

alliance house

Clubhouse Chronicle

January 2006

LOCAL EDITION

Volume 9, Issue 1

A long-standing partner with Valley Mental Health and United Way, a non-profit agency



Alliance House Celebrates the Holidays

by Duncan McDonald
& Tracy Park

On Thursday December 22nd we had 61 members come to the Christmas party at Alliance House from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The members and staff had a lot of different foods and drinks, and played games. A past Alliance House member's family donated all the food. Entertainment included the Goodwill Band performing here for the third year in a row. We appreciated them coming and sharing their talents with Alliance House. They told us "It's not

Christmas until we come to Alliance House".

The local bookstore King's English decided to adopt Alliance House as their Sub-for-Santa. Laurie Bryant, a Duncan McDonald's mother and an Alliance House volunteer, presented gifts. In appreciation for their year-round service to Alliance House, Barbara DeBore, who provides haircuts and Laurie Bryant, a volunteer in the education unit, were presented with gifts from staff, board members, and members of the clubhouse. The members received special gift bags from the Staff and Board members.

On Christmas Day from ten to one Sue Hanson and Carla Majerison shared their Christmas day with 19 members. We had some of the board members come and spend

part of the day with us. We were given presents and had a wonderful dinner of roast beef, ham, yams, potatoes, and pumpkin pie for desert. We had a wonderful Holiday season. We'd like to thank the families and board members that made it a wonderful Christmas day.

Clubhouse Insider

by Duncan Macdonald
& Sue Hanson

On Thursday, Jan. 12th, we had an Action Plan meeting to prepare Jeremy Christensen, Carla Majerison, and Gay Warner for their two-week training in Worcester, Massachusetts. We had a number of good ideas, including improvement of our Youth Program and Orientations, increasing involvement in Administration, improving our Wellness Program, increasing our Board involvement, and improving our tours. The house wants to find ways to increase meaningful participation by making it more fun.

We have two new staff member to our clubhouse. We would like to welcome Brooke Baltazar and Amber Weber to Alliance House.

Brooke Baltazar (working in Business Unit at age 23) grew up in Morgan, Utah. She then moved to Saint George where she got an

Clubhouse Chronicle

Alliance House is a member of the International Center for Clubhouse Development...

...a global network creating opportunities for people living with mental illness to be respected members of society.

Alliance House provides...

...A guaranteed right to a place to come. A guaranteed right to meaningful relationships. A guaranteed right to meaningful work. A guaranteed right to a place to return.

Contributors: Lance Baum, Sue Hanson, Duncan Macdonald, Rob Peden Carla Majerison, Betsy Ogden, Jeremy Christensen, and Tracy Park

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Did you know that the total attendance hours for Alliance House in the month of December was 3,017 hours.

Employment Spotlight

by Lance Baum

The employment Spotlight this month is on John Barnhurst. John currently is working independently for Squatters Restaurant at the airport. He started this job as a Transitional Employment Placement in September of 2004. The job turned permanent in June.

His assignments include: unloading and loading trucks, taking out trash, and bringing food from the storeroom to the restaurant. But much of his time is spent washing dishes. He likes all tasks equally. Some of his favorite co-workers are James, Dave, and Darlene. John currently works twenty hours a week, four hours a day.

Some interesting things about John are that his favorite color is red and he likes cats because they are easier to take care of than other pets. His favorite type of food is pizza and his favorite movie is Star Wars. This concludes the Enlightening Employment Spotlight on John Barnhurst and his Independent Employment at Squatters.

Advocacy Update

by Duncan Macdonald & Carla Marjerison

The Medicare Prescription Program, Part D, has proven to be a difficult transition. Some members have successfully made the change. We are concerned by the feedback

we are receiving. Members have been struggling to contact specific people to find out which plan they have been assigned to, or if they have been signed up, and whether their pharmacies can coordinate with other plans. Members should be assured that there is still help available and that you still have time. If you are on Medicaid, you have been enrolled automatically and can change plans if you like. If you're on Medicare, you have until mid-May to enroll without penalty.

On Friday, January 6th, a group of us went to the Medicaid Coalition Meeting. (The group consisted Carla Marjerison, Duncan Macdonald, Tracy Park and Miriam Hyde). The Coalition priorities for the 2006 Legislative Session include Medicaid costs, dental and vision coverage, Physician Reimbursement, and mental health funding (for the uninsured). The Advocacy Committee has decided to go to the monthly meetings.

On Thursday Jan. 12th, Senator Karen Hale visited Alliance House. We talked about our state budget.

Members shared their concerns about Medicare Part



D and mental health funding. Senator Hale said she would get some contact information and talk to some colleagues about getting more funding for potential members who aren't on Medicaid.

Advocacy Meetings are Tuesdays at 2:00 p.m.

Be sure to sign up in the coming weeks for Citizen's Day on Feb. 17th.

Unit Updates

By Betsy Ogden

Business Unit

We'd like to welcome Bryan Paxton, Olivia Jorgensen, Yvonne Ruby Kip and Hy Chau to the Business Unit. We hope they will enjoy helping out our busy unit.

Welcome Lance Baum to the 1805 apartments. We hope he enjoys living there.

We are so excited to welcome Brooke Baltazar, our newest staff member. We hope she enjoys being part of the team.

We are making sure everyone in the unit reach out book has a picture by his or her name. We are also standardizing sheets for the master reach-out book, making reach-out cards, working on statistics, and a lot of other unit work.

We are engaging many members in the unit, and hope to see more members here soon.

Career Development

Welcome Wendy Collins who enjoys working in the career development unit, Carlos Aruoya Delapena who is working towards his high school diploma, Linda Christensen who is also working toward her high school diploma, and Daniel Reagan who wants to be a tutor, Sherry Buck who is working toward her high school diploma, and Christopher Doenges

who wants to go back to college and help tutor with computers.

We have a new staff member in our unit. We would like to welcome Amber Weber as our new Employment Coordinator. She has taken Michele Gauthier's place. Michele has moved to Las Vegas Nevada to follow her dreams and try a new experience. We gave Michele a rousing send-off. There was humorous Karaoke, some serious moments, and a delicious cake. We will miss her a lot and appreciate all her help at Alliance House.

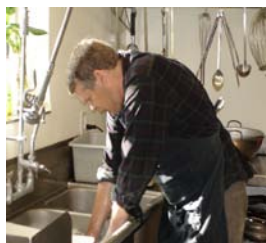
On January 4th, Betsy Ogden started her first T.E.P., which is a group placement at Nutty Guys. She says her first day was a blast. She loves packing candy and she's glad to be working again after six long waiting years.

Our thrift store now picks up donations from Name Droppers and Pibs Exchange. Wow, that's a lot of cool stuff. In December 2005, the thrift store raised \$209.53, and we hope to raise more in 2006.

Culinary Unit

We want to welcome back John Collins.

We've had many members helping in the kitchen including Scott Pyke,



Marty Martinez, Ryan Herron, Joy Maxwell and Austin Allen and others. We will always welcome more members who would like to help.

We had some pretty hectic holidays but we still had a lot of fun.

We want to welcome all our new members. We hope they feel welcome at Alliance House.

We have had a lot of help with a past member who volunteered her time this holiday season. Yes, we're talking about Peggy Sue Whipple. She has since gone back to college and we will miss her for the next four months. We cannot wait until she comes back to help out again.

Insider

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Associate of Science degree from Dixie State College. She got a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from Utah State University in Logan. She moved to Seattle and worked as a case manager for Highline West Seattle Mental Health. She decided to work in social work because she wanted to see a diversity of people. Her hobbies include snow skiing, playing the guitar, hiking, camping and watching movies. Brooke is the second oldest child in her family. She has an older sister in London, England and three younger brothers in Morgan, Utah.

Amber Weber (working as Employment Coordinator at age 25) was born in Soda Springs, Idaho. On May 5th, she will graduate from the University of Utah's College of Social Work with a bachelor's degree. She has worked in three other Valley Mental Health units (Child Behavior Therapy Unit, Adolescent Residential Treatment and Education Center, and Families In Rehab Staying Together). Amber decided to go into social work because she wanted to follow in her dad's footsteps and she has the personality for it. She has two

older sisters. Amber loves singing and playing the piano and the clarinet. She likes shopping for antiques, traveling, and playing volleyball. She's excited to be here.

We have been busy preparing for the Western Regional Conference in September at The Yarrow Hotel. We have a beautiful logo picked out and designed already along with an artistic poster. The Utah Clubhouse Network is hosting this conference in Park City, Utah on September 14th – 17th 2006.

Education Spotlight On Martin Martinez

By Carla Majerison

Martin Martinez or Marty to some, has been a member of Alliance House



for several months. Apparently, he came briefly at some point in the past, but this time around he has stuck here and become an extremely valuable member of our community.

One of the reasons Marty wanted to come to Alliance House was to work towards his high school diploma. Marty remembers a lot of his teenage school days (when he wasn't necessarily "in" school). He says it felt like the class and the teachers were always trying to rush everything and didn't have the time to sit down and actually explain concepts to him. Every time he would start to catch up on assignment #1, the class would be

moving on to assignment #3, and he would constantly feel behind with no way to catch up. Marty would wake up each day and think, "Should I go to school today? Should I slough school today? Oh, I'll just go do something else." Eventually Marty was kicked out of school and he never returned, feeling that he was too old to be in classes with some of the younger kids.

At Alliance House, Marty has put those memories in the past and has been focusing on his math, spelling and reading skills with the help of several different tutors. He has dreams of having a career in business, perhaps involved with selling a product or real estate, so he could make what he calls "Donald Duck money".

Marty has been working in several different areas of Alliance House besides the Education Program within the Career Development Unit. He works in the Culinary Unit most days helping Scott with dishes, has put all of our stools together and has taken on several computer tasks in the Business Unit. Marty says that he likes the fact that he feels productive and challenged at Alliance House.

In case some people aren't aware, Marty is a talented artist and can often be found drawing an intricate rose pattern. He also has some interesting stories of brushes with fame: he has met Chuck Norris, Jean Claude van Dame, Sylvester Stallone (in his pre-Rocky days) and Arnold Schwarzenegger (in his pre-Governor days). One of Marty's dreams for his future is to see the ocean, preferably in California. He talks almost poetically of learning the feel of sand and the smell of the ocean.

We are lucky to have Marty's caring spirit at Alliance House and can't wait to see him receive his diploma!

Jeremy's Soundbyte

Jeremy Christensen
Executive Director



Welcome 2006! What a great chance to kick off with new hopes, goals and dreams. Alliance House has really weathered some recent change. January of 2006 brings two new staff, five new board members, new members (ages 18-23) in collaboration with Valley Mental Health's youth transition program, increased dual diagnosis members, and, as always, lots of fun!

At the beginning of a new year, it is traditional to set goals, renew old commitments, and move forward with a clean slate. Looking forward for Alliance House, I see great potential with so many new people contributing to our success. Individual realms of talent, strength, responsibility, and desire add to the collective progress of Alliance House. We have seen so many members in the last year start and finish school, obtain meaningful employment, and grasp at life with renewed hope. With our additions and continued individual contributions, 2006 will see similar and increasing success.

An exciting result of member success in school and work is that they move on, increase their community involvement and contributions and ultimately reduce their contact with the Clubhouse. It

is bittersweet, but I believe much more sweet than bitter, when a member is seen less around the clubhouse due to success in education, occupation, and quality of life. They leave a void in the clubhouse that is, in fact, a wonderful opportunity for a new member to step in, gain similar experience, and ultimately more success. This is the beauty of clubhouse, a place to hope, learn, grow, and succeed, and during times of difficulty or reminiscing ... a place to return.

Development Update

By Rob Peden

Fundraising is vital to any nonprofit enterprise and a large part of Alliance House's success results from the excellent response to our fundraising effort. Karen Wildfoerster, our Development Director, attributes a large part of this success to our members and board. "An overwhelming number of our contributions come from people or companies that have a personal contact with someone associated with Alliance House," she says. "Donors seem to be inspired by the motivation of members or board members they know personally."

Despite a much smaller mailing, the return on this year's Christmas Letter shows an increase of 33% over last year's. For the 2005 Letter, we elected to focus on donors who have contributed over the past five years. The number of donors remained almost the same, but the amounts donated tended to be substantially higher and the number of responses, as a percentage of the letters mailed, more than doubled. The 2005 Letter featured quotations from John Barnhurst, Mindi Bradford, Alliance House

Elizabeth Knutson, Tracy Park, and Gay Warner describing how Alliance House has changed their lives for the better. Karen says, "I'm certain that it's these stories that inspired the donors. People are far more interested in helping people than they are in helping organizations. The genuineness and quality of our members stories are critical for our Christmas Letter."

The Christmas Letter – along with Queen of Hearts, grants, and corporate sponsorship of events – is one of the four major focuses of our yearly fundraising effort. In contrast to the others, it also stimulates the interest of the public at large, with a much wider audience than sponsorship, grants, and bridge tournaments.



January Birthdays

- 1 Debi Coats
- 4 Arthur Jed Hart
- 7 H. Jasmen Tahmassian
- 9 Trista Struhs
- 10 Stephen Mitcheltree
- 10 Alliance House
- 14 Samara Russo Harbold
- 14 Sue Hanson
- 20 Joni Sloan
- 21 Catherine Pond
- 23 Tracy Bankhead
- 24 Chris A. Callister
- 29 Linda Peterson
- 29 Robyn Volking

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