

Charter House Journal

January—February 2018

Volume 10, Issue 1

Advocacy Works!

Charter House recently became the chair advocacy for all the clubhouses in Michigan. Ottawa county CMH has three clubhouses in Holland, Grand Rapids and Muskegon. In the last months ending 2017 we had learned the Ottawa county CMH had planned to close the Lake shore clubhouse in Holland on February 1st. Additionally, a few weeks later we learned they had also planned to close Sheldon house clubhouse in Grand Rapids. Year ending of 2017 we learned they had wanted Inspiration clubhouse in Muskegon to add more members or they would also close.

After learning all this, immediate action was taken. All the clubhouses in



Michigan were informed and we all advocated for these clubhouses to remain open. Last Thursday in our Michigan area clubhouse conference

call we learned that Sheldon house would remain open. This was possible because of all the advocacy efforts from all the clubhouses in Michigan. Today 1/8/2018 we learned Lakeshore was given a three month extension to remain open and become their own clubhouse identity. If this happens they will be the first clubhouse in Michigan to become their own clubhouse without funding from CMH.

Advocacy works! Thank you to all the Michigan clubhouses for your advocacy efforts.

What Is Clubhouse > Clark W.

Clubhouses are a unique part of the mental health system. Meds alone cannot fully control their mental illness. Clubhouses can change that. Clubhouse changes and saves peoples' lives literally and figuratively. Clubhouses offer opportunities to work through transitional employment (TE's) and supportive employment (SE's), which help members with staying employed. They have opportunities to improve their education (GED or

their local community college).

Members learn how to re-socialize in their communities. Relationships in the clubhouse are very important to its members. Clubhouses give members hope and a future. Members spend less time in jail or hospitals, and it helps members in their recovery. Clubhouses give its members a reason to get up out of bed and go out to be someplace and have something to do. When a clubhouse

closes, the members lose everything, all work (TE and SE) outside the clubhouse...they will lose their "family", the clubhouse. Eventually their mental state will deteriorate, they might end up in jail or hospital, homeless, or worse.



Inside this issue:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Restaurant Reviews | 2 |
| Christmas Party | 3 |
| Frankenmuth | 3 |
| Inside Story | 3 |
| Place to Call Home | 4 |
| "Tell Me About Yourself" | 4 |

Restaurant Review Group

Choupli Wood-Fired Kabob



Charter House has a lively social activity program. One evening each week and one weekend day each month, we have some sort of social recreational activity. Over time we have found that we often repeat activities. We believe this happens for 2 reasons; 1) we like what we like and that is that, and 2) sometimes it is hard to try new things because you might be disappointed. Another thing that was observed about our social activities during the week days was that they often revolved around getting a bite to eat; whether it was bowling and eating at the bowling alley, or feeding ducks and stopping in at McDonald's, or shopping in East Lansing and going to Five Guys a Burger and Fries. It made sense, as the activities took place after the work ordered day and that is smack dab in that dinner hour window. So we had a discussion during our House Meeting and we came up with a plan. Since we already go out to eat somewhere during our evening activities, how about we make going out to eat our focus, at a new place, one time a month. We can then review the new places we eat, so when we go on other social activity outings we may have more choices of places

to eat. That is what we started in the month of November 2017.

On Wednesday, November 8th, a group of us got together to think of place to eat that we had not been before. It was a bit of a hard practice at first, like we said, we like what we like and that is that. Some people wanted Mexican fare, some wanted Italian, some just wanted a burger and fries, however most people wanted to try some place new and that was key. We looked at restaurant menus for not only what they served, but also their prices. One place offered a steak for \$90, that restaurant didn't make the first cut. After a bit of talking over menus and prices we had our first restaurant we were going to try and to review.

Choupli Wood-Fired Kabob was the establishment we chose. Food and drink was right around \$10-14. The restaurant isn't very large, maybe 20-25 people capacity. It was bright inside and easy to see. Ordering takes place at the counter and you can watch them serve up your food. One thing you will notice is, as Choupli's name suggests, a wood fired stove. This is where they cook their kabobs. The beef kabobs were delicious, cooked just right with great flavor. Although I

went for the beef kabobs, one of the employees at Choupli's asked if I had ever tried their chicken shawarma. When he learned that I hadn't, he offered me a sample and I almost decided to get the shawarma instead, it was fantastic. One of the folks on the outing still wanted some American food fare and I saw that Choupli did offer French Fries, "made to order". It appears that they don't make a lot of fries, but they do have that option if you are so inclined. The member of our group ordered some fries. Since Choupli doesn't have fries lying around, when you order them, they are fresh, as they only make them when someone requests them. Everyone in our group enjoyed their food and most were even able to finish the generous portions. The guys working at Choupli were great, as they were asked multiple times to repeat themselves, as it is loud with the wood fire in the background. They made sure we had everything we needed to enjoy our food. Choupli Wood-Fired Kabob is definitely a restaurant we will return to in the future. We give it a 4.75 stars out of 5.

Bridge Street Social



food and drink.

bridgestreetsocial.com

On Thursday December 7th, a group of four members; John H, Charlie W., Rita, Gary L went out to eat dinner at the Bridge street social in Dewitt. We would give the rating 3 star out of 5. Some of the negatives were that it was really cold, we had to keep our coats on while eating. It was expensive, a hamburger and fry was \$13.00, and pop was \$3.50. Gary said the food was average, but good. Gary or-

dered a small pizza with goat cheese. He said it was ok. The three ladies ordered duck in a pancake. It was different and tasted good. We ordered appetizers, a sausage chorizo ball- this was very good. We ordered another appetizer with several options of cheese, sauce, and sausages that was pretty good. Overall, Gary said he might go again. John H. would not go again. Kimberly ordered take home

whitefish coated in roasted almonds and a spicy avocado sauce, it was really good but expensive. We look forward to our next out to eat club adventure!!

Charter House Christmas Party > John H.

On Saturday, December 16th, Charter House threw our own Christmas party for members and guests.

We played games, watched YouTube videos, and had some good food to eat. I had pigs in a blanket for an appetizer and later had BBQ pulled pork.

One of the games consisted in passing a ball of plastic wrap: each person who got the ball uncovered the wrap to reveal what gift was inside. I won a fidget wheel, which I later traded with a colleague for a swell multi-color ink pen.

Another game, called the left-right story, had us all sit in a circle and pass a wrapped gift back and

forth. Our coordinator Stephanie read the story out loud, which,



whenever she would say "right", we pass the gift to the right, the same went for when she said "left".

When Steff hollered STOP, whoever had the package at the moment got to keep it.

The "HO-HO-HO!" contest was great. We had 6 contestants who each did their own version of Santa Clause. The louder the better. One member won \$10.00.

One last game, while Stephanie sang, we passed around items that were left over. When she stopped singing, whoever had the item in their hands got to keep it. I won a nice homemade scarf.

The party itself had a very large turnout of people. Overall, it was fun. I usually balk at crowds, but this time I really had a good time.

Trip to Frankenmuth

Our trip to Frankenmuth started with a stop in Birch Run*. Then we went to Bronner's the big Christmas Store. Ryan tried to get ornaments for her twin baby nephews but the line was so long she just got an ornament and will put their names on it herself. Then we went to the Riverwalk Mall. Some members played pool. Some of us went to the cupcake store. The store won cupcake awards. Gary went to look at radio controlled cars and planes. We made a stop at Zehnder's Bakery. Diane got a date bar that tasted like the ones her Mom use to make. Gary got some pizza bread. Dan ate a huge slice of carrot cake. Next stop was the Frankenmuth



Coffee Haus where we had sandwiches, chips and a beverage.

Stephanie had a delicious chicken salad sandwich. The restaurant had new owners since we were there last year. They had just taken over 2 weeks earlier. Then we went back to Bronner's to see the lights at night. Many members were tuckered out and slept on the way home.

*Lynn got some adorable clothes for her granddaughter including a tutu. We also enjoyed going to the Pepper Ridge farm outlet store.

Brody Hall Dinner > John H.

In early December, for our annual eat-out, all of Charter House went to a place called Brody Hall on the MSU campus, a huge buffet style diner.

They have every food you could imagine, from Italian to Mexican to Chinese. I had a plate of nachos

with refried beans.

It was nice, but very crowded. A lot of walking to get there.

Overall I recommend Brody Hall as a great place to eat the kind of food you like. I hope we go back there soon.



Charter House


Where Everyone Has A Voice

606 W. Shiawassee St
Lansing, MI 48915

Phone: 517.371.2077

E-mail: charterhouse78@gmail.com

Site: charterhousemi.org

 facebook.com/recovery.begins



A Place to Call Home > Daniel A.

I go many places and am very busy, but who are my friends? Who are the people that I can relax with and share my story? Who are still my fans when I have a bad day?

I came to Charter House Clubhouse unemployed and on SSI/SSDI Disability. It seemed that I was unable to work or do much, but when I came to Charter House, the door of opportunity was open.

Immediately, I began writing newsletter articles and making greeting cards for consumers. Everybody cared about my journey-- including staff. This family helped me write a book while I was here called "Guest Speakers in Mental Health." They shared my joys and propelled me forward.

When other agencies dropped me because I did not fit the paradigm, Charter House continued with me and spurred me on to greatness.

Today I work in a Head Start Preschool doing what I love. In about an hour, I will be leaving the building for this job, but I do not forget where I came from or who inspired me!

I stand by my Charter House Family and so should anyone reading this newsletter. Take the time to invest in this important resource in any way you can:

1. Share these stories.
2. Tell your local CMH Provider about the importance of Mental Health Clubhouses.
3. Show up at the "Walk A Mile In My Shoes" Event at the State Capitol or the Community Mental Health Breakfast at the Lansing Center to advocate for the Clubhouse Model.
4. Speak to the Board of Directors at CMH about the importance of Charter House.

Know that you will be making a valuable difference in the lives of many people.

How Do You Answer "Tell Me About Yourself" In A Job Interview

The interview question that stresses me out the most (besides the what are your weaknesses question) is the tell me about yourself question...or statement... or request, whatever it is. What do employers really want to hear? I'm assuming that this isn't the time to regale colorful stories of my childhood in the deep south, but what should I be talking about?

"Tell me about yourself" in a job interview really means "give me an overview of who you are, professionally speaking." There's a reason this is asked at the very beginning of the interview - it says "give me the broad background before we dive into specifics".

You want to be ready with about a one minute answer that summarizes where you're at in your career (generally with an emphasis on your most recent job), what you do, and what strengths of your approach are.

For instance: "I got into technical writing because I found that I have an unusual mixture of technical aptitude with writing skills. I'd worked as a software engineer for the first few years of my career, but when I saw how rare it was to find people with that kind of technical background who could also

write, I started moving into technical writing. I found that I love translating complicated technical into words that a non-technical person can easily understand, and the fact that I come from a software background means I can communicate well both with the tech team and my intended audience. My last boss

and I spent my last two years in school preparing myself to work in communications when I graduated. I sought out internships and extracurricular opportunities that would expose me to media relations, and I'm excited to continue on that path. I've been told that I'm particularly good at coming up with creative story pitches, and I

love pitching, but I really want to learn every aspect of this business from the ground up. I'd like to work in-house rather than in an agency, and I'm especially interested in advocacy work, so I'm particularly excited about this opportunity."

As you can see in these two examples, you want to keep this focused on your professional persona. Don't bring kids into it, or your spouse, or where you grew up. That's not to say you can't say anything personal, but make sure there's a relevant reason for raising it. For instance, you could add something like, "And I grew up in this area and still have family here, so I'm really excited about the prospect of moving back." (Hence signaling to the interviewer that you're not going to be flighty about relocation.)

Whatever your answer is, practice it out loud over and over so it flows right out of your mouth in the interview. Don't try to wing it!

told me that I was the only employee she'd ever had who mixed those two skills to the extent that I do! Being able to bridge those two worlds so comfortably is the reason I was especially interested in the position here."

For someone who's more entry-level and doesn't really have a career to describe yet, the answer would be more forward-looking. For instance: "I've always been a news junkie

How To Answer The "Tell Me About Yourself" Interview Question

