has been wonderful. I felt very welcomed back.

Educational Opportunities

By Stephen Gregosky

Each Monday afternoon, Member Services offers member excursions to a wide variety of educational facilities. Members have found it fascinating to see the numerous educational opportunities available in Pinellas County.

For instance, a member, Michael Ballenger is currently enrolled in two college courses at St. Petersburg College. He feels good about himself since he is getting "A" grades in his classes. He is confident that his mental illness will not be an obstacle in his pursuit of a degree in Journalism. He emphasizes, "Don't think just because you have a mental illness, that you can't take college courses. You can take college courses and you can achieve something great."

Another member, Latoya Johnson said that "the schools we have toured have been an awesome experience." The schools visited so far include: St. Petersburg College campuses, USF, PTEC, Eckerd College, ITT Technical Institute, Tomlinson Center, Clearwater Adult Education, and Pinellas Park Library.

Additional members besides Michael Ballenger are enrolled in colleges within the community. Clearly, there are many educational resources for all people. Having a mental illness is by no means a disqualification to use such resources. Vincent House celebrates recovery through work. Getting an education certainly augments members' ability to get a quality job.



Member Shawna Rylander worked hard to receive her High School Diploma.

Join a Discovery Tour & Experience the Possibilities

A Vincent House Discovery Tour offers interested people in the community the opportunity to tour our Clubhouse, see the work of the units, and meet the founders, members and a representative of our Board of Directors.

A VISIT TO VINCENT HOUSE IS A LIFE CHANGING EVENT.

Choose from any of the following dates:

Tues., Mar. 10 @ 5:30-6:30 pm

Wed., Mar. 25 @ 10-11am

Tues., Apr. 10 @ 5:30-6:30 pm

Wed., Apr. 25 @ 10-11am

Please RSVP: 727-541-0399

Ask for Elliott or Dianne

New Clubhouse Hours

Monday - Friday

Work-Ordered day

8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Wednesdays

Evening Program

4:00 - 8:00 P.M.



Heidi Rippen's Success at Publix

Hi, I am Heidi Rippen. I have been a member at Vincent House since 2007, and I have been working at Publix for three years now. I have learned many things from being at Vincent House. For example, I am not the only one with a mental illness. I have learned how to grow as a person from the other members here and have made many new friends that are now like my family. I like how the staff looks out for all of the members including myself.

My mom and I kept applying at Publix on the computer, and I was hired while I was still in high school. I learned how to be a cashier, bag groceries, and customer service. I have overcome my shyness from working there and am more outgoing now. I like to help people out and make them smile. I make sure that they leave the store happy. I have many new friends at work, and I know several of the customers very well. I work there three days a week and my boss has helped me a lot. He is very patient with me. I have received several raises there because of my performance evaluations. One day I want to be a team leader at Publix or a cashier. I am very glad to be a member at Vincent House because my new friends give me support and new friendships. I don't feel alone anymore. Vincent House is a part of me that I love and I love being a part of Vincent House.

TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

**Nancy Brown
Dimitri Byelov
Stephanie Freskos
Brian Howe
Aimee Hunnell
Carol Jackson
Lisa Sanders
Athena Steele
Todd Steele
Michael Taddeo
Jackie Williams
Deborah Wilson
Abraham Youssouf**

**Sirata Beach Resort
Liberty Lanes
Sirata Beach Resort
Liberty Lanes
Liberty Lanes
Senior Services
Sirata Beach Resort
SCC-FACT Team
Sirata Beach Resort
Suncoast Center
Sirata Beach Resort
Suncoast Center
Galleria Plumbing**

Continuing Education in 2009

**Michael Ballenger
Latoya Johnson
Bob Krehbiel
Franklin La Torre
Gayle Marchiniak
Aloysia McPherson**

**Shawna Rylander
Steve Scofield
Justin Shea
Jason Sulimay
Jeff Suzanne**

Supported & Independent Employment

Michael Ballenger	Irrigation Specialist
Nancy Brown	Tax Preparer
William Champion	Recovery Specialist
Jennifer Dickey	House Cleaning
Tess Daniels	Housekeeping
Adam Franz	SeashellBooks.com
Debra Gaide	SeashellBooks.com
Eddie Gares	Recovery Coach
Craig Hayden	Ground Maintenance
Dennis Hill	Theater Usher
Gary Hinkson	Sirata Beach Resort
Brian Howe	Prep Technician
Bonnie Lawniczak	Machine Operator
Brian Lutz	Food Preparation
Gayle Marchiniak	Kennel Assistant
Philip Noonan	Maintenance
Sean O'Brien	Seashellbooks.com
Angela Parker	Transportation
Michael Ralston	Transportation
David Reed	Transcriptionist
Shannon Riley	Recovery Coach
Heidi Rippen	Service Clerk
Ron Ritchie	Transportation
Chris Schaer	Telemarketer
Justin Shea	Recreation Leader
Jason Sulimay	Receptionist
Terry Taggart	Pet Groomer
Judy Wilson	Transportation
Ed Wohlford	Tri-Glo/Raytheon

"Paid employment helps me progress toward financial independence."

Stephen Gregosky

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



We say farewell to our own Stacy Freskos
and wish her all of the best.

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Annual Legislative Breakfast at Vincent House *January 29, 2009*



State Representative Jim Frishe.

The Legislative Breakfast
was a success!



State Representative Rick Krise-
man with member Jeff Albertson.



Jane Hammond, mother of a future
member, speaks to our guests.



State Representative Bill Heller and
his Aide Jimmie Day with member
Jeff Albertson.



State Representative Janet Long
and her Aide Mr. Barkley Harless.