

Charter House Journal

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Legislative Connection Day ~ Advocacy

Wednesday, 2-21-18, was Legislative Connection Day at the Capital in Lansing.

We, as Clubhouse Michigan, decided to meet with our legislators for some important reasons. In the last 3 months 3 separate clubhouses in Michigan were threatened with closure. Two of these clubs are now safe but the future of the 3rd one is still uncertain. This was not acceptable for Michigan Clubs and

program. Two Charter House members, Clark W and Nicole W, spoke as part of the program and shared the importance of Charter House in their lives. They both shared powerful words. There were also members and staff from other clubhouses, from NAMI and the Michigan Mental Health Association.

Gary L and Andrew M, CH members, visited with Sen-

Sheldon House put together a wonderful book of members stories and facts on the benefits of Club House. We gave this to our legislators.

Most of the clubhouses stopped at Charter House for lunch. The awesome kitchen crew at Charter House cooked up an amazing lunch of Chile (even a veggie version), cornbread and an orange. Many of our guests also received a tour. The crew made sure lunch was available for over 2 hours to accommodate the comings and goings of appointments with legislators.

It is really amazing to see our community rally to help our colleagues and to see that clubhouses that were scheduled to close are now staying open!

Now that we know how easy it is to meet our legislators we have a duty to do it more often and to ensure that our legislators know who we are, know what we are about and how important we are to the community!



we had to take action.

Approximately 20 of the 47 Michigan clubs attended the event at the Capital. Each Clubhouse scheduled appointments with their individual legislators and there was also a

ator Singh and Representative Tom Barrett. For details on these meetings see Daniel A's interview with Andrew. They shared information on the efficacy and cost effectiveness of clubhouses.

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Interview with intern Jillian ~ Louise U.

Why did you come to Charter House? *(To do an) Internship.*

What unit do you work on? *Both Upper and Lower Level units.*

What days are you coming to Charter House? *Tuesday's and Thursday's.*

When did you come to Charter House? *January 2018.*

What is your favorite part about Charter House? *The people.*

What do you like to do on your free time? *Read and watch T.V.*

What have you been doing with your life lately? *Got married and going to school.*

What are your hobbies? *Yoga and cooking.*

What kind of music do you like? *Pop and classic rock.*

What are your goals? Where do you want to go in life? *To graduate from college this year, to travel, and get a masters degree.*

What is your favorite food? *Pizza.*

What school do you go to? *Eastern Michigan University?*

What year are you? *Senior.*

Eating Out Group – Pablo's Old Town Mexican Diner

Hello... let me tell you about a great place to dine in Lansing, as part of Charter House's Eating Out Group, we go to new places to eat once a month.

Pablos, in Old Town, has the best taco salad. We had a member, Gary, order a beef tongue sandwich.

Members, 4 of us, Rita, Gary, your's truly, and Charlie had a great time



there. Like I said, the food was great, and cheap.

We were joined by our fearless leader, Stephanie, who after we were done eating we drove around town

to see the sights. She showed us where she used to live.

Overall, score one for the Eating Out Group, we finally found a place we could agree on.

Interview with new member Cheri

Why did you come to Charter House? *To learn job training to work in the community.*

What unit do you work on? *Upper level unit.*

What days are you coming to Charter House? *Monday's, Wednesday's, and Friday's.*

When did you come to Charter House? *October 2017.*

What is your favorite part about Charter House? *The meeting's (unit meeting's).*

What do you like to do on your free time? *Read books (Silence of the Lambs).*

What have you been doing with your life lately? *Visit family (4 girls) 13 grandchildren.*

What are your hobbies? *Walking, shopping.*

What kind of music do you like? *R. & B.*

What are your goals? Where do you want to go in life? *Get a job and stay at it. Would like to do janitorial.*

What is your favorite food? *Spaghetti and fish (catfish).*

Interview with new member Sai

Why did you come to Charter House? *So I can mingle with people. I also want to play video games and have fun.*

What unit do you work on? *Upper level unit.*

What days are you coming to Charter House? *Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursday's.*

What do you like to do on your free time? *I like to read books and watch T.V., he said. He likes Harry Potter and other similar styles. He likes watching "The Big Bang Theory" (T.V. show).*

What have you been doing with your life lately? *Sai has been working out at the Y.M.C.A.*

What kind of music do you like? *Indian music.*

What is your favorite food? *Indian food.*

Are you interested in working? What kind of work have you done in the past? *Yes he is interested in working and use to work at Peckham.*

What else would you like us to know about you? *Sai grew up in India. He has only been in the United States for 5 years. When he arrived here he did not speak English.*

Interview with intern Paige ~ Daniel A.

Why did you decide to come and work with Charter House Clubhouse? *For school, I had to choose a placement for my internship. Charter House caught my eye. I had never heard about a Clubhouse before and I was curious to learn more.*

What stood out about Charter House? *That it was voluntary. Everyone seemed very opening and welcoming. It was honestly like I*

had never seen in regards to mental health.

What is the most exciting activity for you at Charter House? *I really like Baking Club and interacting with members. I learn a lot from you guys.*

Is there anything else you would add? *I am very grateful for Charter Clubhouse and how it helps me.*

I really like the chill environment too. How do you believe that Charter House pulls this off? *Everyone is easy going and works well together. There is never any real tension. There's no judgment. Then I can just come in and be me.*

Clubhouse Michigan meeting in Traverse City ~Ryan S.

The Traverse City clubhouse was very open and big. Lunch was amazing. They had 4 kinds of homemade soup including Chile, Broccoli Cheddar, Bean and Squash. They also had an amazing salad bar that had many items on it including ham, cheese, dried cherries, raisins, carrots, nuts, tomatoes and lots more. There were also rolls and Oreo brownies and mini cupcakes. They had coffee, water and sugar free Vitamin Waters.

The first meeting we attended was the Advocacy Committee. We re-

viewed how the event at the Capital went and talked about what the Open Doors Committee is doing and how this committee and ours interact. One of the things that we can be advocating for is the Open Doors proposal which is asking the state for \$50,000 per clubhouse. We talked about having a monthly newsletter that Charter House would sent to all the clubs that would include updates on what we need to advocate for and upcoming events. One clubhouse also requested that we include sample letters to

send to legislators and also some education information such as the website link for coffee hours and information about what happens at the coffee hours.

The second we attended was the Clubhouse Michigan Meeting. At this meeting Bill Zimmer presented on the Disability Network and how they can help members find jobs. We also talked about the camping trip and Club Cadillac volunteered to be in charge of it. There will be a Michigan Clubhouse Conference in Traverse City from July 15-18.

CHARTER HOUSE

Where Everyone Has A Voice

606 W. Shiawasse St
Lansing, MI 48915

Phone: 517.371.2077
E-mail: charterhouse78@gmail.com
Site: charterhousemi.org

 facebook.com/recovery.begins



Brand New Day ~ Daniel A.

At Charter House, we face different setbacks due to mental health difficulties, but all is not over. We have friends to encourage us. The sky is the limit. Anything is really possible!

I come here knowing I can make a difference and that people can positively affect me too!

We can be activists.

We can be productive.

We can be happy completing tasks or doing advocacy. Yet, there is no big or small; there is only do.

Today is a brand new day for me and it is a "Do" Day. I have a voice. I can impact people and so can you.

You walked in with that huge smile on your face saying you are glad I am here. I feel the same way about you. Thank you for being here.

What To Do If You Do Not Agree With Your Doctor? ~ Daniel A.

Sometimes medicine is the last substance we think we want to put in our bodies. Sometimes we think we feel well and do not want to be told otherwise anything else. We may brush off most of our allies and connect with only those who will agree with us.

This is my story and I have fought medicine since 1999 until very recently. Now I try to pick up the pieces and receive everything from side-effects to disdain from the group I allied.

But that is ok... We need the treatment that works best for us and no one knows our body better than ourselves.

Sometimes it's necessary to draw a line in the sand. Sometimes it's necessary to take care of our own

health and even submit to what we do not prefer.

Last time you saw me, Daniel, fighting medication for 120 days. Eventually, my head felt like it began spinning out of control. Nothing could settle me down. I could not relax.

I chose the medicine that I had avoided for too long. Life is not perfect now, but I'm rebuilding family ties, re-acquainting myself with my place of worship, and visiting peers and staff from Charter House and Justice in Mental Health Organization.

I live a pretty substantial life swaying from light dizziness to determined typing on this computer. Yesterday, I finished writing a new book and I am excited about life.

Thank you for sharing it with me Charter House Clubhouse.