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A non-profit agency in partner with Valley Mental Health and United Way

## 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
- meaningful relationships
- meaningful work
- a place to return

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A partner with Valley Mental Health

**FIRST ANNUAL MILESTONES BREAKFAST A SUCCESS**

**By Eleisha Hewes**

When speaking of milestones I visualize a rather long road with celebratory points in the mist. Then I visualize a group of over 300 people gathering together uniting for a purposeful reason. This reasoning is vague to the attendees when they first walk through the doors, they were under the impression they were participating in a fundraiser for an everyday non-profit. Little did they know that the true magic of what we do here in the clubhouse as well as who we are as members, staff, and board members would shine through and touch them, leaving a lasting impression never to be forgotten.

Interesting visualization you say; well this happened for the many members, staff and board members here at Alliance House. We at Alliance House were able to carry out the almost perfect breakfast. There was a wide range of emotion reached within a one-hour period. One moment Jan Nelson was welcoming in the group with a brief description of how Alliance House came to be. The feeling of warmth was felt around the room. Jeremy Christensen followed Jan with a magnificently captivating speech about his time at Alliance House. He spoke of what he has seen here through the members. Members who he used to work with in therapy who had never looked at him in the eyes who now not only look him in the eyes but carry on conversations with him about their futures and are currently in school. The highlight of the morning was a gripping speech from our own Shirley Pedler. Shirley, with

great strength, stood in front of 300 people and told, not only her story, but also the story of those who suffer from mental illness. Shirley was able to bring many of 300 people to tears, not because they felt sorry for her, but because they truly could see how difficult it is to reach certain milestones when dealing with mental illness. Ken Verdoia was able to keep the crowd energized and excited, even though he was asking them for money. He spoke of not dealing with mental illness in silence anymore.

This extremely touching event was made possible by the great efforts of the wonderful and dedicated Alliance House members, staff, and board members. With a very special acknowledgment to Karen Wilfoerster for all of her great efforts and extended hours put into this event; without Karen we truly would have been lost. We also are truly grateful to all of those table captains who made the effort to find people to join them for this event. It is not always easy to ask others to join you for a fundraiser. We cannot forget the 300 wonderful people who came into this not really knowing much about Alliance House. All of these great people put time aside out of their busy days, to willingly be asked to donate money. We were honored by these magnificent people who joined us at this breakfast. They listened intently to Jan as she introduced the clubhouse, Jeremy as he spoke about his experience as a LCSW, Shirley as she spoke of being an Alliance House member, and Ken as he asked them to donate. Then when it was all over it was these gracious people who decided to become members of the Alliance House milestones giving path.

The term "milestones" can be interpreted differently depending on the person. I see it as a celebratory point in a person's life; the ability to truly shine. There are many milestones in life, especially when dealing with mental illness when you have to learn to celebrate every achievement no matter how seemingly small. Here at Alliance House

each of our members are able to achieve different milestones every-day through the realization of their true abilities and strengths. This would never be possible without generous people who not only give monetary gifts but also give their time to understand who we are and what we do.



**Did**

**you know...**

Alliance House has a new group TE at the University of Utah! Twelve members applied for this (that's the most interest we've had in a group TE so far!)

- 6 members were hired to clean
- 37 laundry rooms for
- \$7/hr at
- 4 hours per week
- Once a week for
- 9 months.

How about that for some stats?

We are very excited about this group TE!!!

Congratulations and good luck to all those members that will be working this Transitional Employment!

**EDUCATION CORNER**

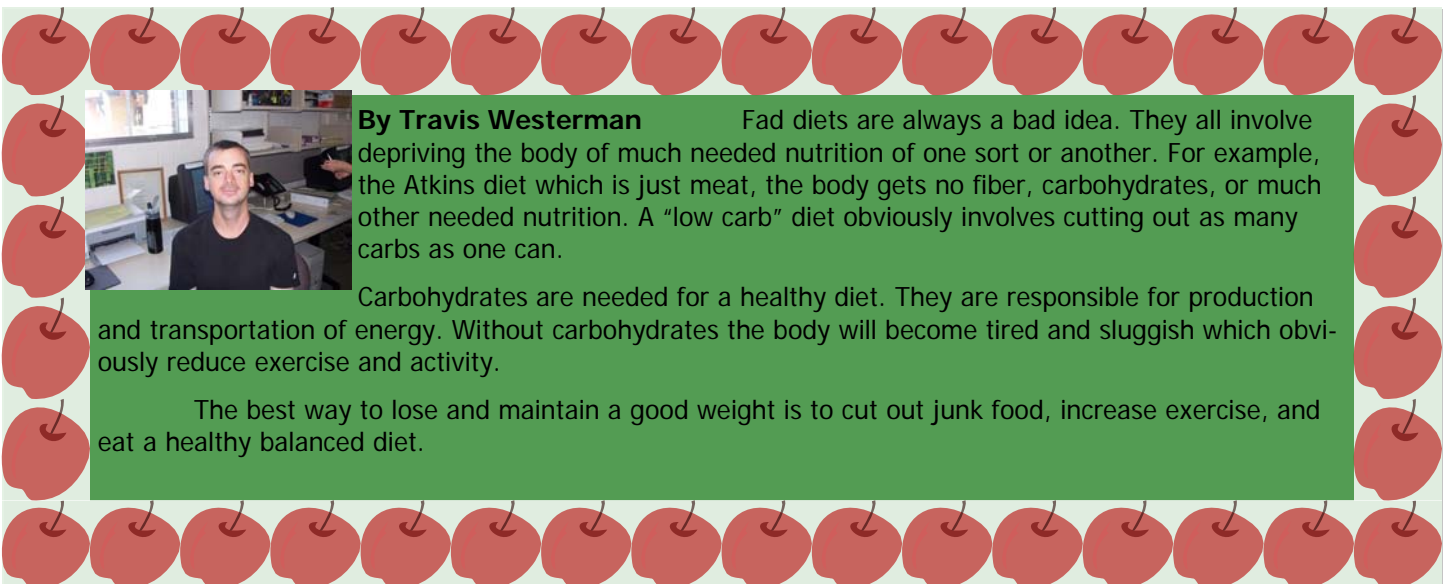
**By Kristen Sheehan and Carla Marjerison**

I'm sure you all know Kristin (aka "Help Me") who is one of our most reliable Culinary Unit members. She a huge Lakers fan, loves helping her friends and her Dad, and is a buff of the Lifetime Network – particularly the show Reba.

Kristin has been working on increasing her reading skills; she gets help from lots of different people around Alliance House. She shares that school was hard for her, particularly because all of her friends were in different classes; she was in Special Education. Now things have changed! In Kristin's words, "I have fun reading and writing now at Alliance House. It

makes me feel better. I like working with Dennis (Card). He's a nice guy. He doesn't make fun of me; he doesn't judge me. He helps me a lot. He makes me want to read." Although she sometimes feels frustrated, she has found that if she just takes two minutes, she always feels better and ready to get back at it.

Kristin is always ready every morning with a friendly smile, a "hi" (or in my case a "Carla-dooooo!"), and even a hug; she gets so many of our days started positively. In closing she would like to say thanks to "Mr. B" for helping her in the kitchen; "he's really nice".



**By Travis Westerman**

Fad diets are always a bad idea. They all involve depriving the body of much needed nutrition of one sort or another. For example, the Atkins diet which is just meat, the body gets no fiber, carbohydrates, or much other needed nutrition. A "low carb" diet obviously involves cutting out as many carbs as one can.

Carbohydrates are needed for a healthy diet. They are responsible for production and transportation of energy. Without carbohydrates the body will become tired and sluggish which obviously reduce exercise and activity.

The best way to lose and maintain a good weight is to cut out junk food, increase exercise, and eat a healthy balanced diet.

**EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHT: DEBBIE GARCIA**



**By Cynthia Wood** For this month's Employment Spotlight we welcome Debbie Garcia who is in the Career Development Unit.

Debbie is a native of San Diego California and has family there. She has one daughter, who has a Master's Degree, and one sister. At the present time Debbie is residing at Valley Villa. Debbie comments, "Living at Valley Villa is a great thing."

At press time, Debbie is keeping busy by pursuing two jobs through Alliance House; not to mention these jobs have helped her grow and progress. In effect, Debbie comments, "I enjoy my work tremendously." Both jobs are Supported Employment, which simply means Debbie has been hired on a permanent-basis; although, she does still get social support from Alliance House.

One job Debbie is now pursuing is located at Horizonte and Debbie stated, "I'm very thankful for this position." The reason Debbie is so enthusiastic about this job is because one of her responsibilities includes helping students (whose ethnic backgrounds are diversified) obtain their high school transcripts from schools from all over the country either by mail or by fax. Anyhow, Debbie holds a clerical position as an office clerk Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Some of her other responsibilities consist of transferring school transcripts to other schools in the same district.

C.T.P. (Community Treatment Program) is Debbie's 2<sup>nd</sup> job where she holds a position as a Peer Counselor. Her job description consists of assisting clients in making adjustments while transitioning into the community. For example, teaching and demonstrating independent living skills and social skills. And, of course, the paycheck is just icing on the cake. When asked what benefits this job brings Debbie replied, "I like being an example for others. Making a difference in another person's life is a wonderful feeling."

Finally, Debbie comments, Alliance House has helped her help herself by turning her life around, i.e. getting on the straight and narrow path. In the past Debbie never had any faith in herself, and now she has gained confidence in herself. As a result, she's dedicating her life to going the extra mile by giving back what she has gained. Her highest hope is to reach out and connect to others less fortunate. She hopes to empower and enrich others by inspiring them to gain self-confidence, dignity, character, integrity, and respect.

Debbie already has made a world of difference. She has clearly demonstrated faith begins with one's self. The world needs more people like her. Best wishes to you Debbie and keep ROCKING!!!



**To those celebrating Birthdays in November...**

- 2nd Mike Madsen
- 3rd Katherine Meals
- 6th Bob Davis and Christine (Big Moma) Jett
- 9th Joe Lindsey
- 10th Gary Adkins and Kristen Sheehan
- 11th Claudia Monroe
- 13th Steven Coult, Elisabeth Jensen, Shawn Moore, and Theresa Price
- 17th Jesse Shelton
- 19th Martin North and June Taylor
- 22nd Chase Bass
- 25th Kurt Ballinger
- 28th Tarra Perea
- 29th Sean Springer

**BUSINESS UNIT**



**By Betsy Maxwell** Big Mama has been a member of Alliance House for 5 Years. She has five kids and 13 grandkids. Big Mama grew up in Rochester, N.Y. She says the Business Unit helps by teaching her skills she didn't know before. It helps her with math skills, learning computers by doing computer work and most importantly is learning to work with others. One more thing, she loves to make cards for members on the computer. Big Mama's Birthday was Nov 6th.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT UNIT

**By Rob Peden and Amber Weber** It's getting close to that time of year when we have our resplendent Employer's Dinner. This year's theme is a quote from Ayn Rand "The question is not who is going to let me, it's who is going to stop me." Much preparation and thought has gone into this year's dinner and much more will be required to pull it off as we are inviting many more guests. We will also be moving to the Depot at the Gateway to accommodate the additional guests. The date of this event is November 27, 2007; time is 6:00 p.m. We are excited to have many companies from the community participating in our dinner this year. If you are interested in volunteering to help with this event, please see the CD Unit

We want to welcome our new members to the CD Unit: Cathy Lindsay, Randy Kid, William Schnoor, Bonnie Wood, Derek Ainsworth, Gary Williams, Jesse Shelton and Bernice Martinez. We are excited to get to know you all and benefit from your skills and strengths. Cathy, William, Derek and Bernice are all interested in pursuing education goals.

We had a very successful monthly MEET (Member in Education and Employment Today). We were fortunate enough to hear from Jolene Emmett who is currently employed at Jones Waldo, and Eleisha Hewes who is attending SLCC studying Social Work. Both ladies shared with us their goals for future employment and education. We wish them luck in their endeavors.

Our second session of ETC (Employment Training Course) started October 30<sup>th</sup>. This is a unique course to train members in obtaining and maintaining jobs. This is a six week course that will cover job searching; resume and cover letters; hygiene and dress; ways to keep your job; applications; and interviewing. This course is taught every Tuesday and Thursday from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. If you are interested in employment, see Brooke, in the CD Unit, to benefit from this unique opportunity.

Congratulations to Kevan Pettit, Fern Potter-Reed, Andy Henderson, Albert Mathena, John Albretsen and Stacie Schofield for filling the first ever group TE (Transitional Employment) at the University of Utah Student Apartments.

## CULINARY UNIT



**By Kristen Sheehan, Tracy Allen, Travis Westerman, Jared Smith, and Lynn Sorensen**

It's about time you read this article. (Just kidding!) We want to talk about time in the Culinary Unit. Spencer comes in our unit a few times a month. He states, "I think the unit is great. I like it a lot." Kristin comes in the unit nearly every day. She reports, "I feel it's good for my education." Thanks to B who helps with the cooking. He's a nice guy." We appreciate Kristin and Spencer for whatever time they give us. Whenever you've got the time, we would enjoy having you with us.

We have been eating the spiffy vegetarian meals made on Wednesdays from Travis. Travis says, "If you have a knife, you can kill time." That's funny coming from a vegetarian. He says not from a "gothic vegetarian." You actually don't have to be affiliated with the Culinary Unit to help out. You just have to be part of Alliance House. If we see you once a day or once a month, we value your assistance.

Jared comes to the kitchen nearly every morning, "I like spending time in the kitchen, helping whoever

needs my help. I want to find a new source in my life, like making new friends. Time is for making healthy choices." John A. has been known as part of the Career Development Unit but has spent many an autumn day making tasty meals.

Tracy A. has spent time planning to make the unit more efficient. She helps organize afternoons into meal preparation. She's even made a sheet for people to sign-up for meal prep training. She took time out of her day to attend the Unit's Retreat where we are finding ways to improve our unit.

Here's a shout out to all of you who work in the kitchen. Some of you are Andy, AJ, Stacy S., Cheryl, Preston, Brandy, Austin, Tracy P., Scott (our man on fire), Alex O, & Alex P, Courtney, Jolene (the dish lady), Joe (muffin man), Duncan the waiter, Tigger, Debbie, Jeff, Mason, Diana, the Staffers (B & Lynn--they are good at telling us our food is delicious) and whoever we failed to mention thank-you for your donation of time.

Harvey Mackey (whoever he is) said, "Time is free, but it's priceless. You can't own it, but you can use it. You can't keep it, but you can spend it. Once you've lost it you can never get it back."

## JEREMY'S SOUNDBYTE



By Jeremy Christensen

So I will make sure to keep my Soundbyte shorter this month since I took up two pages in last month's newsletter. The last couple months and currently are the busiest times of year for Alliance House.

As part of our development and public relations efforts this past year we have had many people in for a tour of Alliance House that have never been in before. Their response has been universally positive. I can always tell a marked difference in people's opinion of Alliance House after they have been on a tour. Alliance House is a place that has to be experienced rather than explained. In speaking with many people who donated time, resources and money to Alliance House this year, I asked why it is that they gave. The majority of the larger donors expressed a personal connection to the members of Alliance House. They had met with the members, spent some time getting to know them, their struggles and the recovery that they experience through their efforts at Alliance House and in the community.

This is my experience as well and why I feel such a connection. Many days I ask myself if I gave more to Alliance House or did I receive more from Alliance House. The majority of the time, if not all the time I have to say I receive more. Alliance House is a place where the more you give, the more comes back. Members express this same equation. Members come here and find great support from their peers and then they feel a desire to return that same support to others and end up getting more back the more they try to support... funny how it always seems to work out that way.

## STANDARD OF THE MONTH: NUMBER EIGHT

By Pamela Ellington

Under International Standards for Clubhouse Programs #8: Clubhouse staff are sufficient to engage the membership, yet few enough to make carrying out their responsibilities impossible without member involvement. Friday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Amber Weber, Angela Jensen, and I went to XPEDEX to choose paper for invitations for the Employers' Dinner. We chose standard size 8 ½ by 11 metallic off-white to be printed in the Business Unit on the color printer. This outing is an excellent example of how staff elicits participation from members. Amber had a cool time showing off her 2007 new Dodge Cavalier.



## COX'S CORNER: TIME CONTINUED



By John Cox

We can use any one of three faces at a time A.M., P.M. or 24 hour faces.

I use the 24 hour clock because my day might start at 9 A.M. and run until 23:00 (that night). That's a 14 hour day or one-face of 12 hours plus 2 hours more=14 hours...or take 23-9=14 hrs. If your day

goes past 24 hours all you need to do is keep counting- so that 3 A.M. = 27:00.

Thank You, John Cox.



## November Activities

**1<sup>st</sup> - *HOT Basketball with B***

**No activity due to Halloween Dance yesterday.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> - *U of U bowling and pool***

**8<sup>th</sup> - *HOT Batting Cage with B AND Hollywood Connections*  
\$1.00**

**10<sup>th</sup> - *No Saturday Activity***

**15<sup>th</sup> - *HOT Meditation with Travis AND Heart & Soul with Hot Coco and Doughnuts***

**17<sup>th</sup> - *Holiday Boutique-Park City***

**22<sup>nd</sup> - *HOT- no activity***

**(*Thanksgiving*) AND Thanksgiving Dinner from 10 am to 2 pm!!!**

**24<sup>th</sup> - *No Saturday Activity—go shopping if you dare to brave the crowds...or can move after the yummy dinner we had.***

**29<sup>th</sup> - *HOT Yoga with Sue AND Christmas Cards with Dee***

***H.O.T. Activities are in Italics and are from 4pm to 5 pm every Thursday!***

## CLUBHOUSE INSIDER



**By Dunc Macdonald and Sue Hanson**

Need we say anything else about our Milestone Breakfast. See our lead story for details.

Wow! What a fabulous whole house retreat we had. All three units are going to be busy bees this year. Their main project is going to be getting the Training Base started back up in March 2008. The business unit will be conducting Culture Trainings and doing aggressive marketing towards getting clubhouses to come for our trainings. Our board president, Larry Goldsmith, talked about the different parts of the Board and the variety of committees that members are involved in. The Business Unit will be boning



Members, staff, and board at the 14th International Seminar in Milwaukee.

up the orientation process by adding a monthly refresher. The Culinary Unit will be working out a way to track our money better. Many other goals were discussed. Overall, we feel like we created a very strong action plan for 2008.

We were all deeply saddened by Jessica Olson leaving us, but glad to be having Phyllis Sharples joining us in the Business Unit.

We had three staff and two members head to the 14<sup>th</sup> International Seminar in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from October 14<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>. This was a great opportunity for us to let everyone know that we are back to doing training. Staff and members have been very busy putting together presentations and looked forward to attending many workshops and getting new ideas to bring back to Alliance House.

## BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: KEN VERDOIA



**By Eleisha Hewes**

Introducing the one the only Ken Verdoia, Ken was born in San Francisco, California. After graduating from college in 1975 he first came to the good ole state of Utah. Ken moved around a bit due to his career in journalism but primarily settled down in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1985. When Ken was a young boy he used to stutter horribly, he was afraid to speak in elementary school. Ken was involved with speech therapy for years. Ken speaks with such strength and power it is hard to tell he ever had any problems. Ken is quoted as saying, "Now people find it hard to stop me from talking." This is true. He is so passionate about what he believes in that he will talk for hours if you let him.

Ken is very enthusiastic about his role on the board of directors here at Alliance House; he is our current Vice President. Ken is very energetic and always keeps the rest of the board on their toes. Ken has always been there for Alliance House when needed for MC positions as well as asking people to bring out their pocket books at our Milestones breakfast. Ken has been able to rally up just the right enthusiasm to get the crowd energized. Ken has been with Alliance House for over two years on our board. It is because of his great passion and enthusiasm for life that he is so widely known here at Alliance House and in the com-

munity.

When asked what brought him to Alliance House Ken stated that he came due to a friend Karen Wildfoerster (who happens to be our development coordinator). Karen asked him to serve as the Master of Ceremonies for an annual Employer Recognition Dinner. There he met some of the great members of Alliance House. He was able to learn about the Transitional Employment Program at this event, which he loved. He was full of great information about Alliance House and was asked to serve as MC for a second time, at this point he was hooked. He knew he wanted to become involved in the program in a special way. He thus joined the Alliance House Board of Directors in late 2005 " It was an easy decision."

Alliance House has impacted Ken immensely by the uniqueness of each member, staff, and board member, especially, the abilities and personality that each of them share in order to complete the clubhouse. However his connection to Alliance House has meant more than just helping others, it has helped out his own personal journey in dealing with mental illness in his own family. When Ken was very young he had to deal with mental illness within his own family. He was bound by silence due to the paralyzing stigma out there in society. Ken is now learning the personal empowerment found by speaking out about mental illness. Ken is helping Alliance House members; Alliance House members are helping him. This is truly what clubhouse is about; everyone pulling something from

each other. We all have pieces to offer to each other to help complete this puzzle we call life.

When asked to describe his most memorable event while on the board Ken spoke of the Alliance House Benevon breakfast. "Sharing the story of Alliance House and the members with the community was a fantastic step forward for our program." This truly was an event that will be remembered by all as a fantastic event. Ken actually was able to play a very special role in this event. He was the one who got to get up there and ask everyone to donate money. Yes this seems like a difficult thing to do, but not for Ken. Ken has this grace about him, he can captivate a crowd with his words.

"So many of the people in attendance volunteered to support us, it was a wonderful time of staff, board and members standing together and sharing our inspiring message, and our community cheering us on! It was special to me."

Ken is a perfect addition to our Board of Directors; he keeps us on our toes. Here at Alliance House the staff, members, and board know and love Ken. Ken has helped us achieve many great goals here at Alliance House. He has given us many ideas of how to improve and fight the binding stigma that still exists in our world today. We look forward to many great new ideas and inspirations from the mind of Ken Verdoia.

## TRAINING BASE: WEEK TWO

### By Rob Peden and Catherine Pond

Distractions abound during three-week training. The first week you're in a new, unfamiliar place, meeting new people from the host clubhouse and fellow visiting colleagues from around the world. The third week you're caught in the frenzy of writing the best possible action plan, coordinating it with your clubhouse, and preparing for the trip back home. Your best chance to focus carefully, your best chance to get real work done, is that second week, when you're comfortable with the environment yet far enough from the action plan deadline to really enjoy yourself.

Consequently, we concentrate on the central topic of clubhouse – work – the second week. Alliance House's tentative schedule for its March training shows sessions on employment overview, job development, a role-playing session to give colleagues the feel for what job development is, organizing work, an SE/IE overview, best practices for placement management, and resources for employment. In addition, we expect to take colleagues on a visit to a Transitional Employment site and to a supported employment site. We'll also welcome them to our Tuesday employment dinner and discussion. Almost the entire week will relate to employment in one way or another.

We plan on visiting another Utah clubhouse during the second week as well. Because of the proximity, we will probably concentrate either on New Reflections (Tooele) or Wasatch House (Provo). After a brief tour, the colleagues will join

the work units and perform that clubhouse's tasks of the day. This will provide yet another perspective of how clubhouses operate, emphasizing that there are multiple styles and processes in getting work done. We expect that this visit will enrich the colleagues' experience of clubhouse in general and stimulate their creativity in coming up with ways to improve their own houses. If we visit New Reflections, we may stop by Great Salt Lake on the way back. While most of us take the lake for granted, it is geographically unique and has its own otherworldly beauty.

We'll also continue our discussions. The discussions for the second week consist of Organizing Work and Clubhouse Space, Employment, Education, and Roles and Responsibilities. We'll offer a second consultation for the action plans this week, as well as substantial unit work and the usual lineup of Alliance House meetings.

**All in all, we expect a very busy, very rewarding week. If the colleagues survive this week, they're set to undertake the culmination of the third week – as will we, in next month's Clubhouse Chronicle.**

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Alliance House has reached agreement with the State Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to help defray the costs for Utah clubhouses to attend our training. For up to four clubhouses per year, the State will pay one-half the tuition for training. We hope this will provide an incentive for clubhouses to stay well educated and will help them with their certification efforts.

**Are you interested in  
learning more about Alliance House?**

- Check us out on the web at [www.alliancehouse.org](http://www.alliancehouse.org)
- Come in for a “Lunch on Us Tour”
- Email or call us for more information

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