



The Starry Night Gazette

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



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September 2008

A Tribute to our Board of Directors

Joel Corcoran, Executive Director of the International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD), asserts that great Clubhouse programs all have something in common: a strong and committed Board of Directors. This is the story behind our success.

By Elliott Steele

In the beginning of 2009 we will be celebrating our sixth year anniversary. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our current Board of Directors for volunteering their valuable time and creating a Clubhouse community filled with hope, dignity and opportunity. I would also like to recognize our past Board members. Without the support and collaboration our Board has demonstrated over the years we would not be experiencing the tremendous success that Vincent House celebrates.



Dorene Thomas. President of our Board of Directors. Police Chief of Pinellas Park.
Chief Dorene Thomas is taking the lead on our current fundraising program. She is the only Chief in the State of Florida who has completed the 40 hour Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). Chief Thomas truly understands and empathizes with the plight of persons with mental illnesses in their daily struggle. We are thrilled to have her aboard and so are the members, as witnessed by the day the youth group posed with her in the front of Vincent House.

Prior to opening the Clubhouse, our Board advocated over 2 years with the State of Florida for the funding of an ICCD modeled Clubhouse. During that time our funding possibilities were up and down, yet we persevered and finally received word from the Department of Children and Families in November of 2002. We opened our doors as "Vincent House" in January 2003.

Our Board has worked diligently to learn the International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD) model of restorative community and the 36 International Standards. They have supported me in many changes from our early days of renting in a strip mall, beginning with an ice chest as refrigerator and cooking meals in the back yard on a gas grill. Two and a half years after such humble beginnings and as a result of their support, we successfully relocated our Clubhouse. We purchased a building on over an acre of land, mortgage-free and debt-free. This was all accomplished through fiscal responsi-



Paul Ziegler. Vice President, Colonial Bank
Paul joined our Board in 2003 and is our immediate past President. He assisted us in setting up our Leisure Bank and we received a \$5,000.00 grant from his bank. Paul was always willing to lend a hand at our annual yard sales.

Often we met as early as 4:30 AM using the headlights of our vans for lighting and carrying sofas and refrigerators to the front for sale. This gives a new meaning to "banker's hours."

bility, our annual yard sale, the backing of a Pinellas County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the support of our members and community donors.

We've come such a long way. Our Board has witnessed the growth of our membership from the average daily attendance of 8 the first month (including three staff and anyone who happened to stop by), to last month's average daily attendance of 52 - which, by the way, only counts member attendance! The Board celebrated our very first member going off to work in Transitional Employment (TE) and now watches in amazement as our members collectively earn over \$300,000.00 annually in Transitional, Supported and Independent jobs.

Learn more about our Board of Directors on page two.

Bob Dillinger. Elected Public Defender for Pinellas and Pasco Counties

In May 2001 we met in Public Defender Bob Dillinger's conference room for our Van Gogh's Palette, Inc. Board of Directors meeting. It seemed like it would be a great battle, getting a Clubhouse in Pinellas County, and a battle it was. It was nice to know that we had a strong advocate like Bob on our side. Bob truly enjoyed the day in 2003 when we had our first Board of Directors meeting in the Business Unit of Vincent House. We asked if we should continue meeting at the Clubhouse or move back to his conference room. His answer was absolutely at Vincent house. We could see he enjoyed being close to members in the Clubhouse, and they enjoyed seeing and meeting him. I will never forget the day I walked the Board through the present building, prior to purchasing it. He looked at me and said "You've got to be kidding." My heart sank as I tried to describe our vision for the 24 rooms to be renovated. As it turned out the vision was successful and the building that was formerly used as Dr. Latus' office continues to provide much needed help to persons in need.



What Lies Ahead

We are reaching another major step along the Vincent House continuum of success. With over 480 lifetime members we are bursting at the seams and in need of an addition to serve the growing demand for our services. It would break my heart to be forced to turn down a potential member due to lack of adequate space.

We have already received word from The Pinellas County Community Development Department that we are receiving a \$300,000.00 CDBG grant, which is a good start. With the expertise of our Board of Directors and the energies of our many members and community supporters I am very confident that we will move into our new addition by September of 2009.



Jennifer England
England Brothers' Construction, Inc.

Jennifer England is our newest Board member. She provides a youthful energetic spirit to our Board. Although she is new, she wasted no time in helping us connect with people who could provide valuable advice for our addition.

More About our Board of Directors

Bruce Cotton.
Employment Specialist,
St. Petersburg College




Bruce came on board when he was an aide to Representative Leslie Walters. Bruce is very knowledgeable about the legislative process in Tallahassee. His relationship was instrumental in Vincent House receiving the CBIRS for "Orientation to Clubhouse."

Suzan Alexander
Therapist, LCSW




Suzan has been a friend for many years and she lived our dream of Vincent House. As a therapist, I am certain she felt I was a bit grandiose in my dreams. She is now on our Board and a part of the driving force. One Thanksgiving Day she and her daughter Sasha helped prepare our holiday meal working side by side with members in the kitchen. The members truly enjoyed working with her and Sasha. She became famous for her sweet potatoes and the terrific sweets she prepared and shared with us.



Hal Hershkowitz,
Treasurer.
Certified Public Accountant, Joslin & Hershkowitz

Hal was our personal accountant when we shared our dream with him. He assisted us in setting up the corporation and the non-profit status. I often wonder what he was thinking when we shared our dream with him. Hal could always be looked to for solid fiscal advice. Hal had doubts about the possibility of our present location working as a Clubhouse. I told him "you have to see the vision." He has since seen the vision and said "I knew it could work out all along." Over the years Hal has provided us with a wealth of knowledge and support.


"We would like to extend a big Thank You to our Board of Directors. We look forward to the challenge of completing our addition and meeting the challenges that lie ahead. Thank you for donating your time, energies and expertise. You are helping to change the world, one member, one employer, one family at a time."
-Elliott Steele & Dianne Steele
Co-Founders of Vincent House




Joe Connelly
Vice President
Major, Nurse at VA

Joe Connelly goes way back with Vincent House. He began coming two days a week with veterans from Bay Pines VA. They enjoyed participating in the work ordered day. The very first day I couldn't tell that Joe was staff. To date Joe comes in and works like any member or staff. We could not have built the wonderful relationship with the VA without Joe's understanding and support of the ICCD Clubhouse model.

Clyde Kobayashi
Vincent House Member



Clyde is our second Clubhouse member-Board member. He took advocacy to a higher level. He was outspoken in his advocacy for Vincent House and Clubhouses throughout the state. He enjoys participating in our Vincent House Showcases.




Chris Cronin
Department of Psychology,
Chair, St. Leo's University.

Chris Cronin is a psychologist and professor from St. Leo University. Prior to becoming a Board member he toured Vincent House and was impressed that it was not business as usual. The fact that Vincent House concentrates on what members can do and not what they cannot do was a message he wanted to get across to his students. As a result, Vincent House provided practical experience for ten St. Leo grad students.

Louis Ladson
Pharmacist



Board member Joe Connelly brought Louie into Vincent House as a result of their past in the military. Louie had lunch with members and staff, sat through a unit meeting and toured Vincent House. I will never forget the day he "saluted" me in the parking lot praising the work we are doing. Louie is a pharmacist and has provided a lot of support to Vincent House.



Alina Gonzalez-Mayo
Psychiatrist

Dr. Gonzalez-Mayo is an extremely busy psychiatrist. She has referred many members to Vincent House and she is very well respected by her patients. They are proud to have her on our Board of Directors and I am sure she is proud to have her patients as members.

- Interested in making a difference?**
Vincent House is seeking contributions:
- Color Laser Printer
 - Upgraded Camcorder & Microphone
 - Copy Paper
 - Heavy Duty Gas Grill
 - Commercial Walk-in Cooler
 - Networking with area businesses to establish part-time jobs for our members
 - Commercial Dishwasher

Join a Vincent House SHOWCASE and experience the possibilities!

A Vincent House Showcase 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.

Tuesday, Sept. 9 @ 5-6 pm
 Wednesday, Sept. 24 @ 10-11 am
 Tuesday, Oct. 14 @ 5-6 pm
 Wednesday, Oct. 22 @ 10-11 am

Please RSVP: 727-541-0399
Ask for Elliott, Dianne
or Fran



TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pamela Adams | Suncoast Center |
| Susan Alvey | Tri-Glo/Raytheon |
| Dimitri Byelov | Liberty Lanes |
| Adam Franz | SeashellBooks.com |
| Stephanie Freskos | SeashellBooks.com |
| Stephen Gregosky III | Suncoast Center |
| Larry Haines | Suncoast Center |
| Brian Howe | Liberty Lanes |
| Alex Houser | SeashellBooks.com |
| Carol Jackson | Galleria Plumbing |
| Gayle Marchiniak | Senior Services |
| Brittaney Spaulding | Liberty Lanes |
| Ed Wohlford | Tri-Glo/Raytheon |

Supported & Independent Employment

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Michael Ballenger | Irrigation Specialist |
| William Champion | Recovery Specialist |
| Debbie Cibik | Driver |
| Jennifer Dickey | House Cleaning |
| Tess Daniels | Housekeeping |
| Eddie Gares | Recovery Coach |
| Dennis Hill | Theater Usher |
| Gary Hinkson | Floor Maintenance |
| Brian Howe | Prep Technician |
| Bonnie Lawniczak | Machine Operator |
| Brian Lutz | Food Preparation |
| Alvis Mills | Recovery Coach |
| John Markle | Lawn Maintenance |
| Ralph Morphew | Food Service |
| Philip Noonan | Maintenance |
| Angela Parker | Transportation |
| Michael Ralston | Transportation |
| David Reed | Transcriptionist |
| Shannon Riley | Recovery Coach |
| Ron Ritchie | Transportation |
| Chris Schaer | Telemarketer |
| Justin Shea | Recreation Leader |
| Joe Stabile | Floor Maintenance |
| Jason Sulimay | Receptionist |
| Terry Taggart | Pet Groomer |
| Judy Wilson | Transportation |

Continuing Education in 2008

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Latoya Johnson | Shawna Rylander |
| Bob Krehbiel | Steve Scofield |
| Franklin La Torre | Justin Shea |
| Gayle Marchiniak | Jason Sulimay |
| Aloysia McPherson | Jeff Suzanne |

"Having great training and fantastic Vincent House placement managers has helped make my transition to Liberty Lanes successful." -Brittaney Spaulding

Van Gogh's Palette, Inc.
 4801 78th Avenue
 Pinellas Park, FL 33781
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September 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Labor Day Picnic at Seminole Lake Park <i>Lee McCarthy</i> <i>Jeffery Taylor</i>	Tofu Vegetable Stir Fry Over Rice	Bob's Meatloaf Manhattan <i>Doris Conway</i> Employment Dinner Spinach Lasagna	Healthy Chicken Nuggets with Fruit Cup & Yogurt <i>Christian Sever</i>	Chef's Surprise <i>Anthony Patten</i> <i>Kim Riggs</i>	International Mall
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<i>Michel Patry</i> <i>Charles Zamora</i>	Erin's Sweet & Sour Chicken with Rice	Grilled Cheese with Minestrone Soup	Baked Fish with Red Potatoes	Reena's Scalloped Potatoes & Ham with Broccoli <i>Rand Pierce</i>	Chef's Surprise Pizza & Movie "Enchanted"	Tampa Museum of Art
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Tuna Casserole <i>Ruben Martinez</i> <i>Michael Parker</i>	Boca Burgers <i>Libby Cooper</i>	Jennifer's Veggie Chili <i>William Friary</i> Employment Dinner Shrimp Fried Rice & Egg Drop Soup	Leilani's Ham Alfredo with Vegetables <i>Kenneth Moore</i>	Chef's Surprise	Laser Tag
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
<i>Lester Milner</i>	Turkey w/ Twice Baked Sweet Potatoes <i>Milen Karpuzi</i>	Black Beans & Rice	Baked Chicken <i>Steve Scofield</i>	Taco Salad	Chef's Surprise <i>Roger Lamb</i> <i>Thomas Parish</i>	Project Homeless Connect <i>Franklin La Torre Sr.</i> <i>Jalene Moser</i>
28	29	30				
<i>Heidi Rippen</i>	Baked Potatoes with "The Works" <i>Eva Mangino</i>	Egg Plant Parmesan <i>Kathy Kohler</i>				

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