

alliance house

Clubhouse Chronicle

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LOCAL EDITION

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

Alliance House Reaches Out to the Community

By Brooke Baltazar and
Tarra Perea

Alliance House has been busy the last few months reaching out to the community and spreading the message of Clubhouse. Many of the members have been busy using their voice to express their feelings concerning Medicaid, Clubhouse, and many other aspects of life.

In February, we had the opportunity to have Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officers at Alliance House for lunch. Members lead them in a discussion on ways people with mental illness would like to be treated in crises. Linda Peterson said "I'm glad they were here to learn about mental illness so they can help." These officers will be called to the scene when someone who has a mental illness is in crisis and in need of their services. They travel around the community becoming educated by the people they could someday help. Alliance

Did you know?

Did you know that in February we had over 140 hours of volunteer hours in our clubhouse?



CIT officers at Alliance House for lunch.

House members gave them excellent feedback. The CIT officers stated that coming to Alliance House and getting feedback from its members has been very helpful to them.

Jeremy Christensen, our director, along with many members have been busy doing presentations to people in Valley Mental Health. Some places they've gone to include Forensics, South Valley, Alcohol and Drug, and Case Management. We have interested people from all of these units and have invited them to join us for lunch to get a better picture of what Clubhouse is all about.

We have had many people from North Valley, Forensics, The Road Home, Saint Vincent's and Fourth Street Clinic show interest and have

brought many people into tour the clubhouse. These efforts have helped increased orientations, as well as membership retention. People's reaction to Alliance House has been very positive and they have expressed interest in what clubhouse can offer. Eleisha Hewes stated "People seem very interested in Clubhouse. They listened to what people say about Alliance House."

Jeremy Christensen, Mary Krmyzan, and Gordon Butler represented Alliance House in front of a committee of members for the State Division of Mental Health. Jeremy indicates that the state has continued to cut funding for human services but we have strong people on our side. Also, there are supportive people for the services that are going on. Mary says that she was nervous at first speaking up

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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.

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but felt that they were nice and open-minded to what the members of Alliance House had to say about the recovery model. Gordon stated that the State Division of Mental Health committee included people from all disciplines. There were parents, community leaders, psychiatrists, police officers, and the Director of the State Hospital on the committee.

Gordon told the committee about his story and how coming to the clubhouse has helped him in his life. Gordon stated "People were very nice to us".

Another community resource we have reached out to is the University of Utah Social Work professors. We are waiting to hear back from them but we would like to spread the good word of Clubhouse to those who may not even know it exists. Also, three students from the University are coming from a writing class and are going to help create a post secondary resource. It will help students decide where to go to college and how they can best choose their program.

These efforts have paid off! We have had so many tours, so many new members attend orientation and stay to enjoy what clubhouse can offer them. Alliance House is alive and growing with opportunities to spread the joy that work can offer people. We are continuing these efforts and are thinking of new creative ways to get our name known in the community.

Unit Report

By Betsy Ogden

Business Unit

Welcome to the Business Unit Eleisha Hewes who has help a lot with computer work, Brian Jenson

who has picked up quickly on the billing, and Tarra Perea helps with our general accounting and many other projects.

Our new computer training is going well. We have learned about opening and closing documents, saving and deleting documents, excel spreadsheet, and how to write a resume. Pete, a volunteer at Alliance House, is really good at teaching this workshop. Kathy Handy says " I think we have a competent thinking teacher. He really takes the time to help us." Betsy Ogden says " I love learning, so I have chosen to help others learn about computers too. At the same time I will be reviewing what have learned in the past."

Collette Soffe is our temporary staff. Collette was born in Utah on Nov. 14th 1981. She went to USU to get her Bachelors Degree in Business. She found out about the temporary position from her friend Brooke who also works in the Business Unit.

Collette says she really enjoys it so far. She is so glad to be a part of Alliance House. "Everyone is kind and helpful. This has been a great experience for me."

Career Development Unit

The Career Development Unit welcomes Shelly Rae Frantz. Shelly is working on her high school diploma. She has also worked in the thrift store, the kitchen, and has been doing lots of reach out calls. We would also like to welcome Sariah Reams as well. Sariah likes to help do the phones at the reception desk.

Dennis Boucher started a T. E. at Valley Mental Health March 1, 2006. He loves it and has been doing really well.

The Book Club has started up again. We meet every two weeks on Thursday at 4:00 p.m. We have started the book The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.

We have started graduation planning meetings on Mondays at 2 p.m. We are still in the process of coming up with a great theme idea. We have many members graduating this year and are very proud of all their hard work.

Culinary Unit

We want to welcome Jeffery Call to the Culinary Unit. He has been helping with pricing in the snack bar and has also organized many things. We have had a lot of help from Brian Jenson, a new member, as well.

We have put together a new white board for our unit. It was a lot of work to assemble so we want to thank all those who helped us.

We have also added a cork board to display everyone's food handler's permits.

Education Spotlight

By Mary Krmzyan

Kathy Handy is a member at Alliance House; she has been a member for about three weeks. She is a part of the Career Development Unit. She is working on her high school diploma at this time. Kathy states that Alliance House helps structure her days and she is learning a lot in her schooling while she has attended Alliance House. Kathy also states that Alliance House has kept her up and going; she looks forward to the days to come.



Members from Alliance House speak out at the Capital.

Kathy's short-term goals are to obtain a high school diploma, make friends, and learn how to develop work skills. Her long-term goals are to have her high school diploma help utilize her future as well as keep meaningful relationships with others at Alliance House.

She expects in the future that she will develop more computer skills and help others at Alliance House utilize community resources. Kathy feels that with Alliance House she can grow as a person and help her develop friendships she's never had before.

Advocacy Update

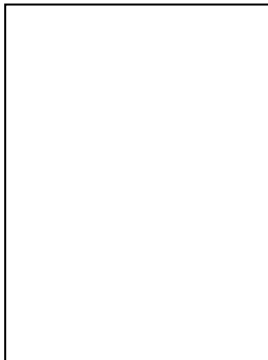
By Duncan Macdonald and
Carla Marjerison

Alliance House's Advocacy Committee has been very active at the Capitol over the last several weeks. A few of our members have even shown up on the TV news and in the Tribune! On February 14, a group went to a press conference related to funding for health and human service issues. Miriam Hyde, one of our members, spoke about dental coverage within

Medicaid. Channels 5 and 13 not only broadcast a part of Miriam's speech, but also panned the audience where members were present, showing their support. On February 28, a large group went to an emergency press conference because dental and vision coverage were still not on the proposed budget. Cheryl Law spoke on Channel 5 news about Medicaid, as well as Mental Health funding. On March 6, Betsy Ogden was on Channel 5 News. Because dental and vision benefits were not approved, Betsy was giving her reaction as a consumer and a member of AHAC (Anti-Hunger Action Committee). They were recording from Crossroads Urban Center.

In our Advocacy Committee meeting, we have started discussing the possibility of educating university and college students and faculty about clubhouse and mental illness. Amber Weber is working on a connection with the University of Utah through her advisor in her Social Work Program. We will also be looking into going to high schools and junior high schools in the future.

Members of the Medicaid Coalition are now brainstorming how to



respond to the lack of dental and vision coverage in this year's budget. Judi Hillman from

Voices for Utah Children has informed us that there may be a special budget proposed to the Governor in May that would include limited coverage. The Coalition is considering holding a retreat at the end of March to coordinate advocacy efforts towards this budget.

We are always looking for more members in our committee. We meet weekly on Tuesdays at 2:00 p.m.

Employment Spotlight

By Stacie Schofield

Ryan Herron has been a member of Alliance House since 1989.

Always armed with a smile and a helping hand, you can find him here usually in the afternoons. His hobby of making pens and pencils is one of the few that he has. He also enjoys eating peanut butter and listening to country music. Ryan started his Transitional Employment (TE) job with Squatters in November and will be ending his TE in May.

He really enjoys the people he works with, the physical activity, staying busy and the lunch perks.

Ryan has stated that the construction going on at Squatters right now has interrupted his daily

tasks. But he still is able to keep his cool and get the job done. He looks forward to a newer remodeled Squatters very soon. He would like more hours but is fine with what he has now.

Some of his tasks include: cleaning chairs, dusting, wiping down the tables and bar.

He mainly sees himself as the odd job guy. If there is an odd job you can count on Ryan to get it done.

He enjoys having three different managers. He states that all the managers are cool and he gets along quite well with all of them.

Sue Hanson, his placement manager, states that, "Ryan is incredibly dedicated to his job, and has great reviews from all of the managers at Squatters".

Clubhouse Insider

By Duncan Macdonald and Sue Hanson

Wow!! The clubhouse is really taking action with the plan.

One of our goals is to increase new membership retention. Last month we had a group of ten new members and we continue to see eight of them extremely active in our units.

Jeremy and many members have hit the pavement and have presented a great PowerPoint presentation on Alliance House. We really feel this has increased the awareness of Alliance House and more referrals have been made. We also have had many opportunities to present to other agencies in the community to educate them on the clubhouse model.

Duncan Macdonald has worn out his shoes giving so many tours at Alliance House the past month. We're trying to train more members to do tours. We also are inviting therapists from the outpatient unit for "Lunch On Us". They get a great tour of the club and then mingle with members about how clubhouse has changed their life.

At our summer retreat we talked about being more involved in our community and giving back. In lieu of that idea we are going to do "Adopt A Highway". We have picked a section of the highway in Parley's Canyon and will pick up trash in a 2-mile radius. This will give Alliance House great public recognition by getting a big billboard with our name on it. The members look forward to working on this project with our board, members, and staff.

Alliance House is getting members and staff in shape to participate in the 4th Annual Walk for Suicide Prevention. It is a 5K Walk on Saturday, April 22, 2006. This is an excellent way for us to show support to the Mental Health Association of Utah. We are looking for sponsors. If you are interested, please see Sue Hanson.

The posters for Western Regional were sent out and everyone enjoyed them. Interact Club has sent out a request for Agenda Suggestions for Plenaries, Workshops, and Roundtable Discussions.

Standard of the Month

By Amber Weber

Since there are so many wonderful standards for consideration, I found it difficult to choose just one to focus on this month. My inspiration came from a recent

Catch The Vision meeting in which the house discussed Standard #15. Standard #15 reads: “The work-ordered day engages members and staff together, side-by-side, in the running of the clubhouse. The clubhouse focuses on strengths, talents and abilities; therefore, the work-ordered day must not include medication clinics, day treatment or therapy programs within the clubhouse.



To break this standard down, we must consider why it is important to the clubhouse community for staff and members to work side by side. Member Chris Smith offers this insight, “you really learn better that way, you get to know one another and establish relationships. Members don’t know where they would be without staff.” Brook, one of the newer staff members, believes “each individual has certain talents. When we are working side by side we can share talents with one another. It’s impossible to do the work without members.”

To further appreciate this standard we must consider why there is and should be a separation between medication clinics and clubhouse. Sue Hanson, Assistant Director, believes that “the clubhouse is a place of business and work. It is a place to replicate the real work world. There has to be a separation between the clinical setting and the work setting.” Along the same lines are mirrored thoughts by member Duncan Macdonald who

feels “clubhouse model relies more on the work of the day. We don’t have time to focus on the methods of therapy.”

A final consideration for Standard #15 is why we focus on strengths, talents, and abilities of members and staff. New member Eleisha had this to offer, “it gives people pride in themselves and what they do in their day.” Staff member Carla Majerison felt that “the alternative doesn’t encourage development of confidence.”

The idea of focusing on strengths, talents, and abilities definitely stands out to me the most in this standard. Every member and staff has unique talents to offer to Alliance House. Without the strength and teamwork of everyone everyday, we are unable to thrive as a positive work environment. Personally, I have learned so much from the members in the short time I have been working at Alliance House. It’s apparent that every dedicated individual here takes pride in his or her work and a sense of unity then becomes a constant throughout the work ordered day. Standard #15 is fast becoming my favorite because of its positive nature. It aids the individual in recovery.

Jeremy’s Sound Byte

By Jeremy Christensen
Executive Director

A great month! Everyone seemed to embrace our action plan. Each unit is well on their way on each plan



step, and we have been seeing results:

1. Orientation has been double the norm for the past two months with over 50% retention. Our new members are full of energy and excitement, and have added a great deal to the clubhouse.
2. We are presenting all over the valley and having clinicians, case managers, potential members and family in for tours and “Lunch on Us” on a regular basis.
3. The board has gotten together, filled out surveys, set up a retreat and started firming up committees.
4. Our annual Queen of Hearts fundraiser, has kicked off and looking great so far.
5. Reach out efforts have creatively increased, afternoons are busier. The Culinary Unit has started organizing unit meetings and seeing increased participation ... which all equals a whole bunch of progress and meaningful experiences for Alliance House members!

I continue to be impressed with the dedication of the staff and members in the work-ordered day. People are passionately embracing learning new skills work, education, participating in advocacy and making a difference.

During the recent legislative session Alliance House members have been on television four different times and in the newspaper, concerning different issues. It was a tough year budget-wise for Human Services in Utah, but members really showed up with a voice at the capitol and it was noticed and felt.

I don’t think my job satisfaction has ever been this high, it has been a honor and privilege to be part of Alliance House and am eager to see the future that we create together!

March Birthdays



3 rd	Christy Tonks
17 th	Sariah Reams
22 nd	Laura Anderson
25 th	Olivia Jorgenson
26 th	John Copley
27 th	Eleisha Hewes
29 th	Connie Jenson
31 st	Brooke Baltazar

**Thank You
to all our new
members for
contributing so
much to
Alliance House.
We appreciate**

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