

Charter House Journal

SEPTEMBER 2016

Coordinator's Corner

WE ARE ACCREDITED!



The good news is that we are Accredited by Clubhouse International! We have been working for several years now and are so excited that our clubhouse meets international standards! This means that our members are getting the best services possible. We have already begun working to institute some of the recommendations from them

including doing some baking one afternoon a week. We hope to have a celebration party soon!

We are so excited that we have two new staff that have started. George Hatter actually returned to Charter House. He worked here for several year, took a break and now he is back. We are very happy to have him working with us again. Our other new staff person is Joshua Kessler. Joshua has worked in other parts of CMH for several years and had been trying to get a position at Charter House. We are happy that it worked out this time for him to get a position here.

Our Advisory Board has reconvened and begun meeting. Topics at our first meeting included

effectively advocating with the state for an increase in general fund monies and planning a fundraiser! These are exciting and important topics!

This month some of us will be attending the National Clubhouse Conference in Washington DC. One of the themes is advocating! We are looking forward to learning how to better advocate for the rights of persons with a mental illness.

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The Ledges in Fitzgerald Park

The Ledges in Fitzgerald Park
On August 20th A few members and Aaron and I went there to go on the trail. I walked a mile altogether. I walk down a hill to get to the ledges trail and then walked back up it. Walking and only stopping on the back up. I

am very proud of myself doing all of this walking. I live a boring life sitting home so this activity was a lot for me. I am very glad I did it.

Lynn



A New American Citizen



Rita, a Charter House member, came to the United States from Africa. She was born in Tanzania. Her country was having problems, so her family moved to the country of Burundi, in Africa. She had a dream of becoming a U.S. citizen. To make this dream come true, she had to learn English. Rita worked hard and studied.

On February 9th, 2016, Rita went to Detroit with Dean her case manager to take the U.S.

citizen test. She passed!

Rita studied a little but feels the test was not hard. She said she felt good when she passed. On March 16th, 2016, Rita, Dean, and Charter House traveled to the Ford Museum in Grand Rapids. Rita was officially sworn in as a U.S. citizen! To celebrate, Charter House took Rita out to eat.

We are very proud and happy that Rita has become a U.S. citizen. We have seen Rita's English improve since she's

been at Charter House. Rita is a hard worker and we are all proud of her.

Stephanie Tighe & John Hignutt

Charter House Trip to Holland

Charter House went to Holland on August 11th. We took Dean's Transportation, and didn't leave until 8:40 AM because they took a while getting Clark Williams properly secured into the bus.

We arrived in Holland around 10:15 AM. Charter House went to the candle store and split into two groups there,

the first group arrived at 11:00, the second group arrived at 11:30. They browsed around downtown Holland until 12:00 pm.

Then the bus headed for Holland State Park at 3:00. Some people went swimming and others did nothing.

The bus left the park at 4:45 pm. We then headed to Hudsonville to McDonald's to eat, although some people headed to Burger King and Arby's.

The bus left Hudsonville at 5:30 to head home. The bus arrived in Lansing at 6:45 pm.

By Mike Endriss

LOOK FOR
SOMETHING
POSITIVE IN EACH
DAY, EVEN IF
SOME DAYS YOU
HAVE TO LOOK A
LITTLE HARDER.

RECOVERYEXPERTS.COM

Our Family and Friends Picnic

Every year, Charter House has an event called the Family & Friends picnic. We rent a pavilion at a place called Hawk Island Park for all of our members, staff, former members and all of our friends.

It was very hot outdoors, in the 90's, but our pavilion kept us cool in the shade. There were also swimming and paddle boating activities at the park to help beat the heat.

Just about everybody played a few games of bingo for money. It was fun.

We also had grilled burgers and hot dogs, and ate potato and macaroni salad and potato chips.

It was a pleasure to hang out with old colleagues, like Bill Zimmer and Lucia, who were former staff members at Charter House. We also saw old members.

Overall, a great time was had. We can't wait until next year.

-Ryan Shank and John Hignutt

Clubhouse Michigan Seminar

On Monday, August 1st, three of us Charter House members and our coordinator Stephanie attended the Clubhouse Michigan training seminar at the Comfort Inn suites in Mt. Pleasant, MI.

There were several workshops we had a choice to attend. I went to the "How to Get the Most of your Clubhouse Membership" seminar. Which asks how the members and staff can work together. One example: The emphasis on the "Work Ordered

Day", to keep members engaged in activities they enjoy, without the afternoon ending up with nothing to do, and the subsequent boredom and disengagement that follows. It also discusses the roles of both staff and members, and there should be a fine line between what members and staff's participation in WOD duties are. We need a team effort to keep both members and staff engaged.

I also participated in the "Ways to Enable Members to take Leadership Roles". For example, staff could encourage members

to take on more responsibilities, but the member has to be motivated enough to feel they belong in a type of leadership role. The key is to make a member feel important, and for them to enjoy the tasks at hand.

Overall, it was a great experience. The food was good, we had a taco bar with all of the fixings.

Hopefully I learned enough to bring back to Charter House. That's my story, and looking for more conferences to come.

John Hignutt

My Recovery Story

Hello...

My name is John, a member of Charter House Clubhouse for 5 years this July. I was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1992.

Up until my diagnosis, I lead a productive life. I was married for two years in Indiana and had a son. I got a really good job at a local radio station as a DJ. I also juggled 2 other jobs to support my family as a factory worker making radiator parts and I was also a security guard at the same time.

After two years, my wife and I divorced, and I moved up to Muskegon, Michigan with my mother. What happened? Eventually I thought that I was being spied on and the neighbors were talking about me. I got so bad I set up microphones in my windows and recorded people. Finally it led to a severe case of agoraphobia, I couldn't leave my apartment. I was a prisoner in my own mind.

I started hearing voices, believing I was psychic and could hear people's thoughts about me. What led me to CMH in an ambulance one night is that I believed I could kill people with my mind, and in my delusional state I thought I killed my 78 year-old landlady. (She was OK.)

I was admitted to Northwood in the Muskegon County CMH program. I spent an entire month there, I received meds and counseling. I played my "neighbor" tapes I recorded to my then case manager, and she didn't hear anything. I was over the idea that people were talking about me, so as I thought.

It took me several years to get back to reality. I was given meds and stayed in three AFC homes over the course of 5 years during my recovery process.

Later on, I decided to move down to Lansing with my mother. I was introduced to the CMH in town and my case was transferred from Muskegon.

I still had episodes at my new place, the feeling came back that I was being talked about. To drown out this feeling again, I started to abuse alcohol, like two 12-packs a day of beer. I stayed in a CMH care unit called "Bridges" about 5 times. Met a lot of nice people. They helped me get a grip on reality because there were similar cases like mine.

CMH introduced me to the ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) program. Today I am taken care of by a lot of wonderful people there. ACT's staff deliver my meds at home and take me to all of my doctor visits. They got me an apartment where I reside now. I don't worry about what the neigh-

bor's think anymore, I've met just about everybody in the apartment building. Really nice folks.

Today I can say I am doing well, thanks to meds, counseling, and Charter House, that ACT introduced me to. I have such great friends there and it brought me out of my shell. It keeps me occupied and less worry about what people think about me. I feel like, hey, if you don't like me, that's fine with me. I have a good life right now because of my Charter House friends and support system.

I was ordered to stay away from alcohol, it had the potential to mess up my meds. I developed liver trouble, so I decided to cut back on drinking, way back. I can proudly say I've recovered in that aspect.

Also I'm now recovered a lot to visit my now 27 year old son Trevor, who still lives in Indiana. The bus ride there did bring some anxiety, but I got through it.

That's my story. Charter House changed my life. I work there 5 days a week, and it's provided me with an outlet other than going stir crazy alone at home. I have my own apartment, family and friends, plus my Job Placement manager could possibly get me another radio station job.

Glad to be on the road to recovery!

Charter House

Where Everyone Has A Voice

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A Task Force

We are working on issues to keep our accreditation

1. Need to have our own space.
2. Need to improve our outreach program.
3. Need to strengthen afternoon work order day.

Our Fenner Nature Center Bonfire

By **JOHN HIGNUTT**

Let me tell you about a fun outing Charter House had on Friday, May 6th. We had a bonfire at Fenner Nature Center here in Lansing.

We had our own special rented spot in the woods. Our guy Sean got the key and let us in the gate.

The park had a nice firepit, we brought in wood from a member Ryan.

After the fire got going, we all sat around and grabbed hot dogs to roast on sticks. Other folks made melted marshmallow S'mores. We also had chips and pop.

A member, Adam, brought out his guitar. He played quite well. I would definitely do this again. Maybe in the fall when it's cool enough to warm up by the fire.

Until next time.

2016 Avg Daily

